

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 1

לקוטי שיחות · חלק א

Parshas Beshalach & Tu B'Shvat

פרשת בשלח · ט"ו בשבט

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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.

Sing with Drums and Dances!

ותצאן כל הנשים אחריה

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Beshalach, p. 139ff, sections 1-8. From a sicha of Yud Shvat 5718 (1958).

The point: *The haftorah of Shabbos Shirah is a woman's song, because the women sang with drums and dances: they had felt Pharaoh's decree more, so their joy was greater. Today's Pharaoh still says "throw the child into the Nile of parnassah", with Sunday school, movies and "progress", sometimes even dressed in holiness. Don't be impressed; give children a Torah chinuch, the only way to life and parnassah. The women's song is higher than the angels', and Hashem will dwell in every home.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What question did the Alter Rebbe ask about the haftorah of Shabbos Shirah (told by the Frierdiker Rebbe in the name of the Tzemach Tzedek)?

Why is the haftorah "Vatashar Devorah", a woman's song, and not David's song (the haftorah of

Shvi'i shel Pesach)? The answer: when the Yidden crossed the sea, the women also sang, and added

"with drums and dances", with simchah. (§1)

- ★★ Why wasn't the song of Moshe and the men with the same joy as Miriam's?

"According to the pain is the reward": the more effort and pain before, the greater the joy after.

The worst of the galus, "every son throw into the Nile" (and Pharaoh bathing in children's blood),

came after Miriam was born, and the mother feels such things more than the father. So the women's

joy at being freed was much greater. (§2)

- ★★ What does "all the women went out after her" teach for all generations? What does "ga'oh ga'ah... sus v'rochvo ramah vayam" mean spiritually?

All Jewish women until the end of time follow Miriam and sing. Kedushah is "ga'oh ga'ah", at the

very highest level, and whatever fights kedushah ("horse and rider") is "ramah vayam", thrown with

force to the very bottom. (§3)

4. ★★ How does “Pharaoh king of Egypt”, the spirit of the country, try to throw a Jewish child into the “Nile” today?

“A boy was born; one day he’ll need to support a family, so throw him now into the river that gives parnassah.” And for Torah and mitzvos, there’s Sunday: the night before, take him to the movies; Sunday morning the parents sleep, so he can go to “Sunday school”; in the afternoon, fill him with TV, movies and baseball. (§4)

5. ★★★ Why is connecting a child to Hashem the only way to parnassah for Yidden?

The goyim’s parnassah may depend on the laws of the Nile, but by Yidden it says “You who cling to Hashem are all alive today”: through connecting to Hashem they live, and “He Who gives life gives food”. Throwing children into the Nile cuts them off from spiritual life and from life itself. (§4)

6. ★★ What does the “neighbor” say about sending a child to yeshivah, and how does Pharaoh sometimes dress up in holiness?

“How can you send him to learn a 3,500-year-old Torah given in a desert, before radio or telephone? In the twentieth century you can’t be a fanatic!” And in holy clothing: “You want your son to give lots of tzedakah to yeshivos? Make him rich: send him to public school like ‘Johnny’ and ‘Michael’.” In truth only Pharaoh gains. (§5)

7. ★★ Once you recognize the advice comes from Pharaoh (“let us outsmart them lest they multiply”), what do you do?

Decide with full Jewish strength to cancel the decree; stop looking for “solutions” at age 5, 7, 13 or 18, and gird yourself with emunah and bitachon. “Many thoughts in a man’s heart, but Hashem’s counsel will stand”, because Hashem is Master in heaven and in her home too. (And the Rebbe added: “So shall they multiply!”) (§5)

8. ★★ Not only isn’t she impressed by her neighbor; what does she do?

She convinces her neighbor to save her children from Pharaoh too, and tens of thousands of Jewish children are raised to go greet Moshiach. (§5)

9. ★★ Why is the joy of getting free of today's "Pharaoh" felt more by Jewish women?

Like in Mitzrayim, the mothers feel the decree more: most of the day the husband isn't home, and even when he is, he doesn't give himself to chinuch as she does. The Jewish woman fights Pharaoh in every form; she wins with drums and dances, and then comes Matan Torah: "Our children are our guarantors." (§6)

10. ★★★ Why does it say "Vata'an lahem Miriam" (masculine) and not "lahen"?

Tanchuma: the angels wanted to sing before the Yidden; Hashem said Moshe and the Yidden first ("yashir"). When the women were about to sing, the angels asked to go first. Even according to the view that they didn't wait, they couldn't sing until Miriam gave permission: "lahem" = Miriam answered the angels. The women's song reaches higher than the angels'. (§7)

11. ★★ What is the lesson for every Yid from all this? What is the "true nachas"?

Don't be afraid of Pharaoh, the Nile or the decrees, even "in Egypt". Lead your children in the way of Torah, which brings life in this world and the next, so that they say "This is my G-d... the G-d of my father", walking the parents' path. That is true nachas. (§8)

12. ★★★ What does "tevi'eimo v'sita'eimo" promise, and what does Hashem do even before it?

It leads to the Third Beis HaMikdash. Hashem didn't wait: already in the desert He said "Make Me a Mikdash and I will dwell among them". So now too, by not being impressed and raising "seed blessed by Hashem", Hashem dwells in every Jewish home, with plenty of parnassah, health and real nachas. (§8)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“Higher, Not Lower”

A girl from a well-known Lubavitch family was finishing high school. She wanted to go to college and had even won a state scholarship. Her parents didn't like the idea. After months of talking, they agreed: one year of seminary first, and then, if she still wanted college, she could go.

She picked a seminary in Eretz Yisroel whose credits she could transfer to a university, and wrote the Rebbe a long letter, pouring out her heart. She promised to follow his advice, but asked for his assurance that it would bring her happiness.

Months later the Rebbe's answer came, written just after Chanukah: “We are coming from Chanukah, which is connected with ‘go up in holiness, don't go down.’ Apply this to your life. The school you attend should raise you to a higher level of yiras Shamayim and mitzvos, or at least not a lower one.”

She realized her choice didn't meet that standard, and went to Beis Rivkah in Kfar Chabad instead. It transformed her; the scholarship lost its pull. Twenty years later she said: “It was a decision that brought me great happiness.”

Source: *Eli & Malka Touger, To Know and to Care, vol. 2, “Shepherding His Flock” (Sichos in English)*

Think: How did she escape the “Nile” of §§4–5, and how did it end like Miriam's song (§6)?

She chose chinuch that raises you in Torah over what the world calls the key to parnassah, and it

brought her real simchah, like Miriam's joy “with drums and dances”.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Don't be impressed by “Pharaoh” or the “neighbors” who say a Torah life is old-fashioned. Torah is your life and your parnassah. Choose what raises you higher, and you'll sing with real joy.

For example: Someone says, “Why go to that yeshivah? Go to the one with better sports and secular studies, you'll make more money.” Ask instead: where will I grow most in yiras Shamayim?

Don't Let Amalek Cool You!

אשר קרן בדרן

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Beshalach, p. 144ff, sections 9-14. From a sicha of Yud Shvat 5716 (1956).

The point: *Against Pharaoh, who stood behind them, Hashem fought; against Amalek, who stood between the Yidden and Har Sinai, they had to go out and fight with every means. Every detail was through Moshe, so the victory was above nature. Amalek "cooled" the Yidden's fire for Torah; in the daily war, fight whatever cools you with every means, with Moshe's power, and it prepares for Moshiach's P'nimiyus HaTorah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What two wars happened to the Yidden on the way from Mitzrayim to Har Sinai, and what was Hashem's command in each?

The war with Pharaoh: "Hashem will fight for you and you will be silent." The war with Amalek: "Go out and fight Amalek", a real physical war. (§9)

2. ★★ What was the difference between Pharaoh and Amalek?

Pharaoh was behind them; he stood between them and the fish and good land of Egypt, not between them and Har Sinai. Amalek stood between the Yidden and Har Sinai (in a desert, nothing to gain), and wouldn't let them go to receive the Torah. (§10)

3. ★★ When something blocks receiving the Torah, how do we act? Why a real physical war with Amalek?

Though "the voice is Yaakov's and the hands are Eisav's" (the sword is Eisav's portion), when something blocks Torah we make no calculations and use every way, as long as we receive the Torah. And it wasn't "my power": it was Hashem's war, since "the Name and the Throne aren't whole until Amalek is wiped out". (§10)

4. ★★ How was every detail of the war with Amalek connected to Moshe Rabbeinu?

Because the war was for the sake of the Torah: Moshe said "choose men and fight"; it began with Moshe's tefillah; it was fought by "anshei Moshe" (Moshe's men); and the victory came through Yehoshua, Moshe's servant. (§11)

5. ★★★ Why was the victory over Amalek above nature?

By nature Amalek should have won: Amalek were sorcerers, and Moshe chose men whose mazal was to live. Each knew he went not with his own power but as Moshe's shliach, with the power of the Torah, and that wins above nature. (§12)

6. ★★ What does "asher korch" mean? When did Amalek come?

Amalek cooled the Yidden's fire for receiving the Torah. They were at their greatest enthusiasm, which even affected the nations (the mashal of the boiling bath): everyone saw a consuming fire. Then Amalek came to cool them down. (§13)

7. ★ Zechiras Amalek is every day. What two lessons do we take for the daily war with the spiritual Amalek?

(a) Use every means to fight whatever cools you off from Torah, as long as you receive the Torah.

(b) Know that you don't do it with your own power, but with Moshe's power, the power of the Torah.

(§13)

8. ★★ "Vayishma Yisro: what did he hear? The war of Amalek." What came from it, and what is the lesson today?

The news reached Midyan, and Yisro's "now I know" was a preparation for Matan Torah (Zohar). So today, fighting the spiritual Amalek with Moshe's power affects even "Midyan", and prepares for the revealing of P'nimiyus HaTorah by Moshiach. (§14)

9. ★★★ A bochur says, "What's wrong with laughing at someone else's chiddush? It's just a joke." How does Amalek's "korch" answer him?

Amalek didn't fight them outright; it just "cooled them down", and that was enough to block the Torah. A cold remark can put out another's fire for Torah. (§13)

10. ★★ Why was Pharaoh answered with "be silent", and Amalek with "go out and fight"?

Pharaoh didn't stand between the Yidden and the Torah, so Hashem fought for them. Amalek blocked the Torah itself, so the Yidden had to go out and fight with every means, with Moshe's power.

(§§9-10)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

One Remark in the Beis Midrash

A brilliant Lakewood bochur had a question on a Gemara that no one could answer, so he went to the Rebbe for a minute of yechidus. The Rebbe answered it in 45 seconds. Then he asked: "Do you learn Chassidus?" "No, it's not for me." The Rebbe explained: without Chassidus a person can lose sight of the G-dliness of Torah, and his whole Yiddishkeit can wear away. Then, with a faraway look, he said: "It could happen that one day a bochur walks into the beis midrash, gets hurt by another student's petty remark, can't concentrate, and that night..." and he described a chain of ten aveiros that would follow, until the bochur left yeshivah. The bochur wasn't convinced.

Months later he worked for days on a hard sugya. Proud of his answer, he shared it with two bochurim. One laughed at it. Hurt, he couldn't learn, took the night off, and that night came the first step. Every step the Rebbe described followed, until he left Yiddishkeit.

Years later his son came home asking, "What does it mean that we're Jewish?" He had no answer. He went to a farbrengen of the Rebbe and heard the very same words about Chassidus, and began learning Chassidus every week with a chassid, Reb Yoel.

Source: *Eli & Malka Touger, To Know and to Care, vol. 2, "A Shepherd of Souls" (Sichos in English)*

Think: Where is "asher korchu" in the story? What would have protected him (§13)?

One cold remark cooled his fire for Torah, and that was the opening. Chassidus, yiras Shamayim and

Moshe's power keep the fire burning.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Amalek doesn't always attack; sometimes it just cools you down. Fight whatever cools your Torah with every means, and remember: you win with the Rebbe's and the Torah's power, not your own.

For example: You're excited about a chiddush and a friend laughs. Don't let it put out your fire; and never be the one who laughs at someone else's.

Saplings Like You!

שיהיו נטיעותיך כמותך

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Tu B'Shvat, p. 146ff, sections 15-18. From a sicha of Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, Tu B'Shvat 5716 (1956).

The point: *Beis Shammai follow the potential, Beis Hillel the actual (honeycombs, Chanukah lights). Water is judged in potential on Rosh Hashanah and in actual on Sukkos; four months later trees draw new water, in potential on 1 Shvat and in actual on 15 Shvat. Man is a tree: he must make fruit that becomes more trees, influencing others until "your saplings are like you", the clearest sign of the Geulah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ When is Rosh Hashanah for trees, according to Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel? Whom do we follow?

Beis Shammai: 1 Shvat; Beis Hillel: 15 Shvat. The halachah follows Beis Hillel; "Beis Shammai in the place of Beis Hillel is not a Mishnah." (§15)

- ★★ What general difference between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel do we find in many places?

Beis Shammai go after the potential (b'koach, hidden); Beis Hillel go after the actual (b'poel, revealed). (§16)

- ★★ Give the two examples: honeycombs and Chanukah lights.

Honeycombs become tamei as a liquid: Beis Shammai, from when he thinks about it (potential); Beis Hillel, from when he crushes them (actual). Chanukah: Beis Shammai, start with 8 and go down, for the days still to come (potential); Beis Hillel, start with 1 and go up, for the days that have passed (actual). (§16)

- ★★★ What is the root of the difference?

Beis Shammai are rooted in gevuros; their avodah is going up (ha'ala'ah), hidden. Beis Hillel are rooted in chassadim; their avodah is drawing down (hamshachah), revealed. "Hillel" is from "b'hilo neiro", shining. (§16)

- ★★ What is the meaning of Rosh Hashanah for trees?

The trees stop drawing from last year's rains and start drawing from the new year's. (§17)

6. ★★★ How does the potential vs. actual difference explain 1 Shvat vs. 15 Shvat?

Trees start drawing four months after the water is judged. On Sukkos (15 Tishrei) water is judged openly (actual); on Rosh Hashanah (1 Tishrei) the whole world, water included, is judged hidden (potential). Four months later: 1 Shvat in potential, 15 Shvat in actual. Even Beis Shammai agree the actual is 15 Shvat. (§17)

7. ★★ How is Rosh Hashanah for trees found in people? What is a tree's essence?

"Man is a tree of the field." A tree makes fruit, from which more fruit-bearing trees grow. So every Yid must influence his surroundings (shul, yeshivah, everyone he meets) so that more Yidden are added. (§18)

8. ★★ What is the best brachah for a tree, and for a person?

"Tree, tree, with what shall I bless you? That your saplings be like you": that those you influence become like you, like your inner self. (§18)

9. ★★★ What does "netiosecha kamocha" have to do with Moshiach?

The Gemara (Sanhedrin), after listing several "ends", says: when "you will give your branches and bear your fruit", there is no clearer sign of the end. When we hold onto the "tree of life" (the Rebbeim and Chassidus) and influence others until they are like us ("see what I have grown!"), it is a sign that the Geulah is near. (§18)

10. ★★ By Beis Hillel's way, which counts more: good intentions to help others, or actually doing it?

Actually doing it (b'poel), like the trees whose new drawing is counted from when it is revealed. Influence that is actual, seen fruit, is what counts. (§§16–18)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“How Is Lila?”

When Miriam Wolosow was nine, her family lived in Dublin, Ireland. There weren't many Jewish girls her age, so she was happy to find a friend, Lila Zolondik. Their friendship had a special side: Miriam encouraged Lila to keep mitzvos, with warmth and care.

Not long after, tragedy struck: Lila's father passed away. Miriam wrote to the Rebbe about her friend and asked for a brachah.

Two years passed, years in which the Rebbe received countless letters and requests. Then Miriam traveled to New York for her first yechidus. The Rebbe's very first questions were: “How is Lila Zolondik? Are you still in touch with her?”

A nine-year-old girl had helped one friend grow, and the Rebbe remembered, and cared, two years later.

Source: *Eli & Malka Touger, To Know and to Care, vol. 2, “Unveiling Hidden Treasures” (Sichos in English)*

Think: How was Miriam a “tree that makes fruit” (§18)? What does the Rebbe's question teach?

Even at nine she influenced a friend to grow in mitzvos, her “sapling”. The Rebbe's first question

shows how much that counts: caring for another Yid is the fruit.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

You are a tree: your fruit is the people you help grow in Yiddishkeit. Do it in practice, not just in thought, until your “saplings” are like you. That is a sign of Moshiach.

For example: Your friend from the neighborhood goes to a different school. Learn with him for ten minutes on Shabbos afternoon, and keep it up every week.