

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Mishpatim

פרשת משפטים

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: "Through You, Israel Will Be Blessed" · 22 Shvat talks

Sicha 2: From Damages to Redemption · Shabbos Mishpatim, §1

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.

“Through You, Israel Will Be Blessed”

בן יברך ישראל

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1: the sichos of the eve of 22 Shvat (the yahrzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka) and the night following 22 Shvat 5752 (1992). Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: 22 = “*becha yevarech Yisrael*”: *through you blessing reaches every Jew, and each good deed starts a chain without end. Hashem will wipe away “dim’ah” (tears, 119) to reach 120, a complete life, like Moshe; every Jew has a spark of Moshe. Each yahrzeit the soul rises immeasurably higher, and this soul, after whom so many girls are named, will lead the way at Techiyas HaMeisim. The next night: go beyond the Ten Commandments to the “eleven” (the encompassing powers, the yechidah, pnimiyus haTorah, “asher tasim” = treasure), fused together. The Menorah, one piece with seven branches, is the unity of the Jewish people; even the gid hanasheh will show its good side.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What does the number 22 hint to?

“Becha (22 = כב) yevarech Yisrael”, *through you Israel will be blessed: through you, blessing*

reaches every Jew, bringing good deeds that bring more blessing, endlessly. (Eve of 22 Shvat)

2. ★★ How does “Hashem will wipe away tears from every face” connect to 120?

“Dim’ah” (tear) = 119. Hashem’s wiping it away adds one and makes 120, a complete human life; so

Moshe at 120 said “today my days and years are complete”. (Eve of 22 Shvat)

3. ★★ How does this apply to every Jew? What is the connection to “olam”?

Every Jew has a spark of Moshe, which starts good deeds that go on forever. “Olam” means forever,

world, and “helam” (hiding): in this world of hiddenness a soul can leave after its days are

filled with good deeds, and the chain of good keeps going. (Eve of 22 Shvat)

4. ★★ How is the yahrzeit connected to the parsha of Matan Torah?

At Matan Torah the souls left after each commandment and Hashem revived them with the dew of

Techiyas HaMeisim. Four years before, a holy soul went up; each yahrzeit it rises immeasurably

higher, which is why kaddish is said again that day after the eleven months ended. (Eve of 22

Shvat)

5. ★ Which soul is meant, and what was asked of everyone?

A soul after whom many Jewish girls are named and raised in her spirit, from the education the Frierdiker Rebbe gave her. Everyone should give tzedakah, adding from his own money, to bring the Geulah, when the tzaddikim and every Jew, man, woman and child, will dance. (Eve of 22 Shvat)

6. ★★ What does “achad asar yom meChorev” teach after Matan Torah?

Don't settle for serving with the ten conscious powers; also bring in the encompassing powers, including the yechidah (“eleven”), and fuse them together. That fits our time: Moshiach is the tenth redemption, while “the new Torah” goes beyond the Ten Commandments, eleven. (Night following 22 Shvat)

7. ★★ What are 21 and 22?

22: “becha yevarech”, the blessings each Jew gives another, rooted in the 22 letters of the Torah. They begin on the 21st: “ach (21 = אכ) tov l'Yisrael”, only good for Israel. 21 = 10 + 11, the Frierdiker Rebbe's yahrzeit on the 10th of the 11th month. (Night following 22 Shvat)

8. ★★ How are Yisro and Mishpatim ten and eleven?

Yisro's Ten Commandments are “ten”. Mishpatim opens “asher tasim”, from “simah”, a treasure: pnimiyus haTorah, “eleven”. Now they can be fused immediately; even then, Rashi says the eleven-day journey took three, because the Aron went before them. (Night following 22 Shvat)

9. ★★★ How do the “seven books” of Torah connect to the Menorah?

“Vayehi binsoa ha'aron” is sometimes counted as its own book, making seven. Written Torah is five, Oral Torah six; seven are the seven general groups of the Jewish people, like the seven branches of the Menorah, made from one piece of metal with its leg (unity). The leg (yerech) going down means Jews busy with mitzvos in worldly matters; Yaakov was hurt in the yerech, hence the gid hanasheh. (Night following 22 Shvat)

10. ★★★ Will the gid hanasheh still be forbidden in the Geulah?

Mitzvos won't be cancelled, yet every negative thing will be, so it's hard to picture. Its good side will be revealed: the "body of the King", where even the 365 prohibitions, like the 365 sinews, are good forces, seen in our very bodies. 613 plus 7 Rabbinic mitzvos = 620 = keser, the crown of the House of David. (Night following 22 Shvat)

11. ★ What resolutions were asked for?

Tzedakah, and good resolutions to learn pnimiyus haTorah, which touches the encompassing powers. (Night following 22 Shvat)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

"They Are All Our Children"

In 1983 Dr. Alan Newmark, a podiatrist raised in a secular home, opened a practice in Crown Heights. One day he was called to treat a "Mrs. Schneerson" at 1304 President Street: a warm, regal lady of about 85, who served him cake and tea. Only the next day did his secretary explain that he had treated Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the Rebbe's wife.

On his next visit he apologized: "If I had known who you were, I'd have worn a yarmulke for you." "You should wear a yarmulke for you, not for me," she answered.

They became friendly. When she heard he was dating but not Jewish girls, she said gently, "Take your time... Promise me that when you marry, you'll marry a nice Jewish girl. All will be well."

Once he blurted out how sorry he was that she had no children. She looked surprised: "All the people in this community are our children. We are responsible for a lot of people."

Years after her passing, Dr. Newmark visited Eretz Yisrael, kissed the ground and resolved never to work on Shabbos again. In 1999 he went to her resting place: "Mrs. Schneerson, I need to get married." Two months later he met Leah, the woman he married.

Source: Alan Newmark, "They Are All Our Children" (chabad.org)

Think: How did the Rebbetzin live "becha yevarech Yisrael"? How did her blessing keep going after her passing (Eve of 22 Shvat)?

She saw every Jew as her child and blessed him warmly: the yarmulke "for you", the promise of a Jewish home. Her blessing set off a chain of good that continued after her yahrzeit: Shabbos, marriage, a Jewish family.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Through you, others are blessed: one good word or deed starts a chain that never ends. Be a source of blessing for every Jew.

For example: A new boy in class sits alone at lunch. Sit with him, invite him for Shabbos; who knows where that one kindness will lead?

From Damages to Redemption

ואלה המשפטים

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, 27 Shvat 5752 (1992), Shabbos Mevarchim Adar I. (The main theme, disarmament as “swords into plowshares”, is in a separate essay.) Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: *Mishpatim's laws are in Seder Nezikin, “one tractate”, and the three “Bavos” are the three galuyos. Bava Kama and Bava Metziah open with damage and dispute, but Bava Basra opens with partners who choose to protect each other (building a wall, the Beis HaMikdash) and ends with wisdom, the Geulah. Peace, unity and kindness, like the free loans of Mishpatim, bring the Geulah. The days lead there too: 25 (“koh tevarchu”, blessing with love), 26 (Hashem's Name, “shivisi”), 27 (“zach”, pure oil). Shabbos Mevarchim Adar: the moon's renewal, and redemption joined to redemption, “miyad”.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ Where are the laws of Mishpatim found in the Mishnah?

In Seder Nezikin, and “all of Nezikin is one tractate”, especially Bava Kama, Bava Metziah and Bava

Basra, one continuous whole. (§1)

- ★★ How are Nezikin and the three Bavos connected to galus?

Nezikin (damages) is galus; the three tractates are the three galuyos: Mitzrayim, after the First

Beis HaMikdash, and the present galus. (§1)

- ★★★ What is the difference between Bava Basra and the first two?

Bava Kama and Bava Metziah begin with something negative: the four kinds of damage, and an argument

over a lost object. Bava Basra begins with partners who want to protect each other from damage

(building a wall of large stones, hinting at the Beis HaMikdash), and ends with an increase in

wisdom, the wisdom of the Geulah that cancels all bad influences. (§1)

- ★★ What brings the Geulah, and how is it in Mishpatim?

Spreading peace and unity. The purpose of mishpatim is to increase peace: “Zion will be redeemed

through justice, and its returnees through tzedakah.” Mishpatim has the mitzvah of free loans, and

Bava Basra says “great is tzedakah, it brings the Geulah near”. (§1)

5. ★ What event that evening did the Rebbe encourage?

A Melaveh Malkah for the community's free-loan fund: come in large numbers ("the King's glory is in a multitude") and give generously. The fund's director, Rav Shimon Goldman, was invited to speak. (§1 (note))

6. ★★ What is the 25th of the month connected to?

"Koh (25 = כה) tevarchu", Birkas Kohanim, said with love for every Jew. It contains every blessing, including the Geulah. That's why the Alter Rebbe put "I accept the mitzvah of 'love your fellow as yourself'" at the very start of davening. (§1)

7. ★★ And the 26th and 27th?

*26 = the Name of Hashem: "I place Hashem before me always", which brings G-dliness into the world.
27 = "zach", pure, like the pure oil that lit the Menorah. (§1)*

8. ★★ What does Shabbos Mevarchim Adar add?

The moon's renewal after it is hidden is a mashal for the Geulah, when Jews "will be renewed like the moon"; Adar's "mazel is healthy"; and Adar "joins redemption (Purim) to redemption (Pesach)". (§1)

9. ★★ What does "miyad" hint to?

Moshe, Yisrael (the Baal Shem Tov) and David (Malka Meshicha), and most of all its simple meaning: the Geulah should come immediately. (§1)

10. ★ What was the main theme of that farbrengen?

The recent disarmament talks as a foretaste of "they will beat their swords into plowshares", explained in a separate essay. (Intro)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

A Gemach for All of New York

Rabbi Yochanan Gordon was the gabbai of the shul in 770 and ran a gemach, a free-loan fund, set up in the days of the Frierdiker Rebbe. Every year, before Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, the parsha that says “when you lend money”, he presented a report of the gemach’s income and expenses.

In the winter of 1950, a few weeks after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s passing, Rabbi Gordon brought the report to the Rebbe. He was surprised by the answer: “Can this be considered a gemach prepared to meet the needs of the Jewish community in New York?”

“We have a Rebbe with a broad vision who will demand much from us,” Rabbi Gordon told his fellow chassidim. And so it was. Years later, after reading another annual report, the Rebbe asked why a gemach that was created to lend money had so much cash sitting in reserve.

Source: *Eli & Malka Touger, “A Fund for the Entire Jewish Community of New York”, To Know and to Care (Sichos in English / chabad.org)*

Think: Why did the Rebbe want a bigger gemach, with less money sitting still? How does that connect to the Geulah (\$1)?

A free loan is kindness that builds peace and unity, the opposite of “damages”; money sitting in a

drawer helps no one. Such tzedakah and kindness, as Bava Basra says, bring the Geulah near.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Turn “damages” into partnership: help, lend, and make peace. Kindness and unity bring the Geulah.

For example: Start a class gemach of pens, calculators and a few dollars, and make sure it’s always lent out, not sitting in a box.