

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Ki Sisa

פרשת כי תשא

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: The World Was Created for Me! · Purim Katan talks

Sicha 2: Up, Down, and Higher Up! · Shabbos Ki Sisa

TEACHER'S EDITION

Answers are printed in italics on the answer lines, with the section (§) of the sicha.

★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

Each sicha has questions, a true chassidishe story, and a lesson for you.

The World Was Created for Me!

בשבילי נברא העולם

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1: the talks of the eve of Purim Katan (14 Adar I) and the eve of Shushan Purim Katan (15 Adar I) 5752 (1992), week of Parshas Ki Sisa, §1 of each (Sichos in English vol. 51; the second is titled there "Children: The Vanguard of the Redemption"). The following essay on children, compiled by the editors, is not included.

The point: *Ki Sisa = lifting up the heads of the Jewish people. The whole world was created for the Jews, and every Jew is obligated (halachically!) to say "the world was created for me"; Hashem gives the strength to live that way. Together, with ahavas Yisroel, two people carry far more than double. The 14th is the full moon; 60 days of Adar nullify and transform the bad; Nissan's two nuns hint to miracles; Iyar = Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Rachel. Shushan Purim is named for Achashverosh's capital: the place of the enemy completely transformed to good, in one jump, like teshuvah. "Arur Haman" starts with alef, above "Baruch Mordechai" with beis: descent for a higher ascent. Children are "meshichai", the world stands on their Torah. "Chanoch lanaar": a foundation to grow on. "Mi yakum Yaakov ki katan hu": smallness (bittul) is the foundation of every good quality.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What does "Ki Sisa" mean, and how is it connected to the Jewish people?

"When you lift up": lifting up even the heads of the Jewish people, because the whole world was created for their sake. (Eve of Purim Katan)

2. ★★ What is every Jew obligated to say, and how can he live up to it?

"The world was created for me", a real halachic obligation. Since Hashem gives this directive to His cherished nation, He gives every Jew, from His full and open hand, the ability to live this way and show that the world depends on him. (Eve of Purim Katan)

3. ★★ What does unity add?

With "v'ahavta l're'acha kamocha" each one's strength grows: two people together can carry much more than the sum of what each could carry alone. (Eve of Purim Katan)

4. ★★★ Why does the moon reach its fullness on the 14th?

A lunar month is about 29½ days, so the middle, the full moon, is the 14th, not the 15th. (Eve of Purim Katan)

5. ★★ What do Nissan and Iyar hint to?

Nissan has two nuns, and seeing a word with two nuns in a dream means wondrous miracles. Iyar

(א"י) = Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Rachel, the four legs of the Merkavah: bringing the miracles

of Nissan into nature. (Eve of Purim Katan)

6. ★★★ Why is it surprising that Shushan Purim is named after Shushan? What does it teach?

It is kept in cities walled since Yehoshua, in honor of Eretz Yisroel, yet it's named after

Achashverosh's capital in galus. It shows a complete transformation: the enemy's capital itself

became a source of holiness, in one leap, like teshuvah and Yetzias Mitzrayim ("leaping over

mountains"). (Eve of Shushan Purim Katan)

7. ★★ Why does the name "Shushan Purim" in the siddur show it belongs to every Jew?

Everyone calls the second day "Shushan Purim", and it's printed in siddurim (for when tachanun

isn't said), and every Jew, even the simplest, uses a siddur. (Eve of Shushan Purim Katan)

8. ★★★ What do the alef of "Arur Haman" and the beis of "Baruch Mordechai" teach?

Beis (Bereishis) is perfection within nature; alef is above nature. "Arur Haman", with alef, is a

descent for an ascent: from Haman's low point we reach a level infinitely above "Baruch

Mordechai", which is why on Purim there is no difference between "Arur Haman" and "Baruch

Mordechai". (Eve of Shushan Purim Katan)

9. ★ Who are "meshichai", and why?

Children who learn Torah ("al tig'u bimeshichai"). The world exists in their merit, which shows

how important chinuch is. (Eve of Shushan Purim Katan)

10. ★★ What is the question on "chanoch lanaar al pi darko, gam ki yazkin lo yasur mimenah", and the answer?

Why is it praise that an old man still acts like he did as a child? Because a child's chinuch is a

foundation he keeps building on until he becomes a wise man. (Eve of Shushan Purim Katan)

11. ★★ What advantage does being young have?

“Mi yakum Yaakov ki katan hu”: being small means bittul, “my soul will be like dust to all”, and that is the foundation of every good quality. (Eve of Shushan Purim Katan)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“Think of Others”

Peter Kalms was a businessman in London who supported many Chabad projects. At his fourth yechidus with the Rebbe, his daughter Tanya came in with him and handed the Rebbe her note. The Rebbe said, “I wish you a blessing to be able to fulfill all you have written,” and added that one needs “to think of others, and not keep good things only for oneself, to spread Torah with conviction, and in the correct path.”

After Tanya left the room, the Rebbe told her father that she should have informal get-togethers with children from the Jewish day schools: “Sometimes informal contact is more important than formal schooling.”

About his other daughter, Penina, who was still in the Lubavitch grammar school, the Rebbe suggested: “She can influence the other children by acting as an instructor for younger girls. One can also be a good pupil by answering a need to be a good teacher.”

Source: *Peter Kalms, “Empowering the Child to be Influential” (chabad.org), from his book Guidance from the Rebbe*

Think: How did the Rebbe show that “the world was created for me” is true even for a child?

He gave each child a real mission, to think of others and influence other children, because children (“meshichai”) have the power to change the world, and being a teacher makes you a better student.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

The world was created for you, so you are responsible for it. You can bring Moshiach closer, and you can influence others even now.

For example: Volunteer to learn with a younger boy for ten minutes before Mincha, or run the Mishnayos contest for the lower grades. Teaching him will make you a better learner too.

Up, Down, and Higher Up!

לוחות ראשונות ושניות

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa, 18 Adar I 5752 (1992) (Sichos in English vol. 51). The text has no numbered sections, so answers cite the sicha.

The point: *Ki Sisa holds extremes: the first luchos, the eigel and the broken luchos, Moshe's tefillah, the 13 Middos, the second luchos and Moshe's shining face. Why together, in a parsha called "lifting up"? Hashem set a pattern: beginning (the goal), middle (the process), end (the goal achieved): Torah, Creation, Geulah; alef (Anochi), beis (Bereishis), gimmel (Geulah); Or Ein Sof, tzimtzum, revelation in the tzimtzum. The first luchos, the descent of the eigel, and the second luchos, higher, because sin and teshuvah raised the Jews (we got all of Torah beyond Chumash and Yehoshua). The second luchos, hewn by Moshe, fused holiness with the world, so they are eternal, and made Moshe's face shine. Sin is a "plot" from Above for a higher ascent; the descent is brief, the ascent eternal: our galus and the Geulah. Daily: Modeh Ani and davening, then work in the world, then "b'yadcha afkid ruchi". The spark of Moshe in every Jew is mesirus nefesh.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ List the "extremes" in Parshas Ki Sisa.

The first luchos; the eigel and breaking the luchos; Moshe's tefillos; seeing Hashem's glory and

the 13 Middos of Rachamim; the second luchos; Moshe's shining face. (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

2. ★★ Why is it hard that the eigel is in a parsha called "Ki Sisa"?

"Ki Sisa" means lifting up. But the eigel was a terrible descent: the zuhama that left at Matan

Torah came back, and it is the root of all sins and punishments since. (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

3. ★★ What three-stage pattern did Hashem put into the world?

Beginning (the head, the goal), middle (the process toward it), and end (the goal achieved). Torah

(before the world) → Creation → Geulah. (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

4. ★★★ How are the three stages hinted in the alef-beis and in Kabbalah?

Alef = Anochi, which includes all the Ten Commandments; beis = Bereishis (the world was created

with a beis); gimmel = Geulah. In Kabbalah: the Or Ein Sof filling everything, the tzimtzum (an

"empty space"), and the Or Ein Sof revealed inside the tzimtzum. (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

5. ★★ Why did Hashem congratulate Moshe for breaking the luchos?

The breaking revealed a higher level of Torah: through sin and teshuvah the Jews rose higher

("where baalei teshuvah stand"). Without it we would have had only Chumash and Yehoshua. (Shabbos

Ki Sisa)

6. ★★★ First luchos: "maaseh Elokim"; second luchos: hewn by Moshe. What is the advantage of the second?

The first were a higher revelation, but the world clashed with their holiness, so they could be

broken. The second joined holiness with the physical world, so they are eternal. (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

7. ★★ How does the Rebbe explain why a Jew sins at all?

A Jew by nature is above sin. Hashem makes an "awesome plot" and prompts the yetzer hara, so that

through the descent he will rise higher. (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

8. ★★ How long is the descent compared to the ascent? How does this apply to galus?

The descent is brief ("for a short moment I left you"); the ascent is eternal. Galus is the

awesome descent; the Geulah will be eternal, "never followed by exile". The descent is itself part

of the ascent: the whole purpose of the eigel was to make teshuvah possible. (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

9. ★★★ Why did Moshe's face shine, and when did he wear the veil?

The second luchos fused physical and spiritual, raising even Moshe's body so his face shone. He

wore the veil only when busy with worldly matters, and took it off when giving over Hashem's word.

In the Geulah it will be removed: "your eyes will see your Master". (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

10. ★ How do the three stages appear in every day?

(1) Modeh Ani, then davening and learning; (2) going down into the world, work and daily business;

(3) at night: "tzaddikim yodu lishmecha" (like Modeh Ani) and, at Krias Shema al hamitah,

"b'yadcha afkid ruchy". (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

11. ★★ What is the spark of Moshe in every Jew, and who reveals it?

Mesirus nefesh, giving yourself over to Hashem. Moshe, and the Moshe of every generation, gives the Jews the strength for the three-stage ascent; it will be fully revealed in Moshiach. (Shabbos Ki Sisa)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Rebbe's Favorite Tefillah

Nochum Stilerman's father opened the first grocery in Crown Heights that was closed on Shabbos. From about nine years old, Nochum delivered groceries with a three-wheeled pushcart, getting up at five in the morning. Among the customers were the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, and the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana. She always gave him a glass of milk, hot in winter and cold in summer, asked about his parents, and loved hearing him tell stories.

When he was a teenager about to start college, he asked her: "What is the Rebbe's favorite tefillah?" He wanted one prayer he could say with total concentration. "All the tefillos are important," she said, "but I will ask him for you."

The next week she told him happily: "It's a very short tefillah, the very first one we say in the morning: Modeh ani lefanecha." "That's it?" "Yes, that's his favorite." A year later Nochum heard the Rebbe explain: Hashem gave us another day of life even though He doesn't owe it to us, so He has a lot of faith in us. Let's not disappoint Him. "It became my life's goal," he said, "not to disappoint Hashem in what I accomplished each day."

Source: Nochum Stilerman, "The Rebbe's Favorite Prayer", *Here's My Story (JEM, My Encounter with the Rebbe / chabad.org)*

Think: Modeh Ani is "stage one" of the day. How does the story show that it sets the goal for the whole day?

Modeh Ani declares that Hashem trusts us with a new day. Nochum made it the goal of each day: not to disappoint Hashem in everything he did afterwards, in the "going down" into school, work and the world.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Every day has three stages: start with Modeh Ani and davening, carry it into your whole day, and end it by giving it back to Hashem. And if you fell, the second luchos can be higher than the first.

For example: Tonight, before Shema al hamitah, think back over your day: one thing you did that Hashem would be proud of, and one thing to fix tomorrow. Then say "b'yadcha afkid ruchi".