

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Vayeira

פרשת וירא

1 sicha in this booklet

Sicha 1: "Why Not to Me?" · 18 Cheshvan 5752, §§1-14

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.

“Why Not to Me?”

וירא אליו ה'

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Vayeira, 18 MarCheshvan 5752 (1991), sections 1-14. (The English Sichos in English edition prints §§11-14 separately as “Mashiach in Every Generation.”)

The point: *Young Sholom DovBer cried: why did Hashem appear to Avraham and not to us? “Vayeira eilav” is in every Jew, from the bris, when the neshamah enters the body. What we need is to SEE it, by making our body and our part of the world holy. Chai Cheshvan, 20 Cheshvan (the Rebbe Rashab’s birthday) and Tomchei Temimim all lead to the Geulah, when every eye will see Hashem. Moshiach is ready; we just need to greet him.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ Tell the story of the Rebbe Rashab as a child on Shabbos Vayeira.

At 4 or 5 he came to his grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, and cried: “Why did Hashem appear to

Avraham Avinu and not to us?” The Tzemach Tzedek answered: when a Jew (a tzaddik) of 99 decides he still must give himself a bris, he deserves that Hashem appear to him. (§2)

- ★★ What question does this raise for every Jew?

If the revelation depends on such high avodah (a tzaddik at 99), what lesson is “vayeira eilav” for every Jew, even one who isn’t a tzaddik? (§2)

- ★★ How was the revelation after the bris greater than the ones before? Where is it hinted?

(1) A higher level of G-dliness was revealed; (2) Avraham could take it in more deeply. “K’chom hayom” = intense light (“shemesh u’magen Havayah Elokim”), and “yosheiv” = settled, absorbed. (§3)

- ★★★ What are the “two extremes” of the mitzvah of milah, and how are they connected?

It is above all mitzvos (13 brisos vs. 3 for all the other mitzvos), and it reaches the lowest place, the body (“bivarchem”), and connects to inheriting the land. Because Hashem wants a dirah b’tachtonim, His essence is revealed specifically below, as in “the heavens cannot contain You... but this house.” (§§4-5)

- ★★ How does “vayeira eilav” apply to every Jew?

At the bris the G-dly soul, “a part of Hashem above,” enters the body, so the body itself becomes holy. (A Jew who couldn’t have a bris is considered circumcised, and “a woman is as if circumcised.”) (§6)

6. ★★ Give examples of how children show this.

Even small children know Hashem exists ("I daven with the intention of this child"); they make brachos on food, kiss the mezuzah, and have a pushka and seforim in their room, making it a small Mikdash. (§7)

7. ★★★ So what exactly was the Rebbe Rashab crying for?

Not for the revelation itself, which every Jew already has, but to SEE it openly as Avraham did. Since Avraham is "our father," all his qualities should pass to his children, so we should see it too. (§8)

8. ★★ What does a Jew learn when he reads "vayeira EILAV"?

It means him too. That should make him long to see it, even to tears like the young Rebbe Rashab, and do all he can to be a vessel: make his body and every action in his part of the world holy. (§9)

9. ★★ What do "Chai" and "MarCheshvan" hint at?

Chai (18) = true life, the neshamah. MarCheshvan = a month with no Yamim Tovim, regular weekday life. Together: the soul's life coming into the body and the world, like milah. (§10)

10. ★★ What is the spark of Moshiach in every Jew, and how is it revealed?

The yechidah, a spark of Moshiach's soul (children are called "meshichai"). It is revealed when each Jew fulfills his shlichus. "Shliach" plus yud (ten soul-powers) = 358 = "Moshiach." (§11)

11. ★★★ What was new about the Rebbe Rashab's Tomchei Temimim?

Nigleh and Chassidus learned together as one "temimah" Torah, with Chassidus understood like a sugya in Gemara, so G-dliness is seen with the "eye of the mind." The students are "soldiers of Beis David" to bring Moshiach. (§12)

12. ★★★ What does the sicha say about our time (§§13–14)?

The Frierdiker Rebbe said all the avodah is finished; after 40 more years of spreading the wellsprings, and in 5752, “a year of wonders,” the obstacles are gone. In every generation there is one fit to be Moshiach, and now we need only to greet Moshiach in actual fact. (§§13–14)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“You Made a Chassid Out of My Berl”

When the Mittlerer Rebbe was a young man, already great in learning and davening, he visited Yanovitch and met one of his father’s chassidim. The chassid felt the young “Rebbe’s son” was a bit too aware of his own achievements.

“What’s the big deal?” said the chassid. “Your father is the Alter Rebbe! You were raised in a Rebbe’s home and kept away from anything bad. All your life you’ve done nothing but learn. So you know a lot and daven with feeling.

“Now take me. My father was a simple man, and I grew up on my own. To make a living I go out before dawn, in the freezing winter, to collect debts from peasants in the villages. After three or four stops I come home, go to the mikveh and get ready to daven. After all that, what kind of davening do you expect?”

The words went straight to the young man’s heart. He traveled home to his father and poured out his heart: his avodah was worth nothing compared to what was expected of him.

The next time that chassid came to the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe said: “Thank you. You made a chassid out of my Berl.”

Source: *Told by the Rebbe Rashab; “The Rebbe’s Son and the Chassid,” translated by Yanki Tauber in Once Upon A Chassid (Kehot 1994; chabad.org)*

Think: How is this like the Tzemach Tzedek’s answer about a tzaddik who, at 99, decides he still needs a bris?

Even a great tzaddik must feel that he still lacks something and needs to go higher. That feeling is what makes a person a vessel for Hashem’s revelation (“now he’s a chassid”).

THE LESSON FOR YOU

“Vayeira eilav” is about you. Your neshamah is a real part of Hashem inside your body. Want to SEE it, even badly enough to cry. And make your body, your room and your actions holy, so you’re a vessel, ready to greet Moshiach.

For example: Turn your room into a small Mikdash: a pushka, a Chumash and Tanya on the shelf, a kosher mezuzah that you kiss when you go in and out. Make the brachah on your snack slowly and out loud.