

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 1

לקוטי שיחות · חלק א

Parshas Vayeitzei

פרשת ויצא

3 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Protect Your Head! · p. 60, §§1–6

Sicha 2: Made in America! · p. 63, §§7–8

Sicha 3: One Simcha at a Time! · p. 65, §§9–13

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.

Protect Your Head!

ויקח מאבני המקום וישם מראשותיו

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Vayeitzei, p. 60ff, sections 1-6. From a sicha of Shabbos Parshas Vayeitzei 5711 (1950).

The point: *To build the house of Yisroel, Yaakov had to leave Be'er Sheva (peace, open G-dliness) for Charan, "the anger of the world." Going out into the world calls for more davening, not less. Yaakov guarded only his head, with stones: work with your hands, keep your head in Torah, protected by kabbalas ol. Then even simple stones become a Beis Elokim.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ The parshah starts by repeating the end of the last parshah. Why does that matter?

In Torah everything teaches; whole halachos come from one extra letter. A whole repeated passage surely teaches a lesson for every generation. (§1)

2. ★★ What are "Be'er Sheva" and "Charan"?

Be'er Sheva is named for the oath of the bris with Avimelech and the seventh well dug after peace: calm and peace. Charan = "charon af shel olam," the anger of the world. (§2)

3. ★★ What question do people ask, and how does Yaakov's life answer it?

Why didn't Hashem take away our worries (galus, parnassah) so we could sit in the tent of Torah?

Answer: to build Klal Yisroel Yaakov had to leave Be'er Sheva and the yeshivos of Shem and Ever for Charan, a place where G-dliness is hidden. By passing the tests he built a home where "mitaso shleimah." (§2)

4. ★ What was Yaakov's first step on the way to Charan?

"Vayifga bamakom": he davened. (§3)

5. ★★★ Wouldn't it make more sense to first learn the language and customs of the new country? What is the lesson?

No. Going out into the world, one must give himself MORE to davening, since the tests there are far greater than before, and he must daven to Hashem to stand up to them. (§3)

6. ★★ Why did Yaakov put stones around his head? What is hard about that?

Rashi: for fear of wild animals. But if he trusted Hashem, why protect anything? And if not, why not his whole body? (§4)

7. ★★★ Explain “yegia kapecha ki socheil, ashrecha v'tov lach.”

Two ways to earn a living: with the hands only, while the head stays in Torah and avodah; or with the head too. The first brings good in ruchniyus and also in gashmiyus, because too much cleverness doesn't help (“lo lachachamim lechem”) and can even spoil. (§4)

8. ★★ What happens to the hands and feet when the head is protected?

They follow on their own: business according to Shulchan Aruch, the hands working in the right measure, the feet running to mitzvos. (§4)

9. ★★★ Why did Yaakov protect himself with stones, not with intellect or feelings? What does a stone teach?

Stone (domem) = kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim. Sechel and feelings aren't enough. A stone can't move itself; a Jew should feel like a simple servant whom Hashem carries from place to place for His mission. (§5)

10. ★★ What was the reward?

“Veha'even hazos... yihyeh Beis Elokim”: plain stones from the roadside, not silver or gold, became a house of Hashem. (§6)

11. ★★ How does a neder fit in?

A neder obligates one when reason and feelings don't: that too is kabbalas ol, and through it Yaakov reached the highest level. (§6)

12. ★★ What is the lesson for a Jewish home?

Not only the siddur and Chumash are holy, but even the fork and spoon, when everything begins with “vayifga bamakom” (davening). Then wherever he is, even asleep, it is “sha'ar haShamayim,” and the home becomes a Beis Elokim. (§6)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Shopkeeper's Gemara

Reb Berel Bieber, a Chabad chassid, moved to Yerushalayim and opened a small shop in the Old City selling flour and sugar. His grandson remembered him sitting at the counter, his face shining, learning Gemara. When a customer came in, he marked his place, closed the Gemara and served him patiently, then went right back to learning.

One day an Ottoman tax inspector handed him a paper: he owed an enormous tax. If he didn't pay by noon tomorrow, the shop would be taken. Reb Berel sat back down and kept learning. "Don't worry," he told his worried grandson. "Hashem's help comes in the blink of an eye."

The next morning, at 8, 10 and 11, the answer was the same. At 11:15 a city councilman burst in: a platoon of Turkish soldiers had arrived without warning, with nothing to eat. Did he have lots of flour? Reb Berel calmly brought out sacks of flour, was paid on the spot, walked to the government office, paid the whole debt, and went back to his Gemara.

Source: *Elchonon Isaacs, "The Holy Shopkeeper" (chabad.org), as told by Reb Berel's grandson, Dr. Aryeh Shoshan*

Think: How did Reb Berel keep his "head" protected while his "hands" worked?

His head stayed in the Gemara and in bitachon; only his hands dealt with the business, and Hashem

took care of the rest.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Out in the world, keep your head in Torah and davening, and let your hands do the work. Protect your head with kabbalas ol: do what Hashem wants even when you don't feel like it. Start every day with "vayifga": davening first.

For example: When you ride your bike, what do you protect first? Your head, with a helmet. In the same way, before the phone, the news or the ball game, daven and learn something. And at the supper table, make a brachah with kavanah, so the fork and spoon are holy too.

Made in America!

כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Vayeitzei, p. 63ff, sections 7–8. From a sicha of 7 Kislev 5712 (1951).

The point: *Yaakov came alone to a strange land with only his stick, yet walked with bitachon. In galus, with no one to lean on (even Lavan cheated him), he raised all twelve sons complete: “mitaso shleimah.” So too today: all the promises are nothing; we can lean only on our Father in Heaven, through Torah chinuch with no compromises. Then our children will be “Made in America” and complete Yidden.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ How did Yaakov arrive in Charan?

Alone, with nothing: “ki v’makli avarti es haYarden,” with only my stick I crossed the Yarden.

(§7)

2. ★★ How did he feel on the way, and why?

He walked with a light heart and bitachon, because he trusted in Hashem (Bereishis Rabbah). (§7)

3. ★★ What did he find in Charan?

No one to rely on, not even relatives; his uncle Lavan cheated him. But he never lost his

bitachon. (§7)

4. ★ What did Yaakov say about his years of work?

“Bayom achalani chorev v’kerach balaylah”: by day the heat consumed me and the frost by night.

(§7)

5. ★★ In the end, what did he take with him? What was the main thing?

Great wealth, but above all “mitaso shleimah”: all his children were as they should be. (§7)

6. ★★★ Compare Yaakov to Avraham and Yitzchak.

Avraham had Yitzchak but also Yishmael; Yitzchak had Yaakov but also Eisav, even though they

raised their children in Eretz Yisroel. Yaakov, in galus with no one to lean on, raised all twelve

sons complete. (§7)

7. ★★ Which posuk shows that Yaakov had no one to lean on except Hashem?

“Me’ayin yavo ezri”; “ezri me’im Hashem.” (“Yomar na Yisroel”: Yisroel Saba, Yaakov.) (§7)

8. ★★★ What did Yaakov make sure of while working so hard?

That his twelve sons, among a whole foreign people, would not pick up the ways of Charan, and instead would soak up the Torah he had received from his fathers and from Shem and Ever. (§7)

9. ★★ What is “vayifrotz ha’ish me’od me’od,” and what was his even greater wealth?

He became very rich in gashmiyus, but his greater wealth was taking all his sons and daughters out of galus complete. (§7)

10. ★★ What is the lesson for the situation of the Jews today?

All the promises are nothing; “ezri me’im Hashem.” We can lean only on our Father in Heaven, and our connection to Him is only through Torah and mitzvos. (§8)

11. ★★★ What kind of chinuch does the Rebbe call for?

Chinuch in the way of Yisroel Saba (“am levadad yishkon”): Talmud Torah and yeshivah, in the spirit of the Torah we received, with yiras Shamayim and no compromises. Then “mitaso shleimah.” (§8)

12. ★★ What will we say proudly when Moshiach comes?

“These are our soldiers, ‘Made in America’”: born and raised in America, but complete Yidden, ready for the Geulah. “Bin’areinu uvizkeineinu neileich.” (§8)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“America Is No Different!”

In 1940, in the middle of World War II, the Frierdiker Rebbe was miraculously rescued from Nazi-occupied Poland. On 9 Adar II 5700 he arrived in New York on the ship Drottningholm, and thousands came to greet him. His health had been badly weakened by years of suffering and mesirus nefesh.

But he announced right away that he had not come to America for his own safety. He had a mission in this free country: to make America a center of Torah, to take the place of the destroyed Jewish communities of Europe. “America is no different!” he declared.

Weak as he was, he threw himself into the work, body and soul. He soon founded the central Yeshivah Tomchei Temimim, which became the forerunner of many yeshivos and Torah schools all over the United States, and then Machne Israel and Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch, for schools, textbooks and Jewish education everywhere.

Source: “Biography of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn” (chabad.org) and JEM “Living Torah,” Program 652, “America is No Different”

Think: How was the Frierdiker Rebbe like Yaakov arriving in Charan?

He came to a strange land weak and with almost nothing, among people who didn’t think it could

work, and with bitachon built Torah chinuch so the children would be “made in America” and

complete Yidden.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Wherever you live, you can be a complete Yid, with no compromises. Lean on Hashem, not on what everyone else says, and don’t pick up the “ways of Charan.”

For example: On the team or at the park, you’re the only one with a kippah, and nobody else makes a brachah on their snack. Make it anyway, out loud and proud. You’re the Rebbe’s soldier, “made in America.”

One Simcha at a Time!

מלא שבע זאת

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Vayeitzei, p. 65ff, sections 9–13. From a sicha of 2 Kislev 5714 (1953).

The point: *From Yaakov's wedding we learn "ein me'arvin simcha b'simcha," even though "we don't learn from before Matan Torah." The rule is about halachah, but the nature of the soul didn't change: two joys from different causes disturb each other. Every mitzvah's simchah must fill the whole person. And Chassidus, revealed in Kislev, brings chayus and simchah to all Torah and mitzvos.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ Whose wedding is the first one the Torah describes in detail? Which two halachos are learned from "malei shevua zos"?

Yaakov's (for Yitzchak only the preparations are told). (1) The seven days of feasting (sheva

brachos). (2) "Ein me'arvin simcha b'simcha." (§9)

2. ★★★ What question is asked on this?

"We don't learn from before Matan Torah." That's why the seven days are only d'rabbanan. So how is

"ein me'arvin", which Tosafos says is a full d'Oraisa derashah, learned from the same posuk? (§9)

3. ★★★ What is the answer?

The rule applies only to halachah ("nitnah Torah v'nischadshah halachah"). The nature of the soul

didn't change at Matan Torah, so we learn from Yaakov about the soul, and the halachah follows by

itself. (§10)

4. ★★ What are the two possible ways one joy affects another?

(1) Being in a happy mood helps another joy, since the mood is the same. (2) Two joys from

different causes disturb each other. The posuk teaches the second. (§11)

5. ★★ Why must the simchah of a mitzvah fill the whole person?

A mitzvah is Hashem's will, which we must do with our own will ("aseh retzono kirtzonecha"); and

"where a person's will is, there he is" (the Baal Shem Tov). So the joy must be with the whole

soul. (§11)

6. ★★★ How far did the Avos reach before Matan Torah, and what was missing?

To the root of creation, the highest a created being can reach on its own, but only in ruchniyus, because of the decree that "those above won't go down and those below won't go up." (§12)

7. ★★★ What changed at Matan Torah?

The decree was cancelled: "va'ani hamaschil." Hashem came down on Har Sinai, and now even through a physical thing one can unite with Hashem's Essence, in one moment. (§12)

8. ★★ If halachah was "renewed," why do the soul's traits from before Matan Torah still matter?

Through Torah and mitzvos we must fix ("barer") what was before Matan Torah (shevirah, the sin of the Eitz HaDaas), so we need to know them. But how to fix them is learned only from after Matan Torah. (§12)

9. ★ What is special about the month of Kislev?

The month of Geulah and miracles, when our Rebbeim revealed pnimiyus haTorah more and more broadly. (§13)

10. ★★ How does knowing Chassidus change learning nigleh and doing mitzvos?

It gives chayus, excitement and simchah to nigleh and to every mitzvah (and so more hiddur). It isn't the same before knowing pnimiyus haTorah as after. (§13)

11. ★★ What once was only for special people, and what about now?

Once only special individuals, or those with enormous toil, could reach it. Now, through learning Chassidus, every Jew can, including simchah: "ivdu es Hashem b'simchah," the Baal Shem Tov's demand. The Arizal reached ruach hakodesh through simchah shel mitzvah. (§13)

12. ★★★ Why does it matter so much for our generation?

Almost all souls today are not new; they came back (gilgul) to complete what was missing, especially in Torah, at every level, including sod (Alter Rebbe's Hilchos Talmud Torah). Only then is the soul made complete. (§13)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Baal Shem Tov Dances

The Baal Shem Tov and his talmid Reb Volf Kitzes came to a town for Shabbos. The Baal Shem Tov was sent to eat at the home of Reb Shammai, a well-to-do man.

In the middle of the Friday-night meal, the Baal Shem Tov said, "I have a custom to dance during the Shabbos meal. Is it all right to dance now?"

"Is it Simchas Torah today?" laughed Shammai. "This is no time for dancing!" But the Baal Shem Tov asked again, and Shammai agreed. The Baal Shem Tov took Reb Volf's hands, and the two danced right there in the dining room.

Shammai and his wife laughed. But as he watched the fire and joy, Shammai started tapping his feet and snapping his fingers, until he couldn't hold back and jumped up to dance too.

The next day it happened again, and by Shalosh Seudos the dancing reached a whole new level; the Baal Shem Tov's face glowed with a holy fire. Shammai understood that his guest was a holy man, and asked for his brachah. He received long life, wealth and a family of upright, devout Jews.

Source: Aharon Loschak, "Three Dances and Three Blessings" (chabad.org)

Think: Why was the Baal Shem Tov's joy so "contagious"? How does it connect to the sicha?

It filled his whole being: real simchah shel mitzvah with all the soul. That is the simchah

Chassidus brings to every mitzvah, even to a regular Shabbos meal.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Do each mitzvah with your whole self: one simchah at a time, all of you inside it. And learn Chassidus, which puts chayus and simchah into everything else you learn and do.

For example: When you sing at the Shabbos table, don't look at your phone or think about the game; be all there. Before davening, learn a few lines of Chassidus (like a Hayom Yom), and see how it changes the davening.