

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 1

לקוטי שיחות · חלק א

Parshas Pekudei

פרשת פקודי

2 sichas in this booklet

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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.

Two Mishkans, and Ohaliav Too!

משכן משכן

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Pekudei, p. 195ff, sections 1–12. From the sichos of Shabbos Vayakhel-Pekudei 5711 (1951) and 5718 (1958).

The point: *Why does the Torah repeat every detail of the Mishkan in Vayakhel-Pekudei? Like the twelve Nesi'im, each with its own "hamshachah": there are two Mishkans. The first (Terumah-Tetzaveh) came from Hashem to Moshe on Har Sinai, a spiritual Mishkan; the second was made by ordinary Jews, down here, from real gold, silver and copper. Only the second fulfilled "v'shachanti b'socham", because Hashem wants a dwelling in the lowest world. So never fall in spirit: a Jew who acts with warmth gets Hashem's help. "Mishkan ha'eidus": testimony is only for something hidden, and in the physical Mishkan Hashem's very Essence dwells. The 18 brachos of Shemoneh Esrei match the 18 "ka'asher tzivah" said with Ohaliav (from Dan, the lowest tribe): tefillah lifts everything up, even the lowest, so before davening we accept ahavas Yisroel for every Jew, even one at the far end of the world, and daven with all our kochos.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What is the question on Vayakhel-Pekudei?

Every word and letter of Torah is exact, and many halachos are learned from a single extra letter.

So why repeat all the details of the Mishkan and the bigdei kehunah already told in

Terumah-Tetzaveh? It could have said in short: they made everything as Hashem commanded. (§§1–2)

2. ★★ How is it like the korbanos of the twelve Nesi'im?

Each Nasi brought the same korban, yet the Torah lists each one in full, because each Nasi brought

down a different "hamshachah". So too, the Mishkan of Vayakhel-Pekudei is a different Mishkan.

(§§3–4)

3. ★★ Describe the two Mishkans.

The first (Terumah-Tetzaveh): from Hashem's mouth, to Moshe (a neshamah of Atzilus, the greatest

navi, "zeh"), on Har Sinai, a spiritual Mishkan, not of physical gold. The second

(Vayakhel-Pekudei): made by the Jewish people (most neshamos from Beriah, Yetzirah, Asiyah), down

in this world, from real gold, silver and copper. "A Mishkan below, a Mishkan above." (§4)

4. ★★ In which Mishkan was “v’shachanti b’socham” fulfilled, and why?

Only in the physical one, because Hashem desired a dwelling in the lowest world, this world, with its doubled darkness. That’s also why the gems of the Nesi’im, brought by a miracle, raise a question: the Mishkan is meant to be made of natural, physical things. (§5)

5. ★ What is the lesson for us from §6?

Don’t fall in spirit thinking: “How can I fulfill Hashem’s will in my situation, in the darkness of galus?” Hashem promises that whoever is a “nediv lev”, acting with Jewish warmth, “v’shachanti b’socham”: Hashem helps him. (§6)

6. ★★ Where are the two Mishkans hinted in the first pasuk of Pekudei?

“Eileh pekudei haMishkan, Mishkan ha’eidus”: Mishkan is said twice. Only the second (the one Jews built) is called “eidus”. (§7)

7. ★★★ Why is only the second Mishkan called “eidus”, testimony?

Testimony is only needed for something hidden (if Beis Din saw the moon themselves, no witnesses are needed). (1) The physical Mishkan, made by people, doesn’t show G-dliness openly, so it needs testimony. (2) Only through the physical Mishkan does Hashem’s very Essence, totally hidden and above all revelations, dwell there: “ikar Shechinah b’tachtonim”. (§7)

8. ★★ What does the Yerushalmi say about the 18 brachos of Shemoneh Esrei?

They match the 18 times “ka’asher tzivah” is said in the second Mishkan, counting only from where Ohaliav ben Achisamach is mentioned with Betzalel. (§8)

9. ★★★ What three questions does this raise?

(1) What do the 18 brachos have to do with “ka’asher tzivah”? (2) Why the second Mishkan? (3) Why only where Ohaliav is mentioned? Tefillah means connecting, and that sounds like Betzalel from Yehudah, the highest tribe (“hoda’ah”, bittul), not Ohaliav from Dan, the lowest. (§8)

10. ★★ What is the difference between Torah and tefillah? How does “sulam mutzav artzah” show it?

Torah draws down from above to below; tefillah lifts up from below to above. The ladder stands

“artzah”, leaning to the earth: you take the lowest things, even what’s below the earth, and lift

them up “hashamaymah”, to Hashem’s Essence. That’s like the second Mishkan, making physical things

into a dwelling for Hashem. (§9)

11. ★★★ Why must we accept ahavas Yisroel before davening, even for a Jew we never saw?

Tefillah lifts everything, even the lowest (“even the sandals”). So we include ourselves with all

of Klal Yisroel, even the “Ohaliavs”. The Baal Shem Tov says ahavas Yisroel includes a Jew at the

far end of the world whom you never saw. It isn’t only a mitzvah: it’s the preparation for your

own tefillah, because lifting starts from the lowest point (like a crane lifting a building).

(§10)

12. ★★ How do you bring “Ohaliav” into your own davening?

Daven not only with the “Betzalet” in your soul but also with the lowest “Dan” in you: all your

kocho together, making all of them a Mishkan for Hashem. Then the lifting up brings down

everything you need (healing, parnassah), and together they make the bond “tzivah” (tzavta,

connection), up to “b’shalom”. (§§10–12)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Odd Prayer and the Lost Bandit

The Baal Shem Tov once said: “Whoever wants his tefillos to go up to Heaven is welcome to daven together with me, word for word, from my siddur.” Most people were too shy, because everyone knew that each word of his davening was full of kavanos. Only one young man, Eliyahu, davened with him word for word: the Baal Shem Tov would say a word, and Eliyahu would repeat it.

One Shabbos morning, in Pesukei D’Zimrah, the Baal Shem Tov said the pasuk “Sheker hasus litshuah, a horse is a false hope for salvation,” and Eliyahu repeated it. Then the Baal Shem Tov said it again. And again. And again. Eliyahu searched the kavanos for that pasuk and found nothing special, so he stopped davening with him.

Some time later he came to the Baal Shem Tov’s home. “Eliyahu, you’ve stopped davening with me,” said the Baal Shem Tov. “Let me tell you why I repeated that pasuk. That Shabbos a Jew was stranded all alone in a far-off field. He had lost his way on Friday afternoon and had to stop there before sunset. A bloodthirsty bandit heard about him and galloped off on his horse to rob and kill him. So I said the pasuk about the horse’s foolishness again and again, with great kavanah, and the horse got so lost that the bandit never found him.”

Source: Menachem Posner, “The Odd Prayer and the Lost Bandit” (chabad.org), from Shivchei HaBesht #163, in the name of R’ Eliyahu, later the Maggid of Sokolovki

Think: How does the Baal Shem Tov’s davening show what §10 teaches?

In the middle of his own holy tefillah he included a Jew he had never seen, alone in a far-off field. Ahavas Yisroel for a Jew “at the far end of the world” was part of his davening, not a distraction from it.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Before you daven, say “Hareini mekabel” and mean it: bring every Jew with you, even the one you think is “lowest”, and daven with all of yourself, not only your best parts.

For example: Before Shacharis, think of a boy in your class who nobody plays with, or a sick person you heard about, and ask Hashem for him by name in “Refa’einu”.

After the Cloud Comes the Call!

ויקרא אל משה

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Pekudei, p. 202ff (Hebrew edition p. 189), sections 13-16. From the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Pekudei 5717 (1957).

The point: *From Pekudei we go into Vayikra. Pekudei ends with the cloud on the Mishkan, a concealment: "Moshe could not enter". Then "Vayikra el Moshe": a call, a revelation after the concealment, which is higher than revelation alone. In our avodah that is teshuvah: coming back after being far, "kiflayim l'sushiyah", until sins become merits and darkness becomes light. That's why baalei teshuvah stand where complete tzaddikim cannot: a tzaddik draws down good and pushes away bad, but teshuvah touches the essence of the soul and has no limits, so the bad itself is transformed: "the night shines like day". So never despair, in any state. The same with generations: earlier, "finer" generations didn't bring the Geulah, and the generation that seems least worthy will, for that very reason. Before dawn sleep is strongest; don't sink into it. Wake up to the morning light.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ How does Pekudei end, and how does Vayikra begin?

Pekudei ends with the cloud on the Mishkan, so "Moshe could not enter the Ohel Moed". Vayikra begins "Vayikra el Moshe", Hashem called to Moshe. (§13)

2. ★★ What is the connection between the two parshiyos?

The cloud was a concealment (he'elem). A "call" (kriah) is a revelation (giluy). So Vayikra is a revelation that comes after concealment, and that is higher than revelation by itself. (§13)

3. ★★ What is "revelation after concealment" in a person's avodah?

Teshuvah: a person was far from Hashem (concealment), and teshuvah is coming back (revelation). (§14)

4. ★★★ How far does the power of teshuvah reach?

It is "kiflayim l'sushiyah", double strength, up to the goal of teshuvah: deliberate sins become like merits, "ishapcha chashocha linhora", darkness turned into light. (§14)

5. ★★ Which famous saying of Chazal does this explain?

"In the place where baalei teshuvah stand, complete tzaddikim cannot stand." (§15)

6. ★★★ What are the two levels of a tzaddik's merits, and why is teshuvah higher?

(1) What he draws down through mitzvos aseh ("do good"). (2) Through lo sa'aseh ("turn from bad"), which only pushes the bad away; it doesn't make it good. Revelations have limits, so bad stays bad and must be pushed away. Teshuvah touches the essence of the soul, and Above, Hashem's Essence, where there are no limits: the sins themselves become merits. (§15)

7. ★★ What is the goal of the "call" after the concealment?

Not just removing the concealment, but that "the night will shine like the day": the darkness itself becomes light. (§15)

8. ★ What hora'ah does the Rebbe give everyone?

In whatever situation you are in, you may never despair, chas v'shalom. On the contrary, through the concealment you can reach an even higher revelation. (§16)

9. ★★★ What question is asked about the generations, and what is the answer?

Earlier generations were "nicer" than ours and still far from the Geulah, so how can the Geulah come in a generation about which people ask, "is this generation worthy?!" Answer: that is exactly the reason ("hi hanosenes"): the revelation after concealment is the highest. (§16)

10. ★★ What is the mashal of the time before dawn?

Just before morning, sleep gets strongest. You have to be careful not to sink into sleep, and to wake up to the morning light, until we merit "the night will shine like day". (§16)

11. ★★ How is a baal teshuvah like Vayikra after the cloud?

Both are a giluy that comes after a he'elem. Because it comes out of the darkness, it is higher than the giluy that came before it. (§§13–15)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“Talk to Weinreb”

In 1971 Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb was in his early thirties, a psychologist in Silver Spring, Maryland, who also taught Gemara. He was torn by questions: stay in learning or go on in psychology, which job to take, what was best for his children's chinuch, and his own questions of emunah. “All these questions had me depressed,” he said, “and I was unsure what to do or where to go.” A friend, a Chabad chassid, told him to contact the Rebbe.

He phoned 770 and told the secretary, “A yid fun Maryland,” a Jew from Maryland, with many questions. In the background he heard the Rebbe say in Yiddish: “Tell him there is a Jew in Maryland he can speak to. His name is Weinreb.” He had never given his name! “But my name is Weinreb!” he said. The Rebbe answered: “If so, he should know that sometimes one needs to speak to himself.”

“I believe I understood,” he said. “You’re looking for answers outside yourself. Trust yourself.” From then on, he said, he became decisive. Months later he passed by the Rebbe and said, “My name is Weinreb and I’m from Maryland,” and the Rebbe gave him a big smile of recognition.

Source: Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, “Talk to Yourself”, *Here’s My Story (JEM, My Encounter with the Rebbe / chabad.org)*

Think: Rabbi Weinreb was in a “cloud”: confused and down. What did the Rebbe show him, and how is that like this sicha?

That the light he was looking for was already inside him. He didn’t despair, and out of that dark

time came strength he never had before, a giluy after a he’elem, like Vayikra after the cloud.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Never give up on yourself. A hard or dark time can be the start of your biggest growth, if you don’t “fall asleep” in it.

For example: You messed up badly this week: lost your temper at shiur and skipped davening. Don’t say “I’m just like that.” Do teshuvah, apologize, and come back stronger than before.