

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 2

לקוטי שיחות · חלק ב

Parshas Chukas

פרשת חוקת

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Mann, Clouds and a Well, Inside the Torah! · Chukas, p. 331, §§1-5

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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.

Mann, Clouds and a Well, Inside the Torah!

ענני הכבוד, מן ובאר

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Chukas, p. 331 (Hebrew edition pp. 38–41), sections 1–5. From the sicha of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5713 (1953). One sicha, divided here into two parts.

The point: *Chazal say that the Clouds of Glory came in Aharon's merit, the well in Miriam's merit and the mann in Moshe's merit. When Aharon and Miriam passed away, the clouds and the well were taken away, and they came back in Moshe's merit. The Torah is wisdom ("it is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations"), yet it isn't called "wisdom" but "Torah", from "hora'ah", teaching: everything told in it is a lesson for always, everywhere, in daily life. Not only the mitzvos teach; the stories teach too. Even the mitzvos are written as a story ("Hashem told Moshe, and Moshe told the Jews"). That is why the Rambam writes (and the Gemara hints) that there is no difference between "and Lotan's sister was Timna" and "Shema Yisrael": both are stories, both are lessons, both are Hashem's wisdom and will. So this story is a lesson too. The clouds protected from outside: on all four sides, they killed snakes, flattened mountains and cleaned and pressed the clothes. The mann was food, and you could taste in it whatever you wanted; food is taken in, inside. The well was water, which doesn't nourish by itself (that's why "we don't make an eruv with water"), but carries the food to every part of the body. The Torah has all three. Like the mann, Torah teaches how to live, and must be understood and taken inside; here Jews differ, each by his level, as the mann was different for tzaddikim and for others (only the mann had differences, not the clouds or the well). Some fulfill the mitzvah of learning, when there is no other way, with Shema morning and night; others must learn all day. The same with hiddurim: some are required of a great person and forbidden to a simple one (as showing off). Like the clouds, Torah protects from outside. When a person goes out into the "desert" of this world, "a great and awesome desert with snakes, serpents and scorpions", he is protected by the power of mesirus nefesh in every Jew: "Yisrael" stands for "there are 600,000 letters in the Torah", and a Sefer Torah is kosher only with every letter, so every Jew, even the simplest, has the power to give his life for kiddush Hashem. Just as the clouds surrounded all the Jews, even those who took an idol with them, this part of the Torah includes every Jew. The Frierdiker Rebbe told that during the bombings of Warsaw, a group in one shelter included the Frierdiker Rebbe himself, ordinary people, simple people, and some thought to have no connection to Yiddishkeit; when a bomb exploded nearby, all of them cried out together: "Shema Yisrael!" When the yechidah, the essence of the soul, is reached, even the simplest Jew says "Shema Yisrael" as strongly as a leader of Israel. And so that every Jew has the mann and the clouds of the Torah, we need the "water" of the Torah: as water flows from high to low, the Torah came down and dressed itself in lower things, so every Jew, by saying the words of the Written Torah (even without knowing what they mean) and by learning the Oral Torah (even only the simple meaning), can reveal the mann and the clouds in the Torah. Like water carrying food to every part of the body, the "water" brings the mann and the clouds to the whole camp, to every Jew, in all he needs.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ In whose merit came the clouds, the well and the mann? What happened when Aharon and Miriam passed away?

Clouds: Aharon. Well: Miriam. Mann: Moshe. When Aharon and Miriam passed away, the clouds and the

well were taken away and came back in Moshe's merit. (§1)

2. ★★ The Torah is wisdom. Why is it called "Torah" and not "wisdom"?
"Torah" comes from "hora'ah", teaching. Everything told in it is a lesson for always, everywhere, in daily life. (§1)

3. ★★ Why do the stories of the Torah teach just like the mitzvos? Bring two proofs.
The mitzvos themselves are written as a story ("Hashem told Moshe, Moshe told the Jews"), and still they teach; so do the stories, which are part of the Torah. And the Rambam says there is no difference between "Lotan's sister was Timna" and "Shema Yisrael": both are Hashem's wisdom and will. (§1)

4. ★ What did the Clouds of Glory do for the Jews in the desert?
They protected them from outside: on all four sides, killed the snakes, flattened the mountains, and cleaned and pressed their clothes. (§2)

5. ★★ What is special about food (the mann) and about water (the well)?
Food is taken in, inside, and in the mann you could taste whatever you wanted. Water doesn't nourish by itself (so no eruv with water), but it carries the food to every part of the body. (§2)

6. ★★ How is the Torah like the mann? Why do Jews differ in this part?
It teaches how to live and must be understood and taken inside. Since it is "inside", each Jew has it by his level, just as the mann was different for tzaddikim and for others, while the clouds and the well were the same for all. (§3)

7. ★★ Give two examples of how the Torah's "mann" is different for different people.
Learning: some, when there is no other way, are yotzei with Shema morning and night; others must learn all day. Hiddurim: some are required of a great person and forbidden to a simple one, as showing off. (§3)

8. ★★★ What is the “desert” we go out into, and what protects every Jew there? Why does every Jew have this power?

This world, full of “snakes, serpents and scorpions”. The power of mesirus nefesh protects him.

“Yisrael” = “there are 600,000 letters in the Torah”, and a Sefer Torah is kosher only with every letter, so every Jew, even the simplest, has the power to give his life for Hashem. (§4)

9. ★★ Whom did the Clouds of Glory surround? What does this teach?

All the Jews, even those who took an idol with them. This part of the Torah, mesirus nefesh, includes every Jew, from the greatest to the simplest. (§4)

10. ★★ What happened in the shelter in Warsaw, and what does it show?

A group with the Friediker Rebbe, ordinary and simple people, and some thought to be far from Yiddishkeit: when a bomb exploded nearby, all of them cried out “Shema Yisrael!” together. When the yechidah is reached, even the simplest Jew says Shema as strongly as a leader of Israel. (§4)

11. ★★ What is the “water” of the Torah?

As water flows from high to low, the Torah came down and dressed itself in lower things, a beautiful wisdom in a plain vessel. (§5)

12. ★★★ What can a Jew reveal even by saying words of Chumash he doesn’t understand, or learning only the simple meaning? How is this like water?

He can reveal the mann and the clouds in the Torah. Like water carrying food to the whole body, the “water” of the Torah brings the mann and the clouds to every Jew in the camp, in all he needs. (§5)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Zeidy Pinchas's Sefer Torah

After the Second World War, Rabbi Pinchas Sudak and his family escaped from Soviet Russia with a group of Lubavitcher chassidim. In Cracow, a Polish Jew offered a Sefer Torah for sale, and Zeidy Pinchas bought it at once. "Wherever this journey leads us," he said, "how can so many Jews travel without a Sefer Torah?" He had a heavy wooden box made for it.

Late one night they had to cross the border on foot through a dense, dark forest. They could carry only the bare necessities. Zeidy Pinchas held his Sefer Torah, but he also had to carry his young child. With tears in his eyes he whispered to the Torah, "It is for you that I left Russia." He kissed it and laid it, in its box, under a tree.

Years later, his daughter heard a friend tell about her own father, Rabbi Gurevitch, who escaped through the same forest a few weeks later. In the dark, their five-year-old daughter wandered off. Crawling on their hands and knees to find her, her father felt a wooden box. Inside was a Sefer Torah, and right next to it sat his little girl. He wrapped the Torah around his body and carried it out. Today it is in a shul in New York.

Source: Chana Weisberg, "Zaidy Pinchas' Torah" (chabad.org)

Think: How does this story show the Torah as "Clouds of Glory" in the desert?

In a dark, dangerous "desert", these Jews were ready to give everything for the Torah, and the

Torah protected and guided them. The lost child was found right beside it.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Every word of Torah counts, even a posuk you only say, or a Gemara you understand simply. It is your "mann", your "clouds" and your "water".

For example: You don't understand every word of Tehillim or of the parsha. Say it anyway, carefully, every day, and add the simple meaning of one posuk. That brings the Torah's protection with you.

Not My Job? It IS Your Job!

וחזרו בזכותו של משה

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Chukas, p. 334 (Hebrew edition pp. 41-42), sections 6-8. From the sicha of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5713 (1953).

The point: *Now we understand why the mann came through Moshe, the clouds through Aharon and the well through Miriam. Moshe was the shepherd of Israel and fed each one by his level: as a shepherd he fed the young sheep soft grass and the older ones hard grass, since feeding is something inner and must fit each one, so the mann, which was "inner" and different for each, came in his merit. Aharon "loved the briyos", even those who are only "creations"; that is why "the whole house of Israel" wept for him thirty days, which isn't said of anyone else. With this love he woke up a desire for mitzvos even in those who were far. Measure for measure, since he loved everyone without any division, he brought the clouds that surrounded all the Jews equally. Miriam was Puah, the midwife who devoted herself to the babies in Egypt. She was named Miriam because she lived in the bitter ("mar") time of galus, yet she prophesied that the savior of Israel would soon be born, and so she cancelled not only Pharaoh's decree but also Amram's (though Amram had a reason). With mesirus nefesh she prepared the children who would say "This is my G-d and I will glorify Him", the generation that would receive the Torah. So in her merit came the well, the water, which is bringing the Torah down to a low place, even to those at the edge of the camp. When Aharon and Miriam passed away, the clouds and the well left and came back in Moshe's merit. So Moshe must have begun a new avodah: though his own avodah was that of the shepherd (mann), the new one brought back the clouds and the well too. The true sign of a shepherd of Israel is that he doesn't do only the work that belongs to him; when it is needed, he sets himself aside and gives himself for the Jews. When a Jewish heart must be brought close to Hashem, even of the very lowest, the leader puts his own matters aside and teaches aleph-beis, the aleph-beis of Torah and mitzvos or the aleph-beis literally. Though he is a kohen (and "what is a kohen doing in a cemetery?", the wicked are called dead in their lifetime); though he is an "elder who acquired wisdom", who doesn't return a lost object when it isn't fitting for his honor; though his job is to teach the leaders how to lead, not to deal with people who aren't kosher: when Aharon and Miriam are gone and no one else takes care of it, the head of Israel takes it on, even when it isn't fitting for his level. Tanya says every Jew has a spark of Moshe. So this is a lesson for every Jew: though each has his own task, when "Miriam's well" and "Aharon's clouds" are missing and there is a danger of "snakes, serpents and scorpions", each one must bring back the well and the clouds, without thinking about whether it is his job. Even someone who himself has nothing to fear (a wild animal rules over a person only if he seems to it like an animal), since others are in danger and no Aharon or Miriam is seen taking care of it, it is pikuach nefesh, which pushes aside Shabbos and the whole Torah, even with many doubts, even for a short time of life. So he must be the one who makes sure there is mann, clouds and a well. When a person gives up on himself, doesn't check whether it is his job or whether his job is higher, and brings Jews close to their Father in Heaven, Hashem will bring him and his family close and give them what they need, and above all, "make Me a Mikdash", a mitzvah on the whole community, men and women, "and I will dwell among them", in each and every Jew.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★★ Why did the mann come in Moshe's merit? What did he do as a shepherd?

He fed each one by his level: the young sheep soft grass and the older ones hard grass. Feeding is

"inner" and must fit each one, like the mann. (§6)

2. ★★ Why did the clouds come in Aharon's merit? How do we see how much he loved everyone?

He loved all the briyos without division, even those who were only "creations", and woke up a desire for mitzvos even in those who were far. Measure for measure, he brought the clouds that surrounded all Jews equally. "The whole house of Israel" wept for him thirty days. (§6)

3. ★★ Who was Miriam in Egypt? Why is she called Miriam?

Puah, the midwife who devoted herself to the babies. "Miriam" from "mar", bitter: she lived in the bitter time of galus, yet prophesied that the savior would soon be born. (§6)

4. ★★★ Why did the well come in Miriam's merit?

With mesirus nefesh she prepared the children who would say "This is my G-d", the generation that received the Torah. Water brings the Torah down to a low place, even to those at the edge of the camp. (§6)

5. ★★ The clouds and the well came back in Moshe's merit. What does this prove?

That Moshe began a new avodah: besides his own work as shepherd (the mann), he took on the work of Aharon and Miriam too. (§7)

6. ★★ What is the true sign of a shepherd of Israel?

He doesn't do only the work that belongs to him. When it is needed, he sets himself aside and gives himself for the Jews, even teaching aleph-beis, of Torah and mitzvos or literally. (§7)

7. ★★★ Give three reasons why teaching aleph-beis might seem "not fitting" for the leader. Why does he do it anyway?

He is a kohen ("what is a kohen doing in a cemetery?"); he is an elder, who doesn't return a lost object beneath his honor; his job is to teach the leaders. But when Aharon and Miriam are gone and no one else does it, he takes it on. (§7)

8. ★ What does Tanya say every Jew has, and why does that make this a lesson for us?

A spark of Moshe Rabbeinu. So each of us can and must do what Moshe did. (§8)

9. ★★ What must every Jew do when “Miriam’s well” and “Aharon’s clouds” are missing?

Bring them back himself, without thinking about whether it is his job. (§8)

10. ★★★ Someone says, “I’m not in danger myself.” Why must he still act? Why is it called pikuach nefesh?

Others are in danger and no one else is taking care of it. Spiritual danger to others is like

pikuach nefesh, which pushes aside Shabbos and the whole Torah, even with doubts, even for a short time of life. (§8)

11. ★★ What does Hashem give to a person who brings Jews close without checking whether it is his job?

Hashem brings him and his family close and gives them what they need, and above all, “make Me a

Mikdash... and I will dwell among them”, in every Jew. (§8)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

So the Torah Won’t Be Forgotten

Rabbi Chiya was one of the great Chachamim of his time. When Reish Lakish, himself a great sage, once tried to find Rabbi Chiya’s grave and couldn’t, he asked, “Didn’t I learn Torah as deeply as he did?” A voice from Heaven answered: “You learned like him, but you did not spread Torah like him.”

What did Rabbi Chiya do? Once Rabbi Chanina argued with him: “If the Torah were ever forgotten, I could bring it back with my sharp mind!”

Rabbi Chiya answered, “I make sure it will never be forgotten.” He planted flax, twisted the flax into nets, and trapped deer. He gave the meat to orphans to eat. From the hides he made parchment, and on it he wrote the five books of the Chumash.

Then he went to a town and taught five children: each child one book of the Chumash. To six more children he taught the six sedarim of the Mishnah. “Until I come back,” he told them, “teach each other.”

Rebbi said: “How great are the deeds of Rabbi Chiya!”

Source: *Talmud, Bava Metzia 85b*

Think: How did Rabbi Chiya act like Moshe bringing back the “well”?

He was a great sage, yet he didn’t say “teaching children aleph-beis isn’t my job”. He did

everything himself, even trapping deer and making parchment, to bring Torah to children who had no one.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

When something needs to be done for another Jew and no one is doing it, don't ask "Is it my job?" You have a spark of Moshe. Do it.

For example: A younger boy in shul can't find the place and nobody helps. You could say, "I'm not his counselor." Instead you sit next to him, show him the page, and teach him how to follow.