בס״ד

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 2

לקוטי שיחות · חלק ב

Parshas Balak

פרשת בלק

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2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: A Lion, Even in Galus! · Balak, p. 337, §§1–3

Sicha 2: Whose Is It? Lavan's Claim · Balak, p. 340, §§4–6

Name: _____

Class: _____

★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

Each sicha has questions, a true chassidishe story, and a lesson for you.

SICHA 1 OF 2 · VOL. 2 · P. 337 (HEB. ED. P. 43) · §§1–3 · YUD-BEIS TAMMUZ 5716

A Lion, Even in Galus!

כרע שכב כארי וכלביא

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Balak, p. 337 (Hebrew edition pp. 43–45), sections 1–3. From the sicha of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5716 (1956).

The point: *The Midrash says the posuk "He crouched and lay down like a lion and like a lioness; who will raise him up?" speaks about the time from King Tzidkiyahu until Moshiach: in Tzidkiyahu's time the churban and galus began, and even in the second Beis HaMikdash it was still a kind of galus, since "five things were missing". On this time it says "he lay down", and the Tzemach Tzedek explains that "lying down" means galus. But someone might think the galus is not only for the body but also for the neshamah, and for Torah and mitzvos, which belong to the neshamah. So the posuk says that even when he "crouched and lay down", it isn't lying helplessly. It is like someone who holds himself back on purpose, because he is "like a lion and like a lioness": a lion is strong, a lioness even stronger (the Zohar). Even in galus the nations don't truly rule over the Jews. The Jews are always like lions, and only "Mi", Hashem, will raise him up and take him out of galus. Until then the rule over them isn't real, just as halacha says no one rules over a lion. Galus makes no sense at all; the lion only lay down because Hashem said so. So Torah and mitzvos, whose source is "Hashem spoke all these words", have no connection to galus at all. But because we get used to galus, and because "we did not see our signs" (miracles happen, but the one who has the miracle doesn't recognize it), and because the darkness of galus can make a person think "the world runs its usual way" ("olam" from "he'elem", hiding), as if the world rules over the lion, Hashem shows open miracles from time to time even in galus, and one of the great open miracles of our generation was the miracle of Yud-Beis and Yud-Gimmel Tammuz. They remind us that even in galus "there is nothing besides Him". That is what Chazal mean: at first Hashem thought to create the world with din, saw it couldn't last, and joined mercy to it; Tanya (Shaar HaYichud) says this means the revealing of G-dliness through tzaddikim and the signs and wonders in the Torah. Miracles break the limits of nature, until even a physical eye sees that the palace has an Owner. Remembering this brings the knowledge that the Jews are always like lions, and in their neshamah, Torah and mitzvos they are not in galus. The sefarim say Bilam and Amalek are connected: write "Bilam" above "Amalek", and the right halves of the two lines read "Bilam" and the left halves read "Amalek". The way to be free of them is love and fear, and the same happens with "Yirah" written above "Ahavah". Amalek could fight the Jews because he came from Esav, and claimed that as Yitzchak's grandson and Avraham's great-grandson he could also have opinions about Torah and holiness; when he was let in a little, he turned out to be one who "knows his Master and means to rebel against Him". Bilam came from Lavan, who claimed "the daughters are my daughters, the sons are my sons". The lesson for every generation: when someone comes saying the opposite of Torah, even with a "certificate" that he is Yitzchak's grandson, answer him: "We have only our Father in Heaven". The only measure is Torah, not family yichus or anything else. If it fits the Torah, good; if not, whether from Bilam or from Amalek, we want nothing to do with it. But a person full of himself can't even tell why he rejects an instruction: because it's against Torah, or because it's against his ego. So there must be the avodah of fear and love, fear first (as the two words read, and as Tanya says fear is "the beginning of the avodah, its main part and root"). Love is the root of the positive mitzvos and fear of the negative ones, and Tanya says this can be taught even to someone who doesn't fully understand. With this preparation, even the simplest Jew, going first with fear and then with love, won't be impressed by Amalek, who came from Avraham and Yitzchak, or by Bilam, of whom it says "among the nations one arose" like Moshe.*

Name:_____ Date:_____

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What time does “He crouched and lay down like a lion” speak about? Why does it include the second Beis HaMikdash?

2. ★★ What mistake might someone make about galus? How does the posuk answer it?

3. ★★ Who is the “Mi” (who) that will raise him up? What does halacha say about lions?

4. ★★★ Why do Torah and mitzvos have no connection to galus at all?

5. ★★ Give two reasons a Jew might think “the world runs its usual way”.

6. ★★ Why does Hashem show open miracles even in galus? Which great miracle of our generation does the Rebbe name?

7. ★★★ “At first He thought to create the world with din… and joined mercy.” How does Tanya explain this?

8. ★ What hint shows Bilam and Amalek are connected? What is the way to be free of them?

9. ★★ What did Amalek and Bilam each claim?

10. ★★ What do we answer someone who says the opposite of Torah, even with great yichus?

11. ★★★ Why does a person need fear and love (fear first) to judge what fits the Torah?

12. ★★ Who can stand strong against Bilam and Amalek?

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“Only Our Bodies Went into Exile”

In 1927, the Frierdiker Rebbe was arrested in Leningrad for spreading Torah and Yiddishkeit and held in the terrible Shpalerka prison. In the end, his harsh sentence was changed to exile in the far-off town of Kostroma.

On 3 Tammuz, the day he was to leave, chassidim crowded the train station. Police and secret agents were everywhere, and informers stood in the crowd. It took real courage to be seen there, but the chassidim came.

Standing on the train, the Rebbe turned to them and spoke boldly: “May Hashem be with us as He was with our fathers; may He not leave us… Only our bodies went into exile, but not our souls! With anything of our religion, Torah, mitzvos and Jewish custom, no one else’s opinion counts, and no force can be used against it.”

He added, “Prison and hard labor are only for a while, but Torah, mitzvos and the Jewish people are forever.”

Less than ten days later, the exile was over, and the Rebbe was free. That miracle is Yud-Beis and Yud-Gimmel Tammuz.

Source: *“The Smoke of the Rebbe’s Train: Soviet Russia, 1927” (chabad.org)*

Think: Which words in the speech match “like a lion, even in galus”?

THE LESSON FOR YOU

You are a lion! No one and nothing in galus can rule over your Torah and mitzvos. The only measure is what the Torah says.

For example: At a family simcha, a cousin laughs: “Nobody keeps that anymore.” You don’t need to argue or feel small. Calmly keep doing what the Torah says.

My turn: A time I will stay strong like a lion in my Yiddishkeit:

Whose Is It? Lavan's Claim

מראש צורים אראנו

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Balak, p. 340 (Hebrew edition pp. 46–48), sections 4–6. From the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Balak 5716 (1956).

The point: *Bilam prophesied: "From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him." The "rocks" are the Avos and the "hills" are the Imahos. It was explained on Yud-Beis Tammuz that Bilam came from Lavan: "Bilam son of Be'or", and "Be'or is Lavan". Lavan said, "The daughters are my daughters and the sons are my sons", and to cancel this claim one of his own descendants had to admit, "From the top of the rocks I see him…". So Lavan's claim has some basis; if not, the Torah wouldn't write it, and Bilam wouldn't have needed to cancel it. What does Lavan's claim mean? The neshamah came down into a body and must deal with physical things. The goal is to refine them, but "one who wrestles with a dirty person gets dirty too". Even if it is only for a short time ("for a small moment I left you"), at that moment he is in touch with physical things and is separated from G-dliness. In truth, being separated from G-dliness even for a moment comes only from a spirit of foolishness; healthy sense doesn't allow it even briefly, because that moment is "a loss that can't be returned" (Tanya explains a moment is above time). It also affects later: one who separates himself for a moment, counting on fixing it later, is like "I'll sin and then do teshuvah", who isn't given the chance. So Lavan claims: since a person must deal with physical things, at least for a moment he is separated from G-dliness. But that isn't true. When a person deals with physical things for the Divine purpose in them, "to make a dwelling for Hashem below", then even at that moment it isn't a going-down but a going-up, so much so that Bilam himself, Lavan's descendant, the one with the closed eye, sees: "From the top of the rocks I see him". In avodah: a claim comes up that since the neshamah is in a body, the Torah itself says to deal with physical things; supporting the family is a mitzvah and a duty, and Chassidus explains "Hashem will bless you in all that you do": the blessing needs the "garments" of physical doing in this world. So even though the business is done to serve Hashem, since through it come more Torah and mitzvos, Lavan's claim says that at the moment of the physical work itself it is like a non-Jew's, as if a Jew's physical life belongs to Lavan. But the truth is "From the top of the rocks I see him". When a person makes a "ma'akeh" (a fence) for a new house (as explained on Yud-Beis and Yud-Gimmel Tammuz: when leaving the four amos of Torah and tefillah for the world, make a ma'akeh), he feels the Divine purpose during the physical work itself. The Avos were a "merkavah", a chariot for Hashem, in everything they did, and so is every Jew while doing a mitzvah, and also in all the things through which he keeps "Know Him in all your ways". Learning Torah with the human mind needs a ma'akeh too: the 50th gate, the "point in the palace", meaning that even while understanding with a human mind, the point of Yiddishkeit must be felt. In general, in everything a person does, physical work or learning Torah with his mind, the Divine purpose must be felt; then even at that moment it is not a going-down but, on the contrary, a going-up, because through it Hashem's purpose is done.*

Name:_____ Date:_____

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What are the "rocks" and the "hills" in Bilam's prophecy?

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2. ★★ Who was Bilam's ancestor? Why did a descendant of his have to say "From the top of the rocks I see him"?

3. ★★ How do we know Lavan's claim has some basis?

4. ★★ Explain Lavan's claim in avodah.

5. ★★★ Why doesn't healthy sense allow being separated from G-dliness even for one moment? Give two reasons.

6. ★★ What is the true answer to Lavan's claim?

7. ★★ Why is it surprising that Bilam was the one to see "From the top of the rocks"?

8. ★★ Give two reasons from Torah why a Jew must deal with physical things.

9. ★★★ What does Lavan say about a Jew's business, even when it is done for Hashem? What is the truth?

10. ★★ What is the "ma'akeh" when leaving the four amos of Torah and tefillah?

11. ★★★ Why does learning Torah also need a ma'akeh?

12. ★ What is the general rule at the end of the sicha?

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Day Laborer Who Brought the Rain

Abba Chilkiyah, the grandson of Choni HaMe'agel, was such a tzaddik that when the world needed rain, the Chachamim would send to him to daven.

Once, when there was no rain, two Chachamim came to his house. He wasn't home, so they went to the field and found him hoeing. They greeted him. He didn't answer.

That evening he carried the firewood and hoe on one shoulder and his cloak on the other. On the road he walked barefoot, but put on his shoes to cross water. Among the thorns he lifted his garment.

At home he and his wife went up to the roof to daven, and soon clouds filled the sky. Then the Chachamim asked him to explain everything.

"I am hired by the day," he said. "I may not stop my work to answer you." "The cloak was borrowed to wear, not to carry wood on." "On the road I can see where I step; in the water I can't, so I protect my feet." "Skin heals if thorns scratch it. A torn garment doesn't."

Every move of his ordinary workday was done the way the Torah wants.

Source: *Talmud, Taanis 23a–b*

Think: How did Abba Chilkiyah answer "Lavan's claim" that work time belongs to the world?

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Your "ordinary" time also belongs to Hashem. Put up a "ma'akeh": in everything you do, remember why you're doing it.

For example: Playing ball at recess, you play fair, include the boy left out, and say a bracha on your drink before you run back. Recess becomes part of your avodah.

My turn: One ordinary thing I will do this week "for Hashem":