

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Yisro

פרשת יתרו

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Dig Out Your Gems! · Tu B'Shvat talks

Sicha 2: Torah from Above, Torah That's Yours · Shabbos Yisro, §§1-2

Name: _____

Class: _____

★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

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

Dig Out Your Gems!

כי תהיו אתם ארץ חפץ

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1: the short talks after Minchah and after Maariv on the eve of Tu B'Shvat, and the sicha of the night following Tu B'Shvat 5752 (1992). Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: *No Tachanun on Tu B'Shvat, because the seven spiritual powers that match the seven species are revealed in every Jew ("adam" = "adameh l'Elyon"). Tu B'Shvat is the full moon of the eleventh month and connects to Basi L'Gani, a garden of trees. As a "Rosh HaShanah" it gives life to the whole year. Every Jew is "a cherished land" with hidden gems that must be dug out ("I labored and found"); the work is a descent for an ascent. Then the seven species as seven avodos: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives (bitterness, Miriam) and dates (pnimiyus haTorah, Devorah).*

Name: _____

Date: _____

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ Why was Tachanun skipped at Minchah on the eve of Tu B'Shvat? What brachah did the Rebbe give?

2. ★★ Why is Tachanun omitted on such days, and why on Tu B'Shvat?

3. ★★ "Ki ha'adam eitz hasadeh": why does it say "adam"?

4. ★ What two sides does Tu B'Shvat have, and how is it connected to Yud Shvat?

5. ★★ What lesson is in the name "Rosh HaShanah"?

6. ★★ If Tu B'Shvat is for trees, why is it linked with wheat and barley?

7. ★★ What did the Baal Shem Tov teach about "you shall be a cherished land"? What must a Jew do?

8. ★★★ Why is the need to do this work a descent, and what is it for?

9. ★★ What avodah do wheat and barley stand for?

10. ★★ What do grapes, figs and pomegranates teach?

11. ★★★ What do olives and dates teach?

12. ★ What will bring us to Eretz Yisrael?

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Miracle Worker

A group of high-school students once came to see the Rebbe. Each had prepared a question, and toward the end of the audience one student asked: "I've heard that the Rebbe can work miracles. Is it true?"

The Rebbe replied: "The ability to work miracles is not limited to a select few. It is within reach of each and every one of us. Each of us has a soul that is a spark of G-dliness, so each of us has the power to rise above the limits of our physical nature, however strong they seem."

"To show you," said the Rebbe, "I will now perform a miracle."

Smiling at the startled faces around his desk, he went on: "Each and every one of you in this room will now resolve to improve himself in one specific area, something you know you need to fix but until now thought was beyond your power. And you will succeed, proving to yourselves that the soul really has the power to overcome the natural 'reality'."

Source: Yanki Tauber, "The Miracle Worker" (chabad.org)

Think: How is the Rebbe's "miracle" like digging the gems out of a "cherished land" (§1)?

THE LESSON FOR YOU

You are a "cherished land" full of gems, but they don't dig themselves out. Pick one of your "seven species" and work at it.

For example: You've always said "I just can't get up for minyan." This Tu B'Shvat, decide that this is your "miracle": set the alarm, get there for Barchu, and watch the gem come out.

My turn: The one area where I'll "perform a miracle":

Torah from Above, Torah That's Yours

אנכי ה' אלקיך

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 20 Shvat 5752 (1992), two days before the yahrzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: *The Ten Commandments appear twice: in Yisro, Hashem's own words; in Va'eschanan, Moshe's retelling. Torah is Hashem's will and wisdom, above us, learned with bittul ("my tongue repeats Your word"); yet it was given to people in bodies, to grasp with their own minds until it is "theirs". Yisro is the direct connection that leaves no room for the self; Va'eschanan is a Jew becoming a medium for Hashem's word. The goal joins both: Hashem's essence revealed in the world and absorbed by us. On the 10th day after Yud Shvat in the 11th month, each person should bring Torah and mitzvos to at least ten Jews.*

Name: _____

Date: _____

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ Where are the Ten Commandments written, and why does the repetition matter?

2. ★★ What is the basic difference between the two?

3. ★★ What two sides of Torah does this show?

4. ★★ How should the first side show in how we learn?

5. ★★ And the second side?

6. ★★ What are the two sides of “a dwelling in the lower worlds”?

7. ★★★ Why does Hashem say “leimor” at Matan Torah when everyone was present?

8. ★★★ What is the advantage of each version?

9. ★★ What is the ultimate goal?

10. ★★ How is 20 Shvat connected?

11. ★ What practical directive did the Rebbe give?

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

New Siddurim Every Year

Standing in front of a classroom year after year, teachers are challenged to bring new excitement to their students. Rabbi Yechiel Malov, the general inspector of the Oholei Yosef Yitzchak Lubavitch schools in Eretz Yisrael, often struggled with this.

He asked the Rebbe how to excite and energize the students. "Which siddurim are the children davening from?" the Rebbe asked. "Old ones or new ones?"

When Rabbi Malov explained that the students used the siddurim from the year before, the Rebbe told him to buy new siddurim for all the students every year. "This will fill the students with enthusiasm," the Rebbe explained. "According to human nature, which G-d gave us, new things bring happiness and lead to new motivation."

The Rebbe also told Rabbi Malov to cover the teachers' desks with white tablecloths and to give out treats on special days of the Jewish calendar. "In schools that serve lunch," the Rebbe added, "there should be a special meal, and if possible, candles should be lit in the lunchroom."

Source: *Dovid Zaklikowski, "Prayerbooks and Scholastic Enthusiasm" (chabad.org)*

Think: Chazal say we should see the Torah every day as if it were given today (note to §1). How does the Rebbe's advice help make Torah feel "new", and our own?

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Learn with bittul, as Hashem's own word, and also work to understand it until it's yours. Then share it: reach ten Jews with Torah and mitzvos.

For example: Make a list of ten Jews you can reach this month: your younger brother (teach him a Mishnah), a neighbor (Shabbos candles for his daughter), a cousin (a mezuzah check).

My turn: My "ten Jews" for this month: