

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 1

לקוטי שיחות · חלק א

Parshas Tetzaveh & Purim Katan

פרשת תצוה · פורים קטן

4 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.

Oil That Soaks In Everywhere

שמן זית זך כתיית למאור

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Tetzaveh, p. 170f, sections 1–4. Compiled from sichos of Simchas Beis HaShoeivah 5712 (1951) and Chanukah 5719 (1958).

The point: *The Menorah needed the “first oil”. In Torah, nigleh is water, its secrets are wine, and the secrets of the secrets are oil, which floats above wine; and within the oil, Chassidus, there are water, wine and oil too. Oil has a special quality: it “spreads through everything”. Nigleh alone can leave a person and his Torah as two separate things, but Chassidus soaks deep inside until they are one, like engraved letters. And since Chassidus too is grasped by the mind, there must also be “oil within oil”: the bittul it brings, especially after davening.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What do Chazal say about “shemen zayis zach kasis lamaor”?

There are three kinds of oil, and the Menorah needed the “first oil”. (§1)

2. ★ Why do we look for this in our own avodah?

Everything in Torah, especially the Mishkan and Mikdash, of which it says “veshochanti besocham”, in each and every Jew, also exists in a person’s spiritual avodah in his soul. (§1)

3. ★★ What are water, wine and oil in the Torah?

Nigleh is water, the secrets of Torah are wine, and the secrets of the secrets are oil. “Oil floats on top of wine”: oil is higher than wine. (§2)

4. ★★ What three levels are within the “oil” itself?

Everything in Torah exists both generally and in detail, so the oil itself has water, wine and oil. That’s why Chassidus, the “oil” of Torah, contains every part of Torah; as the Frierdiker Rebbe says, Chassidus also has mussar and chakirah, but in the spirit of Chassidus. (§2)

5. ★★ What is oil’s advantage over water and wine?

Water and wine stay where they are and don’t move on; oil, by Torah law, “spreads through all of it”: wherever it is, it seeps into every place connected to it. (§3)

6. ★★★ What does that mean in a person's avodah?

A person who learns only nigleh may have Torah in him, yet he and the Torah are two separate things. Learning razin d'razin, which in our generation is Chassidus, "spreads through all of him": it goes deep inside until he and the Torah become one thing. (§3)

7. ★★ What is the difference between "engraved letters" and written letters? How does it fit here?

Written letters are ink on parchment, two things; engraved letters are cut into the stone itself, one thing. Chassidus makes a person and his Torah one, like engraved letters. (§3)

8. ★★ How do nigleh and pnimiyus haTorah differ regarding yeshus (a sense of self)?

Nigleh is clothed in human intellect, so there is still room for a sense of self; pnimiyus haTorah deals with G-dliness and the bittul of the worlds, so there is much less room for yeshus. (§4)

9. ★★★ Why is "oil within oil" still needed?

Even pnimiyus haTorah was given so the mind can grasp it, so in terms of understanding it is still "water and wine" of the oil. So there must also be "oil within oil, kasis lamaor": the bittul in pnimiyus haTorah, which comes especially after the avodah of tefillah. (§4)

10. ★★ Put it together: what path do the three "oils" describe for a person's learning?

Nigleh (water), then Chassidus, which soaks in and makes him one with the Torah (oil), and then "oil within oil": the bittul it brings, especially after davening. That pure oil is what lights the Menorah. (§§2–4)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Their Souls Understand

At the direction of the Tzemach Tzedek, Reb Hillel of Paritch spent a great deal of time traveling to the Jewish farming colonies of the Kherson district, in today's Ukraine, to teach Chassidus to the simple Jewish farmers there.

Once Reb Hillel asked the Tzemach Tzedek: what was the benefit of reviewing Chassidus before simple Jews whose understanding was so limited that they understood nothing?

The Rebbe answered that he should keep reviewing Chassidus aloud before them, because their souls understood it.

Reb Hillel was careful in every detail of his avodah. On these trips he took along a group of ten men so that he could daven with a minyan the whole way. He was a Levi, and he always made sure that one of the group was a Kohen, so the minyan would have all three: Kohen, Levi and Yisrael.

Source: Hillel Zaltzman, Samarkand, "R. Mordechai Yoel's Stories" (chabad.org)

Think: How does the Tzemach Tzedek's answer show that Chassidus is like oil that "spreads through everything" (§3)?

Even where the mind doesn't grasp it, Chassidus seeps deep into the soul, like oil soaking in

everywhere, and becomes one with the person.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Learn some Chassidus every day, even a little, even when you don't understand all of it. It soaks in like oil until you and the Torah are one, and after davening, let it bring you to bittul.

For example: Your class learns Tanya for ten minutes in the morning and you tune out because it's hard. Stay with it, and review one line on the bus home; let it soak in.

Only You and Hashem

מזבח הזהב

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Tetzaveh, p. 171, section 5. From a sicha of 5 Adar 5715 (1955).

The point: *Why does the golden mizbe'ach appear at the end of Tetzaveh and not with the Shulchan and Menorah in Terumah? To hint that the purpose of all the Mishkan's avodah was the ketores: only the kohen and Hashem were there, not even angels, and there the Shechinah rested. In our avodah too, the purpose and completeness is Torah and mitzvos, and tzedakah especially, done without publicity, no pictures in the newspapers, matan beseser: only the person and Hashem.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What does the Torah command at the end of Parshas Tetzaveh?

The mizbach hazahav, the golden altar for the ketores. (§5)

2. ★ Which keilim stood together in the Ohel Moed?

The Shulchan, the Menorah and the golden mizbe'ach. (§5)

3. ★★ What do the commentators ask?

The golden mizbe'ach should have been listed with the other keilim in Terumah, with the Shulchan and Menorah that stood with it. Why does it come only after all the avodos of the Mishkan, at the end of Tetzaveh? (§5)

4. ★★ What does the Torah hint by putting it last?

That the purpose of all the avodos in the Mishkan was the ketores offered on the golden mizbe'ach. (§5)

5. ★★ What was special about the ketores?

Only the kohen who offered it went in, so only the kohen and Hashem were there. The Yerushalmi on “no man shall be in the Ohel Moed”: even those described as having “the face of a man”, even the ministering angels, could not be there. (§5)

6. ★★ Where did the Shechinah rest?

Of all the avodos of the Mishkan, only in the daily ketores on the golden mizbe'ach were the kohen and Hashem alone, and there the Shechinah rested. (§5)

7. ★★ What is the purpose and completeness of our daily avodah?

To do Torah and mitzvos in general, and tzedakah in particular, without publicity. (§5)

8. ★★ What practice does the Rebbe say not to follow? What should it be instead?

Some take pictures and publish them in the newspapers. Instead it should be matan beseser, giving in secret, without anyone knowing, only the person and Hashem. (§5)

9. ★★★ Why is the hidden mitzvah the “purpose”, like the ketores?

Where only the person and Hashem are, nothing else mixes in: no honor, no one watching. Just as the Shechinah rested where only the kohen and Hashem were, a mitzvah done for Hashem alone is where He truly dwells. (§5)

10. ★★ Give an example of “ketores avodah” in a 13-year-old’s life.

Answers will vary: e.g., tzedakah with no name on it, helping a classmate without telling anyone, saying Tehillim for someone without letting him know. (§5 (application))

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Eviction That Didn't Happen

Rabbi Chessed Halberstam told this story. The Rebbe had asked him to take the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka to a park on Long Island, where she liked to feed bread to the birds.

Once the highway was closed, so they took a detour through slow, crowded local streets. They passed a house with a group of people gathered outside, some of them crying. After they passed, the Rebbetzin told Chessed that her father, the Friediker Rebbe, had taught her that everything one sees is hashgachah pratis, and she asked him to go back.

They found out that a poor Russian family was being evicted because they were behind on the rent. "How much do they owe?" the Rebbetzin asked. About \$8,000, the marshal answered. If she wrote a check for \$8,000, would they let the family stay? Yes. The marshal called the bank, and the bank approved the check.

The Rebbetzin wrote it, and asked that the same men who had carried out the furniture bring it back in. Then she left quickly, before the family could find out who had helped them, and told Chessed not to tell anyone. Only after the Rebbetzin's passing did the story become known.

Source: Nissan Dovid Dubov, *To Love a Fellow Jew*, ch. 11 "Seven Stories" (*Sichos in English*, chabad.org), as told by Rabbi Chessed Halberstam

Think: How was the Rebbetzin's tzedakah like the ketores on the golden mizbe'ach (\$5)?

Only she and Hashem knew. She left before the family could find out who she was and asked that it

be kept secret: no pictures, no publicity, real matan beseser.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Do your mitzvos, especially tzedakah and favors, quietly, for Hashem alone, not for likes or praise.

For example: You hear a classmate can't afford the class trip. Instead of telling everyone, give your rebbi an envelope from your savings with no name on it.

Throw the Gold into the Fire!

נתקשה משה במנורה

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Tetzaveh, p. 172ff, sections 6–13. From a sicha of Chanukah 5716 (1955).

The point: *Moshe found the Menorah hard, and Hashem told him to throw the gold into the fire. How can physical things become a Mikdash for Hashem's very essence, revealed in the Kodesh HaKodashim ("the place of the aron took no space", "nimna hanimna'os"), when "the heavens cannot contain You"? Because "terumah... dekulah chad": physical things come from His essence, only hidden, and Jewish souls, in whom it is revealed, can uncover it. The Menorah had to light up the darkness from gold, which a person can't do; he only throws the gold into the fire and Hashem makes the Menorah. So too, Hashem wants a Mikdash from our gashmiyus: throw your "gold" into the fire of your heart.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What do Chazal say about Moshe and the Menorah?

"Moshe found it hard": he didn't know how to make it. Hashem told him to throw the gold into the fire, and the Menorah came out. (§6)

2. ★★ What two questions does this raise?

(1) Why only the Menorah, when Moshe knew how to make all the other keilim? (2) He had already seen the Menorah in Heaven ("as you were shown"), so why didn't he know? (§6)

3. ★ What general introduction does the Torah give before the Mishkan?

Two things: "Daber el Bnei Yisrael" and "veyikchu li terumah"; only after them comes the making of the Mishkan. (§7)

4. ★★ What is the question about making a Mikdash from physical things?

The Mishkan was made from gold, silver, copper and so on. A Mikdash could seemingly be made through Torah and tefillah, but how from physical things? (§8)

5. ★★★ Why is it even harder to understand?

The G-dliness in the Mikdash was higher than the light in the worlds: even the upper worlds have only a glow of G-dliness, while in the Mikdash there was "hamshachas Atzmuso", Hashem's very essence. (§8)

6. ★★ How was Atzmus seen openly in the Kodesh HaKodashim?

"The place of the aron took up no space", something that comes only from Hashem's essence. (§9)

7. ★★★ What is “nimna hanimna’os”, and how was it revealed there?

There is G-dliness clothed in nature, G-dliness that creates the worlds, and G-dliness above creation; higher still is “nimna hanimna’os”. Some chakirah said even the impossible has a fixed nature, but Kabbalah and Chassidus explain that Hashem is beyond even that. In the Kodesh HaKodashim this was revealed: a place above place. (§9)

8. ★★ Why do all tefillos pass through the Kodesh HaKodashim?

Our requests are mostly for physical things, which have no place Above. But in the Kodesh HaKodashim, where Atzmus is revealed, “nimna hanimna’os” joins the lowest low with the highest high. So we face Eretz Yisrael, then the Mikdash, then the Kodesh HaKodashim: “this is the gate of heaven”. (§9)

9. ★★ What did Shlomo HaMelech wonder?

“The heavens and the heavens of heavens cannot contain You, how much less this house!” Even such lofty levels are not vessels for Atzmus, so how can a house of physical materials be? (§10)

10. ★★★ How do “veyikchu li terumah” and “daber el Bnei Yisrael” answer this?

The Tanya, quoting the Zohar: it says “terumah”, not “uterumah”, because “it’s all one”: the 13 (or 15) physical things are one with “li”, since the physical comes from Atzmus, only hidden. So all that’s needed is to reveal it. And only Jewish souls can reveal it, since in them Atzmus is revealed and Hashem gave Himself to them to “take”. (§11)

11. ★★★ So why was the Menorah alone hard for Moshe?

The Menorah was gold and had to light up the darkness as “testimony to the world that the Shechinah rests in Israel”. How could gold, something physical, do that? Hashem answered: a person can’t; only I can. You just take the gold and throw it into the fire, and I will make it a Menorah. (§12)

12. ★★ What is the lesson for every Jew?

Only the Mikdash of wood and stone was destroyed; the Mikdash in every Jew's heart stands always.

Hashem says: your Torah, tefillah and mitzvos aren't enough; make Me a Mikdash from your gashmiyus

too, from your "gold". You can't do it alone: throw the gold into the fire in your heart (every

Jew has a flame burning for Hashem), and I will make it a Mikdash that lights up the world,

testimony that the Shechinah rests in you. (§13)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

A Menorah from an Onion

"There I was, sitting in a Soviet prison without the slightest possibility of lighting Chanukah candles," said Reb Berke Chein, a chassid who spent years in prison after a failed attempt to escape across the border.

Prisoners were interrogated often, and if even the smallest item was found on them, they could be charged with treason. As Chanukah came closer, Reb Berke worried: how could he get oil, wicks and matches in a sealed cell, and how would he hide them?

He was friendly with his cellmates. A few days before Chanukah one of them, a burly, hardened non-Jewish Russian prisoner, asked why he looked so down, and Reb Berke explained. "What exactly do you need?" "Oil, a little cotton for wicks, something to hold the oil, and most of all, matches." "No problem."

When Chanukah came, he brought what he had found: an onion cut in half for a menorah, butter saved from Reb Berke's daily rations instead of oil, and a few threads from his worn prison uniform for wicks.

But matches? Being caught with matches could mean the end. The prisoner took a few more threads and rubbed them hard against the stone floor with the sole of a shoe, again and again, until they began to glow and smoke. Soon the menorah was burning in the Soviet darkness.

Source: Aharon Loschak, "Chanukah Lights in Soviet Prison" (chabad.org), as told by Reb Berke Chein

Think: How did Reb Berke "throw the gold into the fire" (§§12–13)? What made it shine?

He gave his own scarce food (the butter) and simple physical things for the mitzvah, and the fire

in his heart, with help from Above, turned an onion, butter and threads into a Menorah. The

Mikdash in his heart stood even in prison.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Give Hashem your “gold” too, your physical things, money, talents and time, and throw them into the fire of your heart. Hashem makes them shine.

For example: You’re great at drawing. Instead of keeping it for yourself, make the posters for the shul’s Purim event, or use your bike to deliver mishloach manos to elderly neighbors.

A Wide Mind Is Always Happy

וטוב לב משתה תמיד

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Purim Katan, p. 175ff, sections 14–20 (numbered on from Tetzaveh). From a sicha of Shabbos Parshas Tisa, Shushan Purim Katan 5717 (1957).

The point: *The Rama rules to add a little in the meal on Purim Katan and ends “vetov lev mishteh tamid”: whenever there is any reason for joy, be joyful. “Tov lev” is one whose mind is broad, and so happy with his lot in every situation. “Your people’s needs are many because their mind is short”: chasing extras costs even the necessities (like a garment too big for you), and comes from not judging your own worth. To a broad mind gashmiyus takes up no room; only Torah and mitzvos, which are truly limitless. And whoever is generally in a broad mind draws down all his needs, so even when he falls, he is always “tov lev”.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What does the Rama rule about Purim Katan?

There are two opinions on whether to increase in feasting and joy; the Rama rules to add a little to the meal to satisfy the stringent view, and ends: “vetov lev mishteh tamid”, the good-hearted always feasts. (§14)

- ★★ Which two views exist on this ruling, and which does the Rama’s wording support?

Whether it applies only to 14 Adar I (Purim Katan) or also to the 15th (Shushan Purim Katan). The word “tamid” supports the second: whenever there is any reason for joy, one should be joyful. (§14)

- ★ Where does this conduct lead?

Being careful to rejoice whenever any opinion calls for joy brings a person to “vetov lev mishteh tamid”. (§14)

- ★★ What are the two explanations of “vetov lev”, and how do they connect?

The Gemara: “one whose mind is broad”; Rashi: “happy with his lot”. They go together: one whose mind is broad is happy with his lot. (§15)

5. ★★ What question does this raise?

Seemingly it depends on how Hashem treats him: with chessed and all his needs he doesn't worry, but otherwise there is room to worry. Yet the Gemara implies the broad-minded person is happy in every situation. (§15)

6. ★★★ How does the Rebbe Maharash, quoting the Alter Rebbe, explain "merubim tzarchei amcha veda'tam ketzarah"?

Why are your people's needs many? Because their mind is short. If their mind were broad, their needs wouldn't be many. So the broad-minded person is "tov lev": he lacks nothing; whatever he needs, he has. (§16)

7. ★★ What is the first point: what happens to someone who chases extras?

Usually a person receives from Above what he needs. But one who chases luxuries may not get them, and may even lose the flow of his necessities. The Tzemach Tzedek's mashal: clothes must fit; a garment too big doesn't help you walk, it tangles your legs. In ruchniyus too, too much cleverness in worldly matters ("vegilchah es roshah") harms. (§17)

8. ★★ Where does this come from?

From "da'tam ketzarah": he doesn't judge his own worth and spiritual state correctly, so he thinks he deserves and needs everything. The broad-minded person knows what he has is only Hashem's kindness, so he doesn't complain and doesn't rush to get more. (§18)

9. ★★★ What is the second point? What does the Rambam say about Moshiach?

To a broad mind gashmiyus takes up no room, since it is narrow and limited; Torah and mitzvos, truly unlimited, are the only thing that does. He thinks only of ruchniyus, and gashmiyus matters to him only as it connects to Torah and mitzvos. The Rambam: the Sages longed for Moshiach not for the wealth then ("a man will keep a young cow and two sheep") but for Torah, mitzvos and knowing Hashem. (§19)

10. ★★ What did the Rebbe write to a chassid who became too absorbed in business?

“Not by bread alone does man live, but by every utterance of Hashem.” The body’s hunger for bread comes from the soul’s hunger for the G-dly spark in the food; the main thing is the G-dly, not the physical. (§19)

11. ★★★ Why do we still ask Hashem to fill “the many needs” that come from a short mind?

“A tzaddik falls seven times and rises”: anyone can fall from his level and get a short mind, where gashmiyus takes up room and he misjudges himself. We ask that even then he lack nothing. And whoever is generally in a broad mind draws down all his needs, so even when he falls he has everything: “vetov lev mishteh tamid”, always. (§20)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

What You Are Needed For

A chassid who had been wealthy and lost his entire fortune came to the Alter Rebbe. “If Hashem has chosen to make me poor,” he wept, “I accept it. But how can I live with not being able to repay my debts, or give my daughter the dowry I promised for her wedding? I have never gone back on my word. Why is Hashem humiliating me like this? Rebbe, I must repay my debts! I must give what I promised!”

The Alter Rebbe sat with his head in his arms, in deep dveikus, and listened. After a long pause he lifted his head and said with great feeling: “You speak of all that you need. But you say nothing of what you are needed for.”

The words pierced the chassid’s heart, and he fainted. He was carried out and revived. From then on he spoke to no one; he threw himself into Torah and davening with such devotion that he forgot everything else. Though he fasted every day, he was always full of joy.

Several weeks later the Alter Rebbe called him in, blessed him with success, and told him to go home to his business. In time he regained his wealth, paid his debts, married off his daughters, and gave tzedakah even more generously than before.

Source: *From the writings of the Frierdiker Rebbe, adapted by Yanki Tauber, “The Needy and the Needed” (chabad.org)*

Think: How did the chassid go from “many needs, a short mind” to a “broad mind” (§§16–19)? What happened to his needs?

The Alter Rebbe turned him from what he needs to what he is needed for. Gashmiyus stopped taking up room, so even poor and fasting he was always joyful (“tov lev”), and then all his needs were filled, as §20 says.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Think about what you're needed for, not only what you need. Be happy with what you have and chase extras less, and you'll be "tov lev" always.

For example: Half your class got the newest gadget and you feel you "need" it too. Ask yourself what you're needed for today, then use the time to help a friend who's stuck on his Gemara.