

Do your best!

written by Shaul Mizrahi
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In *Sichah* 11 of *Sichos HaRan*, Rebbe Nachman says how fortunate we are to have merited the holiness of the Jewish people and how much happiness he derives from having been in *Eretz Yisrael*. Yet, he does not stress here that his happiness came from attaining the great levels of *kedushah* he achieved in *Eretz Yisrael*. What caused him so much happiness was the fact that on the way he was able to overcome many obstacles.

The story of Rebbe Nachman's journey to *Eretz Yisrael* is detailed in *Shevachey HaRan*. He encountered financial difficulties, transportation difficulties, people actively trying to prevent him from travelling, pressure from his family not to travel, as well as his own confusing thoughts about the idea. In the end, of course, he did succeed in reaching *Eretz Yisrael*. He tells us in this *sichah* that the fact that he had to overcome so many obstacles in order to

reach *Eretz Yisrael* increased his *simchah* in obtaining his goal.

From this specific case, the Rebbe teaches us a general principle. He says, based on the *Zohar HaKadosh*, that no good though or attempt to do something good ever gets lost. When a person tries to do a mitzvah, even if he does not succeed, all of his efforts and all of his desires to do the mitzvah are recorded in Heaven. From this we learn that even if a person does not succeed, he should not feel that his efforts were for naught. Everything he tried to do is recorded for his eternal merit.

On the other hand, if he does finally succeed in doing the mitzvah, it is a much greater mitzvah than if he had done it without any obstacles, since all of his efforts to overcome the obstacles join in with the actual act of the mitzvah. Rabbi Tzvi Aryeh Rosenfeld explained that these obstacles, MeNIOS (מניס), turn into NeIMOS (נעים), pleasantness, which adds to the *simchah* as the Rebbe explained about his trip to *Eretz Yisrael*.

For the last few months, we have been facing many new obstacles to doing mitzvos that until now have been so simple that we took them for granted. Davening in a shul, davening with a *minyan*, hearing a *shiur*, going out to collect *tzedakah* for important causes, traveling to *Eretz Yisrael* and other mitzvos are now difficult or impossible, depending on where we live. We are now well into Tammuz and no one knows if we will be able to be with the Rebbe on Rosh Hashanah, about which he said "There is nothing greater than this" (*Chayey Moharan* 406) and "the entire world depends on my Rosh Hashanah" (*Chayey Moharan* 405).

In the face of these obstacles, we can look to the Rebbe's words and resolve to do our best to overcome them. If we do not succeed, then we know that our efforts are recorded and will stand to our merit when we need them. If we do succeed,

the *simchah* in doing the mitzvah will be that much greater. In any case, even under the most dire circumstances we should not give up. It is noted that this *sichah* was given over the same Shabbos evening that the Rebbe said the lesson about his being a simple person, in which he spoke about the road to Eretz Yisrael and shouted his eternal cry "There is no despair at all!" Despair is a sure loss. When we do our best, it is win-win.