

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Vayishlach

פרשת וישלח

1 sicha in this booklet

Sicha 1: The Moon Is Going Up! · Shabbos Vayishlach, §§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.

The Moon Is Going Up!

פדה בשלום נפשי

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach, 16 Kislev 5752 (1991), three days before Yud-Tes Kislev. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 50).

The point: *Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanukah come when the moon is getting smaller, yet we keep counting up: outside there is less light, but inside it is an ascent toward the essence. Kislev is the "Matan Torah" of Chassidus, from our own avodah, and it leads to the full union of Hashem and the Yidden in the Geulah. Yaakov in Vayishlach was ready for the Geulah; today the work is done ("we have polished the buttons"), so open your eyes and see, and make many farbrengens for Yud-Tes and Chof Kislev.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ This Shabbos came between two special days: the Friday before it, and the Tuesday after it. What were they, and how does each one affect Shabbos and the week?

Friday was the 15th, when the moon is full; "whoever works on Friday eats on Shabbos", so Shabbos gets Friday's strength. Shabbos's influence lasts until Tuesday, which was Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus. (§1)

- ★ What is the connection between Yud-Tes Kislev and Tuesday?

The Alter Rebbe was freed on a Tuesday. He was saying Tuesday's section of Tehillim, kapitel 55, and when he reached "Padah b'shalom nafshi" (He redeemed my soul in peace) he was told he was free. (§1)

- ★ When in the month do Pesach, Sukkos and Shavuot fall? How are Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanukah different?

Pesach and Sukkos are on the 15th, when the moon is full; Shavuot is in the first half, when the moon grows. Yud-Tes Kislev is in the second half, when the moon gets smaller, and in the middle of Chanukah the moon disappears completely. (§1)

- ★★ After the 15th the moon gets smaller every night. So why don't we count the days backward (15, 14, 13...)?

"Always go up in holy things, never down." Outwardly there is less light, but inwardly the moon is going up. That's why the biggest numbers, the 29th and 30th, are the nights the moon is hidden. (Even the numbers are good: 17 = tov, 18 = chai.) (§1 and note)

5. ★★ Explain how the sun and the moon are a mashpia and a mekabel. When will the moon reach its true fullness?

The moon has no light of its own; it receives from the sun. Even when it's full, it is still only

a mekabel. Only in the Geulah, when "the light of the moon will be like the light of the sun",

will it be truly full. (§1)

6. ★★ When the moon gets closer to the sun, it shines less. Give the simple reason and the deeper reason.

Simple: close to the mashpia, the mekabel is battul and busy receiving, so it can't shine; it

wanes in order to receive and shine again next month. Deeper: less revealed light means being

closer to the essence, which is hidden. When the mekabel unites with the mashpia as one, the

essence itself is revealed. So even while the moon (and the Jewish people) seems to shrink, it is

really growing. (§1)

7. ★★ Why is Kislev compared to Sivan? Why is the "Matan Torah" of Kislev even greater?

Kislev is the third winter month like Sivan is the third summer month. Sivan is the giving of the

Torah; Kislev is the giving of Pnimiyyus HaTorah, Chassidus. Summer (the strong sun) is revelation

from Above; winter is the avodah of the Yidden from below. A union that comes from our own avodah

is the fullest union. (§1)

8. ★★ What do the two parts of the name Kislev hint to?

"Kis" means hidden (covered). "Lev" (lamed-vov) equals 36, which is 6×6: the six middos fully

revealed. Kislev is a joining of hidden and revealed: the essence that was hidden becomes

revealed, and there is no longer just giver and receiver, but full oneness. (§1)

9. ★★★ Now answer the first question: why is Yud-Tes Kislev in the half of the month when the moon is waning? What does Chanukah add?

Yud-Tes Kislev is connected to Moshiach, who comes through spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus.

Matan Torah was only the "betrothal"; the full marriage of Hashem and the Yidden is in the Geulah.

In the second half of the month the moon draws close to the sun, getting ready for their union. On

Chanukah we add a light every night while the moon wanes: the decrease is only on the outside.

(§1)

10. ★ How is Yaakov in Parshas Vayishlach and Vayeishev different from Yaakov in Toldos and Vayeitzei?

In Vayishlach and Vayeishev Yaakov is ready for the Geulah. He told Esav's messengers he had

finished his work and expected Esav to have finished his (Torah Or), and in Vayeishev he "wanted

to live in peace", which is only truly possible in the Geulah. (§2)

11. ★★★ How is Yaakov like the moon, and what was the moon's smallness for? What did the Friediker Rebbe mean by "we have already polished the buttons"?

The moon is the "small light", and Yaakov is called small ("Mi yakum Yaakov ki katan hu"); Yidden

count by the moon. The moon's smallness caused the breaking of the vessels of Tohu, so sparks fell

into the world for us to lift up (birurim). When that work is done, the moon becomes great again.

In Yaakov's time Esav wasn't ready, but now the birurim are finished, especially by spreading

Chassidus everywhere, so our new job is to reveal the Geulah: "open your eyes and see". (§2)

12. ★★ What does the Rebbe ask us to DO for Yud-Tes Kislev and Chof Kislev?

Make farbrengens in every Jewish community, many small ones in many places rather than one big

one. Each person should take part in at least three (a chazakah): starting with himself (his ten

kochos), then his family, then his friends, so each is both a mashpia and a mekabel. Take on more

Torah, tefillah and gemilus chassadim, hinted in "Padah b'shalom nafshi". (§2)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Secret Farbrengens of Moscow

In Stalin's Moscow, a Chassidic gathering could cost a man his freedom. Still, in 1945 Reb Berel Levertov started preparing for Yud-Tes Kislev a week ahead, collecting money for food and l'chaim. We know this because a secret-police informer wrote it all down in his file. Reb Berel was later arrested and died in a labor camp, but the secret Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengens he fought for went on for as long as the Communists ruled.

In the 1950s and '60s they were held only in private homes, a different home each year, and never one big gathering: five, ten, at most twenty people around a table, late at night, careful that the neighbors not hear. At the home of Reb Henich Rapoport, who had spent eight years in Stalin's camps, the elder chassidim would tell the story of the Alter Rebbe's arrest and liberation, make a siyum on Tanya, and take on good resolutions: fixing the city's mikveh, getting the older Yidden to teach the younger ones. One year Reb Henich showed the children a smuggled, brand-new volume of the Rebbe's Likkutei Sichos. "It was like a diamond," Rabbi Yitzchak Hazan remembers.

Rabbi Avraham Chazan, who was a boy at those farbrengens, says: "I remember the niggunim, the l'chaim. The Chassidic spirit is something we all got then. I still feel it today."

Source: Dovid Margolin, "Underground Memories: Recalling Secret 19 Kislev Gatherings in 1960s' Moscow" (chabad.org, 2016)

Think: How did the Moscow chassidim already do what the Rebbe asks in §2, even in the darkest time?

Many small farbrengens in different homes instead of one big one; old and young each gave and

received; they retold the Alter Rebbe's story, finished Tanya and took on hachlatos. Like the

waning moon, outside it was dark, but inside they kept adding light.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

When things seem to be getting darker or harder, don't count down: inside, you are going up. And the Geulah isn't far away; the work is done, so open your eyes and see the good. Make Yud-Tes Kislev real with farbrengens: yourself, your family, your friends.

For example: On Yud-Tes Kislev, gather four friends in your living room: sing Padah b'shalom, tell the story of the Alter Rebbe's release, and each say one hachlatah. Then join your family's farbrengen and the one in yeshivah or shul. That's your three.