

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 2

לקוטי שיחות · חלק ב

Parshas Beha'alos'cha

פרשת בהעלותך

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.

Seven Lamps, One Light!

מנורת זהב כולה

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Beha'alos'cha, p. 314 (Hebrew edition pp. 23–24), section 1. From the sicha of Yud Shvat 5716 (1956).

The point: *The haftorah of Beha'alos'cha says: "I saw, and behold, a menorah all of gold" (Zechariah 4:2). This is the Jewish people: all Jews together are one golden menorah. The menorah had seven lamps, and so there are different paths among Jews, as Chassidus explains: some go in the line of chesed, some in the line of gevurah, and so on, seven paths in all, the seven lamps. What they all share: they are all lamps, they all give light in the Beis HaMikdash, and the light doesn't stay inside. It goes out from the Beis HaMikdash to the whole world. That is why its windows were "shekufim atumim", narrow inside and wide outside: not like ordinary houses, whose windows bring light in from outside, but the opposite, the Beis HaMikdash lit up the whole world. That is the purpose of the Beis HaMikdash, and the ones who do it are the lamps, the souls of the Jewish people. Every Jew must serve Hashem with his own talents ("I was created only to serve my Maker"), so they are different, but the difference is only in the approach: some serve in the line of chesed, others in the line of gevurah, with chumros and in a "strict" way. The goal is the same: to give light. Still, there is a big difference between the gevurah path and a path of chesed from the start, where there is no need to grope: the goal is seen right away, because even openly it is a path of "v'ahavta l're'acha kamocha". That was the way of Aharon HaKohen, who lit the menorah: he loved the briyos and brought them close to Torah, even "briyos" who have no special quality at all and whose only virtue is that Hashem created them (as the Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya ch. 32). This love was not only the goal but also the path, and through it he made them bnei Torah. That was also the way of our Rebbeim, up to and including the Frierdiker Rebbe, whose hilula is Yud Shvat: lighting the lamps. In every Jew there is a "lamp of Hashem, the soul of man", but some are waiting for someone to light it. The Chabad Rebbeim, and the Frierdiker Rebbe especially, showed love openly, in the goal and in the path, and with closeness and pleasant ways lit the lamp of every kind of Jew.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What does the menorah in the haftorah, "a menorah all of gold", stand for?

The Jewish people: all Jews together are one golden menorah. (§1)

- ★★ What do the menorah's seven lamps stand for?

The different paths among Jews: some serve Hashem in the line of chesed, some in the line of gevurah, and so on, seven paths in all (Likkutei Torah). (§1)

- ★ What do all seven lamps have in common?

They are all lamps, and they all give light in the Beis HaMikdash. (§1)

- ★★ How were the windows of the Beis HaMikdash different from the windows of a regular house, and what does this teach?

They were "shekufim atumim", narrow inside and wide outside. A regular window brings light in; the Beis HaMikdash sent light out to the whole world. That is its purpose. (§1)

5. ★★ Who makes the light of the Beis HaMikdash go out to the world?

The lamps, which are the souls of the Jewish people. (§1)

6. ★★ Why are Jews different from each other? What do they still share?

Each Jew was created to serve Hashem with his own talents and feelings ("I was created only to serve my Maker"). But all of them are lamps, and all of them give light. (§1)

7. ★★★ If the goal is the same, what is the big difference between the path of gevurah and the path of chesed?

In the gevurah path (chumros, strictness) one has to grope to see the goal. In the chesed path the goal is seen right away, because even openly it is a path of "v'ahavta l're'acha kamocha". (§1)

8. ★ What does the mishnah say about Aharon HaKohen, who lit the menorah?

He loved the briyos (people) and brought them close to Torah (Avos 1:12). (§1)

9. ★★ According to the Alter Rebbe (Tanya ch. 32), who are the "briyos" whom Aharon loved?

Even people with no special quality at all, whose only virtue is that Hashem created them. Aharon loved them too. (§1)

10. ★★★ For Aharon, love was not only the goal but also the path. What does that mean, and what came of it?

He didn't just aim to bring them to good in the end; his way of dealing with them was openly loving. Through that love he brought them close to Torah and made them bnei Torah. (§1)

11. ★★ What does "ner Hashem nishmas adam" teach about every Jew? What was the avodah of the Rebbeim?

Every Jew has a lamp of Hashem, his soul, but some are waiting for someone to light it. The Rebbeim's avodah was to light the hidden lamp in every Jew, of all seven kinds. (§1)

12. ★★★ How did the Chabad Rebbeim, and the Frierdiker Rebbe especially, light the lamps? Why does this sicha fit Yud Shvat?

With love shown openly, in the goal and in the path, with closeness and pleasant ways, to every kind of Jew. Yud Shvat is the Frierdiker Rebbe's hilula, and this was his way. (§1)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

No Such Thing as a Small Jew

In the early 1980s, a Jewish boy on the island of Curaçao, in the Caribbean, was having a terrible time. There was no Jewish school, and at the Protestant school he refused to join their prayers. The other boys picked fights with him every day. In the end he stopped going to school altogether.

His father didn't know what to do. One night he dreamed of his grandmother from when he was a small child. "Whenever you are in trouble," she told him, "the one who can help you is the Lubavitcher Rebbe." He had never heard of the Rebbe. The next morning he went to his little shul, stood by the Aron Kodesh and poured out his heart.

In January 1984, the Rebbe's secretary phoned Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky: "The Rebbe wants you to go to Curaçao immediately." He took the next flight with a 17-year-old bochur. At the airport they asked a taxi for "the shul", and the driver took them, not to the famous old synagogue, but to a small neighborhood shul. A man was just walking out: the boy's father. That summer the boy went to Camp Gan Israel, and then to yeshivah.

The grateful father wrote to thank the Rebbe and signed: "a small Jew from Curaçao." The Rebbe answered: "I must take exception... Every Jew has a Nefesh Elohis, which is a part of G-dliness above. There is no such thing as a small Jew."

Source: "A Jew in Curaçao" (as told by the son), and the Rebbe's letter "No Such Thing As a Small Jew" (chabad.org)

Think: How did the Rebbe act like Aharon, "lighting the lamps" with love?

He sent someone right away to one boy on a faraway island, without waiting to be asked, and lit his lamp. And he told the father that no Jew is "small": every Jew has a G-dly soul, a lamp of Hashem.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Every Jew is a lamp of Hashem, even someone who seems to have nothing special. Light his lamp the way Aharon did: with love you can see.

For example: There's a quiet boy in your class whom nobody really talks to. Sit with him at lunch, ask about his week and invite him to your Mishnayos chavrusa. You don't need a reason; he is a Jew.

Light It in the Heichal!

בהעלותך את הנרות

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Beha'alos'cha, p. 316 (Hebrew edition pp. 24–27), sections 1–6. From the sicha of Chag HaShavuot 5717 (1957).

The point: *Spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus outward means not waiting for those “outside” to come to the wellsprings, but going out to them. This way is rooted in Aharon, who “loved peace and pursued peace, loved the briyos and brought them close to Torah”: he didn’t wait for them to come; he went to them, even to “briyos” with no virtue except that Hashem created them. But the exact words are “brought them close to Torah”: he brought them to the Torah, not the Torah to them. He made no compromises and no “heterim”; he brought people to the whole Torah, as it is. The point of Aharon’s avodah is hinted in “Beha’alos’cha es haneiros”. The lamps are Jewish souls (“ner Hashem nishmas adam”), of seven kinds. In every Jew the G-dly lamp is hidden, and Aharon’s job is to light it and reveal it, “until the flame rises by itself”: as long as someone still needs Aharon to light him, he hasn’t reached the goal. The menorah of the Beis HaMikdash had three laws: (1) lighting is kosher even by a non-kohen: influencing others isn’t only for special people; it is every Jew’s right and duty (“be among the students of Aharon”); (2) preparing the lamps, the oil and wick, is only by a kohen: one might think that what matters is influencing others, so I’ll explain Torah my way, choose a way in mitzvos that suits me and him; no, the material of the lamp can be prepared only by a “kohen”, someone separated from materialism whose whole being is cleaving to Hashem (the Rambam, end of Shemittah v’Yovel); after that, everyone lights; (3) the menorah must be lit specifically in the Heichal: there are ten levels of holiness, and the lower ones are holy too, yet lighting there doesn’t count. The lesson: a person shouldn’t say, “Fine, I must light my lamp and others’ lamps, but why with such strict holiness? Many Jews aren’t asked for so much.” Everyone has his own task. If someone was given the ability to give light in a holier place, that itself proves this is the job Hashem gave him, and if he doesn’t do it, he hasn’t done Hashem’s will at all, because a will can’t be divided: you can understand an idea halfway, but a will done halfway isn’t half done; it’s the opposite of the will. The same between generations: in earlier generations many didn’t learn pnimiyus haTorah, but in our generation, when it has been revealed, that very revelation shows that learning it is our generation’s job. The flame has a dark part near the wick (nigleh) and a bright part (pnimiyus haTorah), and both are needed; pnimiyus haTorah gives strength against all obstacles and adds life to nigleh and to mitzvos. To women: tznius, “kol kevudah bas melech penimah”. Kimchis, whose walls never saw her hair, merited seven sons who were kohanim gedolim. A woman shouldn’t think, “Must I be so careful just so my sons are kohanim gedolim? What if they’re ordinary kohanim? All Jews are holy!” The menorah must give light in the Heichal: if she can raise sons who are kohanim gedolim, that is her duty. This explains “Speak to Aharon... when you light the lamps”: a non-kohen may light and an ordinary kohen may prepare, so why Aharon? Because everyone must light others’ G-dly lamp, and the way must be at the level of the kohen gadol’s holiness. The kohen gadol entered the Kodosh HaKodashim, where there was only the Aron and the Luchos, with letters engraved in the stone itself, not written on top. His whole being is Torah. Every Jew must light his own lamp and others’ with Aharon’s power and in his way, until his whole being is Torah, and especially the women, on whom the chinuch of the children depends. Then all obstacles in the children’s lives fall away, with blessings of children, life and plenty, in the simplest sense.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What does “yafutzu maayanosecha chutzah” mean in practice?

Not waiting for those “outside” to come to the wellsprings, but going out to them and spreading the wellsprings there. (§1)

2. ★★ Aharon “brought them close to Torah”. Why are these exact words so important?

He brought the people to the Torah, not the Torah to the people. He made no compromises or “heterim” to suit them; he brought them to the whole Torah, as it is. (§1)

3. ★★ What does “until the flame rises by itself” teach about influencing another Jew?

The goal is that his own lamp burns by itself. As long as he still needs Aharon to light him, he hasn’t reached the goal. (§2)

4. ★ What are the three laws of lighting the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash?

(1) The lighting is kosher even by a non-kohen; (2) preparing the lamps (oil and wick) must be by a kohen; (3) the menorah must stand and be lit in the Heichal. (§3)

5. ★★ What do we learn from “lighting is kosher even by a non-kohen”?

Influencing others and spreading the wellsprings isn’t only for special people. It is every Jew’s right and duty: “be among the students of Aharon”. (§3)

6. ★★★ What mistake does “preparing the lamps only by a kohen” come to prevent? Who is a “kohen” in our avodah?

Thinking “what matters is influencing, so I’ll explain Torah my own way and pick a mitzvah path that suits us both”. The oil and wick must be prepared by a “kohen”: someone separated from materialism whose whole being is cleaving to Hashem (Rambam). After that, everyone lights. (§3)

7. ★★ There are ten levels of holiness, and they are all holy. Why can’t the menorah be lit in one of the lower ones?

Everything has its own “field of work”. The menorah’s job is to give light in the Heichal, and lighting it in a lower place doesn’t count. (§3)

8. ★★★ Someone says: "Why must I do it with such strict holiness? Many Jews aren't asked for so much." How does the sicha answer?

Everyone has his own task. If Hashem gave you the ability to give light in a holier place, that proves it's your job, and if you don't do it, you haven't done Hashem's will. (§4)

9. ★★★ What is the difference between understanding (sechel) and will (ratzon)? Why does it matter here?

You can understand an idea partly, but a will can't be divided. A will not done in all its details isn't half done; it isn't done at all, it's even the opposite. (§4)

10. ★★★ How do we know that learning pnimiyus haTorah is a task of our generation? What do the two parts of the flame teach?

In earlier generations many didn't learn it, but now that it has been revealed, the revelation itself shows it is our job. The dark flame (nigleh) and the bright flame (pnimiyus) are both needed; pnimiyus gives strength against obstacles and adds life to nigleh and mitzvos. (§4)

11. ★★ What did Kimchis merit through her tznus? What is the lesson from the menorah in the Heichal?

Seven sons who were kohanim gedolim. If a mother can raise sons who are kohanim gedolim, that is her duty; she shouldn't settle for "ordinary kohanim". (§5)

12. ★★★ A non-kohen may light, and an ordinary kohen may prepare. So why does the Torah say "Speak to Aharon"? What is special about a kohen gadol?

Lighting others' lamps must be at the level of the kohen gadol's holiness. He entered the Kodesh HaKodashim, where there was only the Aron and the Luchos, with letters engraved in the stone itself. His whole being is Torah. (§6)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“You Must Train Rabbis”

In 1968, a Jewish student at Cambridge University named Jonathan Sacks rode a Greyhound bus for seventy-two hours to meet the Rebbe. In yechidus he asked his philosophical questions, and the Rebbe answered. Then the Rebbe began asking him questions: How many Jewish students are in Cambridge? How many are involved in Jewish life? What are you doing to bring others in?

The young man began, “In the situation in which I find myself...” The Rebbe stopped him: “Nobody finds himself in a situation. You put yourself in a situation, and if you put yourself in that situation, you can put yourself in another situation.”

Ten years later he came back with three career choices for the Rebbe to pick from: a professor, an economist or a lawyer. The Rebbe chose none of them. “Anglo Jewry is short of rabbis. You must train rabbis, and you must become a congregational rabbi yourself.”

He did. He trained rabbis, led a shul, and in 1991 became Chief Rabbi of Britain. And all three dreams came to him anyway: he became a professor, gave Britain’s top economics lectures and was made an honorary barrister. “You never lose anything,” he said, “by putting Yiddishkeit first.”

Source: *Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, “Chief Rabbi Sacks Highlights Rebbe’s Inspiring Charge” (transcript, chabad.org)*

Think: How does the Rebbe’s answer show the menorah lit “in the Heichal”?

The Rebbe saw that this young man could do much more than help himself; he could light the lamps of a whole community. Because he had that ability, it was his job, and settling for less wouldn’t have been enough.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Don’t ask, “Why me? Others don’t do this much.” What Hashem gave you shows what He wants from you. Light your lamp, and others’, with real Torah, at the highest level you can.

For example: You’re strong in Gemara. Instead of “that’s enough for me”, you learn with a boy who struggles, the real Gemara, not a watered-down version, and you add a few lines of Tanya to your day too.