

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Mikeitz

פרשת מקץ

1 sicha in this booklet

Sicha 1: Pure Oil for a Dark World! · Shabbos Mikeitz, §§1-2

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.

Pure Oil for a Dark World!

שמן זית זך

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz, Shabbos Chanukah, Rosh Chodesh Teves 5752 (1991). Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: *Chanukah is celebrated with lights, not meals, because it was a spiritual victory. Bread and water are Nigleh; oil is the deepest secrets of Torah. The Greeks wanted to make Torah just "wisdom", and the answer was pure oil: P'nimiyus HaTorah, which reveals the G-dliness in all of Torah. As the darkness grows, more of it is revealed, from Chanukah to Yud-Tes Kislev to Tomchei Temimim, a taste of Moshiach. Yaakov called his life "few" because the Geulah hadn't come; we too must feel that, and add in Chassidus and Mivtza Chanukah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ How is Chanukah different from other Yamim Tovim in the way we celebrate it?

On other Yamim Tovim there is a mitzvah of festive meals (bread, water, meat, wine). On Chanukah the meals are optional; we remember the miracle with prayers of praise and thanks, and by lighting the Chanukah lights. (§1)

2. ★★ What is the reason for this difference?

The Chanukah victory was spiritual: the Greeks wanted "to make them forget Your Torah". Purim was against the Jewish body, and Pesach freed us from physical slavery. So Chanukah is remembered with spiritual things: praise, and lights, which stand for "the light of Torah and the lamp of mitzvos". (§1)

3. ★★ Bread and water, wine, and oil are all meshalim for Torah. What does each stand for?

Bread and water, which we need every day, stand for Nigleh, what we must know to keep the mitzvos. Wine and oil add pleasure and stand for P'nimiyus HaTorah. Wine is the secrets that are close to being revealed. Oil, never eaten on its own, is the deepest secrets, beyond revelation. (§1)

4. ★★★ How could the Yidden reach the level of "oil", the deepest secrets, exactly when the Greeks were oppressing them?

Because as the darkness of the world grows, a higher light of Torah is revealed to match it. Because the Greeks challenged our emunah, the deepest level of Torah had to be revealed. (§1)

5. ★★ What did the Greeks want to do to the Torah, and what does “they made the oil impure” mean?

The Greeks were philosophers who respected Torah as wisdom but denied that it comes from Hashem and is above human wisdom. Making the oil tamei means they wanted to make the Torah's kedushah impure and make it just another human philosophy. (§1)

6. ★★★ The Torah was translated into Greek by the 70 Sages, yet that day was “as hard as the day of the Golden Calf”. Why?

Using the beauty of Greek “in the tents of Shem” is good in itself. But the translation came from King Ptolemy's order, not from Hashem's command, so it could be used for bad: to present the Torah as human wisdom. About 100 years later the Greek decrees came from it. (§1)

7. ★★ Why is the pure jug of oil, sealed by the Kohen Gadol, the direct answer to the Greeks? What does it have to do with P'nimiyus HaTorah?

The Greeks wanted to make Torah impure; the answer is oil untouched by them, from the highest kedushah. In Nigleh, which deals with this world, one could mistake Torah for mere wisdom. In P'nimiyus HaTorah G-dliness is open, and learning it together with Nigleh lets you feel the kedushah in Nigleh too, the way oil flavors other foods. (§1)

8. ★★ Why are the Chanukah lights lit outside, after sunset, “until the foot of the Tarmudim leaves”?

Oil gives light, so the inner light of Torah shines into the world outside too. Tarmud has the letters of “moredes”, rebellion; the lights can cancel every rebellion against Hashem, and even turn “the foot of the Tarmudim” into great love for Hashem (“tichleh”, expiry of the soul). (§1)

9. ★★ What is the difference between Chanukah and Yud-Tes Kislev in P'nimiyus HaTorah? Why is Chassidus revealed now more than in earlier generations?

Chanukah: P'nimiyus HaTorah lifts our Nigleh so we feel its G-dliness. Yud-Tes Kislev: Chassidus becomes a subject in its own right, brought into understanding. It is revealed more now because the darkness and secular wisdom have increased; so the Rebbe Rashab founded Tomchei Temimim, and the Frierdiker Rebbe spread it and translated it. It is also a taste of Moshiach, “the anointed one”, who will reveal the secrets of Torah. (§1)

10. ★ When Pharaoh asked Yaakov his age, what did Yaakov answer, and what two questions are there on his answer?

"The years of my journeys are 130; few and bad were the days of my life, and they did not reach the days of my fathers." (a) Pharaoh only asked his age, so why add that they were few? (b) 130 is already more than the 120 years given to man, so how is that "few"? (§2)

11. ★★ How does the sicha answer, following Rashi?

Because his years were hard, they were "few": not filled with the inner avodah he wanted, unlike Avraham, who "came with his days" and filled each day. (That is relative to Yaakov's own great level; in his 17 years in Mitzrayim, learning with his children, he made up for it all.) (§2)

12. ★★★ What deeper message did Yaakov want to give, and what does it mean for us, "the last generation of galus"?

Yaakov wanted to live in peace, meaning the Geulah, and was ready for it from Yosef's birth. He told his children: even in the best of Mitzrayim, without the Geulah your life is lacking. We too must feel that until Moshiach comes our life is lacking, and that should make us long for him and add in spreading Chassidus and Mivtza Chanukah: farbrengens and Chanukah gelt. (§2)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Answer to a Question Nobody Asked

A young man in Eretz Yisrael had learned in a yeshivah for many years but had never been exposed to Chassidus. When he started looking for deeper meaning, he met Lubavitcher chassidim and was struck by the depth and joy of their life. He began learning Chassidus. Some things felt very different from his family and his yeshivah, so he wrote to the Rebbe with his questions.

A few weeks later a detailed answer came. At the end was a strange postscript: "There is no need to ask why Chassidus was not revealed in earlier generations", with a full explanation. That question had never bothered him, and he hadn't mentioned it.

Soon his yeshivah found out. A talmid chacham he respected called him in to talk him out of it. He brought argument after argument, and the young man answered each one; the scholar simply didn't know Chassidus well. Then he pulled out what he thought was his strongest point: "If Chassidus is so valuable, why wasn't it revealed to earlier generations?"

The scholar was surprised by how fast, and how deeply, the young man answered.

Source: "Encouraging Jewish Advancement", in Eli & Malka Touger, *To Know and to Care*, vol. 1 (*Sichos in English*)

Think: According to the sicha, what is the answer to the scholar's question?

As the darkness and secular wisdom grow, a greater light of P'nimiyus HaTorah must be revealed

(like the "oil" on Chanukah), and it is a taste of the Geulah, when Moshiach will reveal the secrets of Torah.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

The darker the world, the more light we need. Add some "oil" to your learning: a little Chassidus makes your Gemara feel G-dly. And don't get used to galus; even when life is good, want Moshiach.

For example: A friend says, "Gemara is enough; why do we need to learn Chassidus?" You tell him about the oil: it gives flavor to everything else and lights up the outside. Then learn a page of Tanya together at Chanukah lighting.