

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 1

לקוטי שיחות · חלק א

Parshas Toldos

פרשת תולדות

5 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.

Don't Be Scared of Og!

אברהם הוליד את יצחק

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Toldos, p. 45ff, sections 1-7. From a sicha of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5719 (1958).

The point: *"Avraham holid es Yitzchak" is the reason for "Toldos Yitzchak." Yitzchak was the first to have a bris at eight days and a bar mitzvah at 13: a bond with Hashem above reason. Og mocked it, but Avraham, alone against the whole world, gave every Jew the power not to be scared of anyone.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What question do the meforshim ask on "Elah toldos Yitzchak ben Avraham, Avraham holid es Yitzchak"?

Why the double language: if Yitzchak is "ben Avraham," why say again that "Avraham holid es Yitzchak"? (§1)

2. ★★ How does the sicha answer it?

It is giving the reason: "Toldos Yitzchak" (his children, and his Torah, mitzvos and good deeds) were possible because "Avraham holid es Yitzchak." (§1)

3. ★ Which two things began with Yitzchak?

A bris at eight days (the completeness of milah) and becoming bar mitzvah at 13. Avraham had his bris at 99 and was not bar mitzvah at 13. (§2)

4. ★★ How are both hinted in "b'yom higamel es Yitzchak"?

"Higamel" = "hei-gimmel mal": he was circumcised at eight (hei-gimmel = 8). Or "nigmal" = weaned from the yetzer hara to the yetzer tov, at 13. (§2)

5. ★★ What two explanations does the Midrash give for "mishteh gadol," a great feast?

(1) The "Great One of the worlds," Hashem, was there (as at a bar mitzvah: "Ani hayom yeliditicha"). (2) The "great ones" were there: Og and all the kings of the generation. (§2)

6. ★ What did Og think at the feast, and what did Hashem tell him?

Og thought: I can squash Avraham's only son with my finger. Hashem said: by your life, you will see thousands and myriads of his children, and in the end you will fall into their hands. (§2)

7. ★★★ What is special about a bris at eight days? Why is a bond “above reason” needed even when a person grows up and understands?

It ties a child who can't yet understand to Hashem in an eternal bond above reason, like a baby who feels his parents and is drawn to them. Milah is a mitzvah that continues (like Dovid in the bathhouse). A bond that depends on understanding is limited, so even when grown up a Jew must connect with mesirus nefesh and kabbalas ol. (§§3–4)

8. ★★ How did Og's mocking end up?

It didn't weaken anything; the day was celebrated with a great feast, and Og's downfall began right then, when Hashem said he would fall into the hands of Yitzchak's children. (§5)

9. ★★ What was special about Avraham that he passed on to Yitzchak?

“Echad hayah Avraham”: alone, the whole world on one side and he on the other, yet he proclaimed everywhere “Kel Olam”: the world itself is G-dliness, there is nothing besides Him. (§6)

10. ★★★ What is the difference between “Kel Olam” and “Kel ha'olam”?

“Kel ha'olam” (G-d of the world) means the world is its own thing and Hashem is its master. “Kel Olam” means the world itself comes from Hashem's true existence; ein od milvado. (§6)

11. ★★ What worry might a Jew have, looking at his situation and the world?

The world is full of hiding and hard things, he spends most of his day on worldly matters, Jews are “the fewest of the nations,” and people scare him that he'll disappear. Where will he get strength for Torah and mitzvos all year, not just at Neilah? (§7)

12. ★★★ What is the answer, and what does it lead to?

“Ma'aseh avos siman (and power) labanim”: we come from Avraham, who wasn't scared of the whole world. A Jew connects to Hashem above reason, even in weekday life, and isn't frightened by those who trust in their own strength. Then Yitzchak's children defeat all who fight Hashem and His Torah, like Og, preparing for Moshiach. (§7)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Rabbi Who Would Not Bend

The Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, was the chief rabbi of Yekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk) in Soviet Russia, when the government was crushing Yiddishkeit and jailing rabbis. Many gave up. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak did not: he publicly declared that he would not be forced to give in.

He built a new mikveh and secretly did chuppos and brissin. Then came the matzos. All the factories belonged to the government, but people would only buy matzos with a rabbi's hechsher. When the officials came to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, he said: only if I can put in my own mashgichim. They refused.

So Rabbi Levi Yitzchak went to Moscow and met with Mikhail Kalinin, the President of the USSR, to explain his position. The Soviets gave in. He was made the rabbinical supervisor over the main wheat mills of the whole country, and the Pesach matzos were made according to halachah.

His stand was very dangerous for him and his family, but, encouraged by his wife, Rebbetzin Chana, he stayed strong. In 1939 he was arrested and sent into exile.

Source: JEM "Living Torah," Program 50, "Unwavering Jewish Courage" (the Rebbe, 6 Tishrei 5750), and "Biography of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson," chabad.org

Think: Who was the "Og" in this story? Where did Rabbi Levi Yitzchak get his strength?

The Soviet government, which thought it could crush Yiddishkeit with one finger. He had Avraham's

koach: one Jew who isn't impressed by the whole world.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

When the world seems huge and you feel small, remember: "Avraham holid es Yitzchak." You have Avraham's koach. Your bond with Hashem is above reason, so you don't have to be scared of anyone who laughs at it.

For example: You're the only frum kid at a family wedding or on a team, and someone makes fun of your tzitzis or of you leaving to daven Minchah. Don't hide them and don't skip Minchah. Smile and go. Og looked big too.

A Taste of Gan Eden

כי אתה אבינו

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Toldos, p. 48ff, sections 8-12. From a sicha of Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5714 (1953). (§12, about the wedding ceremony, is not included in the questions.)

The point: *In the future we will say to Yitzchak "ki atah avinu." His life was like the future: after the Akeidah he had a neshamah of Olam Haba and was in Gan Eden "above time." His chiddush was bringing Gan Eden down into the world, and he gives every Jew the power to taste Gan Eden now, so worldly pleasures can't compete.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What will be said to Yitzchak in the future, and how does Chassidus explain it?

"Ki atah avinu" (you are our father). Yitzchak's quality is pachad and bittul, which belong especially to the time of the future. (§8)

- ★★ All the Avos were given "a taste of Olam Haba." How was Yitzchak different?

For the other Avos it was a taste of its pleasure. Yitzchak's whole life was like the future: his neshamah flew out at the Akeidah and he was given a neshamah of Olam Haba. (§8)

- ★★★ Why isn't "his neshamah flew out" by itself Yitzchak's greatness? What is?

Others also had their neshamah fly out (some say the son of the Shunamis). His greatness is that he was above the world and from there drew it down and brought it into the world. (§9)

- ★★ What question is asked about Avraham dying five years early so he wouldn't see Eisav go bad?

By the count of years, when Eisav turned to avodah zarah at 13 Avraham was 173, so he should have seen it for two years. (§9)

- ★★★ What is the answer of the Asarah Maamaros (and the Riva)? What does it show about Yitzchak?

From the Akeidah until Rivkah was three years and a day, Yitzchak was in Gan Eden, which is above the time of the world, so those years didn't count. When he came back into time he was "only" 60 when his sons were born, and Avraham was really 162 then. (§9)

6. ★★ How do we see that Gan Eden left its mark on Yitzchak after he came back down?

He said "r'ei rei'ach b'ni k'rei'ach sadeh": the smell of Gan Eden. He knew it because he remembered his time there, even though normally a neshamah forgets. (§9)

7. ★★ Why does every Jew say "Elokei Avraham, Elokei Yitzchak v'Elokei Yaakov"?

The levels of the Avos are in the soul of every Jew (unlike the shevatim); each of the Avos passes on his way of avodah as help to every Jew. (§10)

8. ★★ How is Shabbos similar to Yitzchak's Gan Eden?

Shabbos is above time, yet "all the days are blessed from it," so we mention it every day ("yom rishon b'Shabbos"). Shammai would say about everything he found: "lichvod Shabbos." (§10)

9. ★★★ A Jew asks: "I'm tied to a body and this world; how can I give up its pleasures for 'lachazos b'noam Hashem'? That's for Gan Eden!" What is the answer?

From "Elokei Yitzchak" every Jew has the power to think about Gan Eden until he sees that all pleasures of this world are only the "leftovers" of Gan Eden's pleasure. Why give up the main thing for leftovers? (§11)

10. ★★★ What happens to the "leftovers" when one gives up the main thing?

In the end the secondary things are lost too, and certainly the leftovers. So one should put his mind on the main thing. (§11)

11. ★★ What is the way to reach this? What does "pachad Yitzchak" mean in avodah?

Like going up to Gan Eden: through bittul, which in avodah means kabbalas ol. That is "pachad Yitzchak." (§11)

12. ★ What did Shammai do whenever he found a nice animal during the week?

He bought it and said "lichvod Shabbos," for the honor of Shabbos. (§10)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“How Fortunate I Am!”

The Baal Shem Tov tried many times to reach Eretz Yisrael. On one of these trips he and his daughter Adel were stuck in Istanbul on Erev Pesach without a penny, without matzah or wine, and even his great spiritual powers had left him.

A Jew from Poland knocked on the door and asked to spend Yom Tov with them. “We have nothing,” said Adel. “No matter,” said the guest, “I brought everything.” When the Baal Shem Tov came home from shul, a full seder was waiting, and his holy powers returned.

At the meal he said to the guest, “You gave me back my life. Ask for anything.” The man asked for a child; he and his wife had none. “I swear,” said the Baal Shem Tov, “before the year is out you will hold your child.”

A voice went out in Heaven: the couple would have a child, but because the Baal Shem Tov had forced Heaven to change nature, he had lost his share in Olam Haba.

The Baal Shem Tov’s face lit up. “How fortunate I am! All my life I worried that maybe I served Hashem for the reward. Now my avodah will be pure!”

Source: Yanki Tauber, “Beyond Paradise,” *chabad.org*

Think: The sicha says the pleasures of this world are only “leftovers.” What did the Baal Shem Tov want even more than Gan Eden?

Hashem Himself: to serve Him purely, with bittul, not for any reward, even Gan Eden.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

You can taste Gan Eden right now, in Torah, davening and Shabbos. Once you taste the real thing, the “leftovers” don’t pull you as much. And like Shabbos, let that taste bless your whole week.

For example: On Shabbos you have a really good time at the tisch singing niggunim, or learning with your father. On Monday, when you want to waste an hour on your phone, remember that taste and “save” something for Shabbos: a dvar Torah to say at the table, like Shammai’s “lichvod Shabbos.”

A House, Not a Jacket

אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Toldos, p. 52ff, sections 13-21. From a sicha of the second day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5713 (1952).

The point: *Before his wedding Yitzchak was kept in Gan Eden, where there is no bad at all, because a Jewish home is an eternal building. So too a chosson learns halachah and gets semichah first: svaros (reasonings) are like clothing, good for their time; a psak halachah is like a house, "emes l'amito," forever.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ Where was Yitzchak before his wedding? Where did he "go out" from when he met Rivkah?

In Gan Eden, to be guarded from ayin hara. "Vayeitzei Yitzchak lasuach": he went out from Gan

Eden. (§13)

- ★★ What did the Friediker Rebbe instruct about a chosson in the days before the wedding, and why?

A chosson should not be alone for a few days before the wedding, as a shemirah (protection). (§13)

- ★★ Why is Gan Eden mentioned in the sheva brachos ("k'samechacha yetzircha b'Gan Eden")? What can't Gan Eden tolerate?

Gan Eden cannot tolerate any bad at all (that is why Adam was sent out after the sin). (§14)

- ★★ How much bad is in each world: Asiyah, Yetzirah and Beriah?

Asiyah is mostly bad (bad can overpower good); Yetzirah is half and half; Beriah is mostly good.

(§15)

- ★★★ How does this explain the difference between Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi?

Outside Eretz Yisrael the flow comes through Asiyah, so Bavli is full of questions and answers

that sort out the bad (the Arizal sweated over a halachah to break the kelipos). In Eretz Yisrael

it comes through Yetzirah, so Yerushalmi is mostly straight; its questions are answered right

away. (§15)

6. ★★ How should our learning be divided during the week and on Shabbos, and why?
Weekdays: mostly nigleh (two-thirds nigleh, one-third Chassidus), because the light comes through Asiyah and Yetzirah, where there is bad to sort out. Shabbos: pnimiyus haTorah, since then it comes through Beriah alone. (§15)
7. ★★ What did the Frierdiker Rebbe tell about what he was told before his wedding?
His father, the Rebbe Rashab, told him to learn and get semichah (in issur v'heter). The Rebbe Rashab was told the same by his father, the Rebbe Maharash, who wrote to him "my son, the Rav." (§17)
8. ★★★ "Eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim chaim." So what is special about a psak halachah?
All opinions in Torah are true, but halachah is "emes l'amito," the truth of truth ("v'Hashem imo," the halachah is like him). A sharp svara can be pushed off by another svara; a psak halachah stands forever. (§18)
9. ★★ Why does the Mishnah mention opinions of individuals that are not the halachah?
So that if someone comes with that argument to overturn the halachah, we'll know it was already raised and still the halachah isn't like it. (§18)
10. ★★ Explain the mashal of clothing and a house.
Clothing is used for a while, however nice; a house is permanent. In Torah, svaros are like clothing (good and necessary, but they can be overturned); halachos are like a house. (§19)
11. ★★ How does "Yitzchak was 40 when he married Rivkah" connect to semichah?
One may pasken from 40, because "one understands his teacher's mind at 40." Yitzchak took in all of Avraham's ways, and Avraham gave him all his property; then came the wedding. (§20)
12. ★★★ Why does a person first build a "house in Torah" before building his own home?
Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world, so each person's private world is built by looking into Torah. (That's also why a chosson gets an aliyah.) Building a house in Torah, halachah, makes his home an eternal building. (§21)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Maggid's Big Job

About 250 years ago, Jews had a hard time knowing the final halachah. Life was difficult, everyone was busy making a living, and few had time to swim through the “sea” of Gemara and poskim. Even great talmidei chachamim found it hard to decide between all the opinions.

The Maggid of Mezritch decided that someone must write a new Shulchan Aruch: all the halachos, clearly organized, short, with the reasons. He searched among all his great talmidim for the one with “the spirit of Hashem in him” who could do it.

He chose Reb Schneur Zalman (the future Alter Rebbe), and urged him: “There is no one with understanding and wisdom like you.”

The Alter Rebbe took on the job. His Shulchan Aruch HaRav became famous for being short and clear at the same time, giving both the halachah and its explanation, and it became one of the great pillars of halachah.

Source: *Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, “What Is Shulchan Aruch HaRav and Why Was It Necessary?” translated by Eli Rubin (chabad.org), based on the introduction of the Alter Rebbe's sons to the Shulchan Aruch HaRav*

Think: Why did the Maggid want a book of clear, final halachos, not just more svaros?

Because the halachah is the “house”: the clear bottom line that a Jew lives by every day, that stays forever.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Svaros and good questions are wonderful “clothing,” but your Yiddishkeit needs a house: knowing the halachah, the bottom line of what to do. Build your own world on that.

For example: Learn one halachah every day, for example from Kitzur Shulchan Aruch or the daily Rambam, and make sure you know the bottom line: what we actually do. When a friend asks “what brachah on this?”, you’ll know.

Holy Crazy

עלי קללתך בני

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Toldos, p. 55ff, sections 22–24. From a sicha of 13 Shevat 5711 (1951).

The point: *Why did Yaakov take the brachos through cleverness (“mirmah”)? The snake took the sparks of holiness through trickery, so they must be taken back the same way. And Rivkah’s “Alai kilelascha, b’ni” shows it needs mesirus nefesh, not calculations. We turn the “foolishness” of the other side into holy foolishness, which goes higher than holy reason.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ How did Yaakov get Yitzchak’s brachos?

Through cleverness, “mirmah” (with the wisdom of his Torah, as the Midrash says). (§22)

- ★★ Why did it have to be through “mirmah”?

The sparks of holiness fell through trickery: “v’hanachash hayah arum.” So taking them back must also be through cleverness: “im ikesh tispatal.” (§22)

- ★ What was Yaakov afraid of, and what did Rivkah answer?

That he would get a curse instead of a brachah. Rivkah said, “Alai kilelascha, b’ni”: your curse be on me, my son. (§23)

- ★★ Why is Rivkah’s answer hard to understand?

How would that calm Yaakov? Any son, especially Yaakov, cares about his mother’s safety! Yet it did convince him. (§23)

- ★★★ Who was Yaakov like, and what did he need to fix?

Yaakov’s beauty was like Adam HaRishon’s, and he had to fix Adam’s sin, which the snake caused through trickery. So he had to take back the brachos through cleverness and make sure they wouldn’t fall to Eisav. (§23)

- ★★★ Why can’t what is taken back here be received with sechel?

Its source is higher than understanding (or, at the sin, lower than understanding), higher than the giver’s will and mind. So it must be received in a matching “kli”: not reason but a step of mesirus nefesh, of risk. (§24)

7. ★★★ So what did “Alai kilelascha” really mean?

Rivkah was ready even for that; this requires total devotion and can be reached only that way, not through calculations of reason. Her answer moved Yaakov in that direction too. (§24)

8. ★★ How does the Midrash explain Yitzchak’s brachah “mital hashamayim...”?

Tal hashamayim = Mikra; shmanei ha’aretz = Mishnah; dagan = Talmud; tirosh = Aggadah. We reach Torah too through “holy cleverness.” (§24)

9. ★★ Which story does the sicha mention (in a note) about the young Tzemach Tzedek?

That he listened to the Alter Rebbe’s Torah in hiding. (§24, note 80)

10. ★★★ What does the Frierdiker Rebbe explain in the maamar (Basi L’Gani 5710) about “shtus”?

We must turn the foolishness of the other side (shtus d’l’umas zeh) into holy foolishness (shtus d’kedushah), and through that rise higher than avodah based on reason, above even holy sechel. (§24)

11. ★★ What is the “shtus” (foolishness) of the other side? Give an example from life.

Doing something wrong against all reason, just because the yetzer wants it (e.g., wasting hours one knows are precious). Holy foolishness is doing more for Hashem than reason demands. (§24)

12. ★ On what date was this sicha said? What happened then?

13 Shevat 5711, three days after the Rebbe formally accepted the nesius on Yud Shevat 5711 with the maamar Basi L’Gani. (date line)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

What a Chassid Hangs on His Gate

Reb Shmuel Munkes was one of the Alter Rebbe's great chassidim, famous for his "crazy" holy pranks.

Once, after a long farbrengen in Liozna, where the chassidim had warmed their hearts with l'chaim and niggunim and engraved the Rebbe's words on their hearts, they walked back to the Alter Rebbe's place. There, at the gate of the Rebbe's school, they found Reb Shmuel hanging upside down by his feet!

Holding their sides from laughing, they asked, "What now, Reb Shmuel?"

Reb Shmuel answered: "Well, what else should hang here? A tailor hangs a pair of scissors above his door. A shoemaker hangs a boot."

In other words: this is a factory for chassidim who are "fools for Hashem," ready to go beyond what is normal and "reasonable" for Him. The Frierdiker Rebbe taught in the maamar Basi L'Gani that this shtus d'kedushah, holy foolishness, is needed especially in our time.

Source: *Likkutei Dibburim* vol. 4, p. 1521 (the Frierdiker Rebbe), as retold by Michael Chighel, "In Praise of Chassidic Folly," chabad.org

Think: What was "crazy" about Reb Shmuel's answer, and what was true about it?

Hanging from a gate isn't normal, but it showed that a chassid serves Hashem beyond reason and

normal limits: holy foolishness.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

The yetzer hara gets you to do foolish things that make no sense. Fight back the same way: be a little "holy crazy" and do more for Hashem than "makes sense," with mesirus nefesh and not calculations.

For example: It's a freezing winter morning, and "making sense" says stay in bed until the last minute. Be holy crazy: get up early, go to shul before everyone else and say a few kapitlach of Tehillim. Or dance with all your strength at a chasunah or at Simchas Torah, even if someone thinks it's "not cool."

Taste It on Friday!

ויתן לך האלקים

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Toldos, p. 57ff, sections 25-30. From a sicha of Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5718 (1957).

The point: *Yaakov's ten brachos match the ten sayings of creation, because the world was made for the Ten Commandments, the Torah. Today his brachos are hidden, but in the future he will take "above and below." We are now on "Erev Shabbos after chatzos" of history, so it's time to taste the future, as Chassidus is spreading now.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ How many brachos did Yaakov get in "v'yiten lecha," and what do they match?

Ten, matching the ten sayings (asarah ma'amaros) with which the world was created. (§25)

2. ★★ When the Torah says one thing is "keneged" (matching) another, is it only the number?

No. They are truly connected to each other, and because of that the numbers match. We notice the number first because we understand from the result to the cause. (§25)

3. ★★ What is the example of the 248 and 365?

248 positive mitzvos match 248 limbs and 365 negative mitzvos match 365 sinews, because the mitzvos are the "limbs" of the soul through which life flows to the limbs of the body ("tamim tihyeh"). (§26)

4. ★★★ Why do the ten sayings of creation match the Ten Commandments?

Creation was for the Torah ("Bereishis: for the Torah called reishis"). Until 6 Sivan, the day of Matan Torah, heaven and earth were "shaky"; with Matan Torah the world got its existence. The purpose of the ten sayings is to shine the Ten Commandments into creation. (§27)

5. ★★ What does a Jew get when he "connects" the ten sayings with the Ten Commandments?

Plenty in gashmiyus and ruchniyus, all the brachos of "Im bechukosai teileichu," and so they come in tens. (§28)

6. ★★ What question is asked in the Zohar about Yaakov's and Eisav's brachos?

Why were Eisav's brachos fulfilled and Yaakov's not (yet)? Rabbi Elazar answered: Yaakov took "above," Eisav took "below." (§29)

7. ★★★ How does the sicha explain this?

Mitzvos "stand forever," but their light is now hidden, "like in a box" (gems in a chest), to be revealed in the future. Since the brachos come from the mitzvos, they are now hidden too. In the future Yaakov will take above and below, and his brachos will be fulfilled in this world, in gashmiyus. (§29)

8. ★ What halachah from the Arizal and the Magen Avraham is mentioned?

To taste the Shabbos food on Erev Shabbos: "to'ameha chaim zachu." (§30)

9. ★★ According to "shita alfei shnei havei alma," where are we now in history?

On Erev Shabbos after chatzos (and even after plag haminchah), so the things of the future must already show at least as a "taste." (§30)

10. ★★ Give an example of this "taste" that is already happening.

Pnimiyyus haTorah: once only special individuals had it, but in the last generations "it is a mitzvah to reveal this wisdom," through the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe in Chassidus Chabad, spreading "yafutzu ma'ayanosecha chutzah." (§30)

11. ★★★ "Yishakeini mineshikos pihu" refers to the Torah's secrets revealed in the future. So how can they be revealed now?

As a "taste" on Erev Shabbos: it is the time to begin tasting the future already now. (§30)

12. ★★ What does the sicha say should begin now regarding Yaakov's brachos?

That Yaakov's brachos "above and below" should begin to be revealed, success in gashmiyus and ruchniyus, in visible and revealed good. (§30)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The King's Crown Jewel

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, a great talmid of the Baal Shem Tov, felt that the deep secrets of Chassidus should be kept for a few special people. Once in Mezritch he found a handwritten copy of the Maggid's Torah lying in a pile of garbage, and it hurt him terribly. The young Alter Rebbe, who was there, told him a mashal:

"A great king had an only son, who fell dangerously ill on a faraway island. No doctor could cure him, until one man said: grind a certain precious stone into powder, mix it with wine, and give it to the prince. But the only such stone was the centerpiece of the king's crown! The king said: take it out and grind it.

"Then news came that the prince was so sick he couldn't even open his mouth. Surely now the king would save his crown? But he ordered: 'Grind it, pour it, use up the whole stone! Who knows? Maybe one drop will get into my son's mouth, and he'll be healed!'"

The crown jewel is the Torah's deepest secrets, and the sick son is the Jewish people in galus. Hashem wants it spread everywhere.

Source: *"The Splattered Gem," told by the Frierdiker Rebbe, adapted by Yanki Tauber (chabad.org)*

Think: How does the king's crown jewel connect to "tasting the Shabbos food on Erev Shabbos"?

The Torah's secrets belong to the time of Moshiach, but because it's already "Erev Shabbos" and we need healing, Hashem lets us taste them now through Chassidus.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

We are living on "Erev Shabbos" of the world, right before Moshiach. It's time to taste the future now: learn Chassidus, the Torah's secrets that used to be hidden, and bring Hashem's light into the world so the brachos come in gashmiyus and ruchniyus.

For example: Add five minutes of Chassidus to your day: a Hayom Yom in the morning or a few lines of Tanya before bed. On Friday, taste the cholent "lichvod Shabbos," and remember: we're tasting Moshiach too.