

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 2

לקוטי שיחות · חלק ב

Parshas Devarim

פרשת דברים

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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.

A Vision From Afar

שבת חזון

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Devarim, p. 357 (Hebrew edition pp. 63–64), section 1. From the sicha of Shabbos Chazon 5715 (1955).

The point: *About this Shabbos, Shabbos Chazon, there is a saying of the holy Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev: on Shabbos Chazon we are shown the third Beis HaMikdash ("chazon" means seeing), but it is a seeing from afar. That is what Shabbos Chazon is. This explains the connection between Shabbos Chazon and Parshas Devarim, since Shabbos Chazon always falls on Parshas Devarim. Devarim begins Sefer Mishneh Torah. Though it is all one Torah, Mishneh Torah is different from the earlier Chumashim: it was said to the generation that entered Eretz Yisrael, and they needed warnings about certain things that at first didn't need a warning. The difference between the generation of the desert and the generation that entered the land: the desert generation was a "generation of knowledge"; its people were on Moshe Rabbeinu's level, who had "seeing" of G-dliness. The generation entering the land had already come into contact with physical things, so they lacked the seeing of G-dliness; they had only hearing, as it says, "And now, Israel, hear...". The difference between seeing and hearing: seeing has no limits. Once a person has seen something, nothing can move him and put doubts in him, since he saw it himself. But when he hears something, even if he takes it in well at that moment, a question can shake it, which proves that even when it seemed taken in, it was limited. So in Mishneh Torah, said to the generation that had only "hearing" of G-dliness, there was a need to command about mesirus nefesh and the like, things the desert generation didn't need to be commanded or warned about. Yet though the generation that entered the land was on a lower level, it had an advantage the desert generation didn't have. About the desert generation it says, "for you have not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance", meaning Shiloh and Yerushalayim, after entering the land. The reason: exactly from the descent itself, from beginning to deal with physical things on lower levels, came the chance to carry out the true purpose, building the "rest and inheritance". So Shabbos Parshas Devarim marks two opposites: a great descent, and exactly from the descent comes the true ascent. The same is in Shabbos Chazon: on one hand it falls in the Nine Days, and even more, it is the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av, the time of the churban; on the other hand, exactly through the descent will come the highest ascent, as the Berditchever said, on Shabbos Chazon we are shown the third Beis HaMikdash, higher than the ones before it, to be built speedily in our days by Moshiach.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What did Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev say about Shabbos Chazon?

We are shown the third Beis HaMikdash ("chazon" = seeing), but from afar. (§1)

- ★ On which parsha does Shabbos Chazon always fall? What sefer begins then?

Parshas Devarim, the beginning of Mishneh Torah (Sefer Devarim). (§1)

- ★★ How is Mishneh Torah different from the earlier Chumashim?

It was said to the generation entering Eretz Yisrael, who needed warnings about things that the earlier generation didn't need to be warned about. (§1)

4. ★★ What was the difference between the desert generation and the generation that entered the land?

The desert generation was a "generation of knowledge", like Moshe, with "seeing" of G-dliness. The next generation had contact with physical things and had only "hearing" ("Shema Yisrael"). (§1)

5. ★★★ What is the difference between seeing and hearing?

Seeing has no limits: once you saw it, nothing can put doubts in you. What you hear, even if you took it in well, can be shaken by a question, so it is limited. (§1)

6. ★★ Why did the generation entering the land need to be commanded about mesirus nefesh?

They had only "hearing" of G-dliness, so they needed commands and warnings that the "seeing" generation didn't need. (§1)

7. ★★ What advantage did the generation entering the land have?

They reached "the rest and the inheritance", Shiloh and Yerushalayim, which the desert generation never reached. (§1)

8. ★★★ Why did the lower generation merit building the Mikdash?

Exactly from the descent, from dealing with physical things, came the chance to carry out the true purpose. (§1)

9. ★★ What two opposites are in Shabbos Chazon?

It falls in the Nine Days, right before Tisha B'Av, the churban. Yet through the descent comes the highest ascent: the vision of the third Beis HaMikdash. (§1)

10. ★★ How is the third Beis HaMikdash different from the first two?

It is higher than the ones before it, and it will be built by Moshiach speedily in our days. (§1)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Why Rabbi Akiva Laughed

After the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva went up to Yerushalayim. When they reached Har HaTzofim and saw the place of the Beis HaMikdash, they tore their clothes.

When they reached Har HaBayis, they saw a fox come out of the place of the Kodesh HaKodashim. They began to cry. Rabbi Akiva laughed.

"Why are you laughing?" they asked. "Why are you crying?" he asked. "The Torah says a non-kohen who comes near this place shall die," they said, "and now foxes walk in it! Shouldn't we cry?"

"That is why I laugh," said Rabbi Akiva. "The navi Uriah said, 'Har HaBayis will be like a forest,' where foxes run. And the navi Zechariah said, 'Old men and old women will yet sit in the streets of Yerushalayim.' As long as Uriah's words hadn't come true, I was afraid Zechariah's might not. Now that Uriah's have come true, Zechariah's will surely come true too!"

They said to him: "Akiva, you have comforted us! Akiva, you have comforted us!"

Source: *Talmud, Makkos 24b*

Think: How did Rabbi Akiva "see the third Beis HaMikdash from afar"?

In the middle of the churban he saw the rebuilding. The destruction itself was proof that the

Geulah would come.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Even when you can't "see", only "hear", you can build. And a hard time is often the start of something even greater.

For example: Your team lost the big game and everyone is down. Instead of only complaining, look ahead: "Now we know what to practice. Next time we'll be better."

Extra Joy, Even Now!

שמחה יתרה בשבת

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Devarim, p. 358 (Hebrew edition pp. 64–65), section 2. From the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mattos-Masei 5716 (1956).

The point: *It was already said once that the sadness of Bein HaMetzarim shouldn't be on Shabbos, since on Shabbos there must be joy. More than that: on this Shabbos there must be more joy than on other Shabbosos, so that no one suspects the missing joy is because of Bein HaMetzarim. The inner explanation: Shabbos is a taste of the future, "the day that is all Shabbos", and since the future Geulah will be so complete that no trace of galus will remain, there is no place on Shabbos for Bein HaMetzarim. But that explains only why there shouldn't be anything opposite to joy on Shabbos. Why must this Shabbos have more joy than other Shabbosos? It is known that the Geulah after a galus brings a higher state than before the galus; if it only went back to how it was, why was the galus needed? As is known, "breaking down in order to build": the building after the breaking is greater than before. This is true in general of every Geulah from galus. Even a Geulah that has a galus after it, like Yetzias Mitzrayim, is higher than before the galus, because of the refining of the sparks in galus, which is the purpose of the galus. All the more so the future Geulah, a complete and true Geulah with no galus after it: it surely makes a completely new light, a new kind of existence, in which there is no place at all for galus. This light wasn't there before the galus, since we see a galus came afterward; but in the future Geulah something so high will be drawn down that there will be no room for galus after it. So on a Shabbos, a taste of the future "day that is all Shabbos", that falls in Bein HaMetzarim, there must be extra joy, because this Shabbos gives the strength to turn Bein HaMetzarim into gladness and joy: the revelation of the future light, which is far above galus and Geulah, has the power to turn Bein HaMetzarim itself into joy. This also explains the halacha in Shulchan Aruch that on a Shabbos in Bein HaMetzarim one may have a meal like Shlomo's in his time, since in Shlomo's days "the moon was full". On this Shabbos comes the strength for these days to become gladness and joy.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ May there be sadness of Bein HaMetzarim on Shabbos? Why?

No. On Shabbos there must be joy. (§2)

2. ★★ Why must a Shabbos in Bein HaMetzarim have MORE joy than other Shabbosos? (first, simple reason)

So that no one suspects that missing joy is because of Bein HaMetzarim. (§2)

3. ★★ What is Shabbos a "taste" of? Why does that leave no place for Bein HaMetzarim?

The future, "the day that is all Shabbos". The Geulah will leave no trace of galus. (§2)

4. ★★ Why must the Geulah be higher than how things were before the galus?

If it only went back to how it was, why was the galus needed? "Breaking down in order to build":

the new building is greater. (§2)

5. ★★★ Why was even Yetzias Mitzrayim, which had a galus after it, higher than before the galus?

Because of the refining of the sparks in galus, which is the purpose of the galus. (§2)

6. ★★★ What is special about the future Geulah compared to all others?

It is complete with no galus after it: a completely new light, which wasn't there before the

galus, with no place for galus. (§2)

7. ★★ What strength does a Shabbos in Bein HaMetzarim give?

The strength to turn Bein HaMetzarim itself into gladness and joy, through the future light, which

is above galus and Geulah. (§2)

8. ★★ What halacha in Shulchan Aruch shows this? Why Shlomo?

On Shabbos in Bein HaMetzarim one may have a meal like Shlomo's in his time, since in Shlomo's

days "the moon was full". (§2)

9. ★ What will the days of Bein HaMetzarim become?

Days of gladness and joy. (§2)

10. ★★ Practically: how should a Shabbos in the Three Weeks feel different?

It should be even more joyful than a regular Shabbos: good food, zemiros and simcha, bringing the

Geulah closer. (§2)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“Take It Away from Them!”

The holy Ruzhiner Rebbe, Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin, pushed away every kind of sadness. His chassidim, wanting to make the sad day of Tisha B'Av less sad, would play practical jokes on each other.

One Tisha B'Av they opened a skylight in the roof of the beis medrash and let down a rope with a loop. Whenever someone walked in, they pulled the rope, the loop caught him, and they hoisted him up toward the roof.

Then the Ruzhiner himself walked in. From the roof the chassidim couldn't see who it was, so they pulled him up! When they saw it was their Rebbe, they quickly let him down.

The Ruzhiner cried out: “Master of the World! If Your children are not keeping Your ‘Yom Tov’ properly, take it away from them!”

The Frierdiker Rebbe told this story in the name of his great-grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek.

Source: “A Tisha b'Av Prank” (told by the Frierdiker Rebbe in the name of the Tzemach Tzedek, chabad.org)

Think: What did the Ruzhiner mean by calling Tisha B'Av a “Yom Tov”, and what did he ask for?

Tisha B'Av will become a Yom Tov when Moshiach comes. He asked Hashem to bring the Geulah now and

turn the day of sadness into joy. (Teacher: the point is the Ruzhiner's prayer and joy, not the pranks; the halachos of Tisha B'Av stay in force.)

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Shabbos in the Three Weeks needs EXTRA joy. Joy has the power to bring the Geulah and turn sad days into happy ones.

For example: On the Shabbos of the Nine Days, sing the zemiros with extra energy at the table, and say a vort about Moshiach to your family.

Why Is It So Dark? The Teacher's New Idea

ברית בין הבתרים

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Devarim, p. 359 (Hebrew edition pp. 65–68), sections 3–7. From the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mattos-Masei 5716 (1956).

The point: *The first news of the galus came at the Bris Bein HaBesarim: “a dread, great darkness”, a hint to the four galuyos. A covenant between two people who love each other means that whatever happens, even if there is no reason for the love and even reasons against it, the love will stay strong. When there are reasons for love, no covenant is needed. A covenant keeps the love forever, because it isn’t love based on reason (love that depends on something, which ends when that thing ends) but an essential, unlimited love. At the time of the covenant this essential love shines openly, so the covenant is made that the love will last forever, whatever changes. So why was the galus announced exactly at the Bris Bein HaBesarim? Galus is the opposite of love, even of love based on reason, and all the more so when the essential love is shining! One might answer with Chazal’s saying that Avraham chose the rule of the nations instead of Gehinnom, so there is good in galus. But that isn’t enough: when love is openly at work, especially essential love, there is no place to speak of Gehinnom or of the rule of the nations. It is understood through Chassidus’s explanation of the inner meaning of galus, which also solves a difficulty in the Gemara and Midrash. The Gemara says that at a time of favor, when Jews do Hashem’s will, the keruvim in the Beis HaMikdash faced each other, embracing, and when not, they turned away. The Midrash says that when the enemies entered the Kodesh HaKodashim at the churban, they saw the keruvim facing each other, embracing. But the churban was the opposite of a time of favor! Chassidus explains galus with the mashal of a teacher teaching his student. While teaching, the teacher pays attention to the student. But if, in the middle, a new idea flashes in his mind, he must turn his attention to it right away, or it will disappear. Out of his deep love for the student, he wants to give himself to the new idea so he can grasp it and later pass it on to the student. As his attention to the idea grows, his attention to the student and the teaching shrink; the higher and deeper the idea, the more he must give himself to it, until for the student it becomes “galus” and “churban”. But that is only on the outside. Inside, it is the greatest revelation: the teacher is ready, for the student’s good, to turn away from him to grasp the new idea, which shows how precious it is. The greater the hiding, the greater the revelation coming. So galus, on the outside, is galus and churban, but inside it is the greatest revelation, the coming Geulah, for which it is worth having galus for a while. A proof that inside, galus is a revelation of light: if galus were only atonement for sins, it should get smaller with time, since every period of galus atones for part of the sins. But we see galus gets stronger. In Mitzrayim the Jews were there 210 years; the first 17 were very good; even after Yaakov’s passing, while his sons lived, the slavery hadn’t begun; and its bitterness began only when Miriam was born, in the last 86 years (86 = “Elokim”). And the decree “no straw will be given” came at the end, close to the Geulah: “since I came to Pharaoh... things got worse”. The same in this galus: at its start there was revelation through the Tannaim, then the Amoraim, and the hiding grew, until in the last generations, “ikvesa d’Meshicha”, there is almost no revelation; they are called “heels”, a part of the body with little life. So galus isn’t only atonement; inside it is the revelation of a new light, and the closer Moshiach comes, the stronger the galus. Now we understand the Midrash: the whole galus is only on the outside; inside it is the highest revelation, so in the Kodesh HaKodashim, the innermost place, the keruvim faced each other, because inside it was a time of favor. That is why the galus was spoken of at the Bris Bein HaBesarim: inside, it holds the greatest revelation; when the essential love shone, the news of the future Geulah came, which in the outer order of things shows itself as galus. The lesson: despite the darkness of galus, which keeps growing to a darkness like never before, we must not be impressed, knowing that the greater the darkness, the closer the light of the Geulah. To bring the light to the “receiver” below, two things are needed from the “student”: (a)*

knowing that the hiding is only outside, while inside it is the greatest revelation; (b) a bond and thirst for the "teacher": though the teacher seems far on the outside, the student must stay bound to him and thirst for him as much as when he was being taught, and even more, as the Alter Rebbe would say in his dveikus: "Whom do I have in Heaven... I want nothing at all. I don't want Your Gan Eden, I don't want Your Olam Haba... I want only You alone." Through this thirst the new light is revealed to the receiver, in the coming Geulah, speedily in our days.

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ Where was the galus first announced? What was the hint?

At the Bris Bein HaBesarim: "a dread, great darkness", a hint to the four galuyos. (§3)

2. ★★ What is the point of a covenant between two who love each other?

That the love stays strong whatever happens, even without reasons. It is essential, unlimited love, not love that depends on something. (§3)

3. ★★ What is hard about announcing the galus at the Bris Bein HaBesarim? Why isn't "Avraham chose galus instead of Gehinnom" enough?

Galus is the opposite of love, and there the essential love was shining. When love is openly at work, there is no place to speak about Gehinnom or galus at all. (§3)

4. ★★ What is the difficulty about the keruvim at the time of the churban?

They faced each other (embracing) only at a time of favor, yet the Midrash says the enemies saw them embracing at the churban. (§4)

5. ★★★ Explain the mashal of the teacher and the new idea.

In the middle of teaching, a new idea flashes. Out of love for the student, the teacher turns to it so he can later teach it. For the student it feels like "galus", but really it is for a greater revelation. (§4)

6. ★★ What does a greater hiding show, according to the mashal?

That the idea coming is greater and more precious. (§4)

7. ★★★ How do we see that galus isn't only atonement for sins?

If it were, it would get smaller with time. But it gets stronger. (§5)

8. ★★ Show from Mitzrayim that galus got harder toward the end.

210 years: the first 17 were very good, the bitterness began only when Miriam was born (last 86 years), and "no straw" came near the end: "since I came to Pharaoh, things got worse". (§5)

9. ★★ How do we see the same in this galus? Why are the last generations called "heels"?

First the Tannaim, then the Amoraim, then the hiding grows until "ikvesa d'Meshicha", with almost no revelation. The heel is a part of the body with little life. (§5)

10. ★★ Why were the keruvim embracing at the churban?

Galus is only on the outside. In the Kodesh HaKodashim, the innermost place, it was a time of favor. (§6)

11. ★★ What should a Jew feel when he sees the darkness growing?

Not be impressed. The greater the darkness, the closer the light of the Geulah. (§7)

12. ★★★ What two things are needed from the "student"? What did the Alter Rebbe say in his dveikus?

(a) Knowing that the hiding is only outside. (b) A bond and thirst for the "teacher", even more than before. "I don't want Your Gan Eden, I don't want Your Olam Haba, I want only You alone." (§7)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Picture in the Family Album

In 1927, the Frierdiker Rebbe was forced to leave Soviet Russia. Before leaving, he gave his secretary, Rabbi Chaim Zalman Kozliner, a glass photo negative of himself “for Tomchei Temimim.” Kozliner hid it, sometimes even in the ground, and a few copies were made.

Years later, in the mountains of Soviet Georgia, a boy named Azriel Chaikin noticed his father learning Chassidus from old handwritten volumes.

One day before Yud-Beis Tammuz, his father, Rabbi Meir Chaim Chaikin, sat him down and opened the family photo album. Among the pictures of grandparents was one that was different. “This is the Rebbe,” he said. “He is somewhere, not in Russia.” He explained what a Rebbe and chassidim are, how the Rebbe was put in prison and freed on Yud-Beis Tammuz, and that it was dangerous to tell anyone.

Then Azriel was allowed to join the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen in his grandfather’s attic: four or five chassidim, saying l’chaim and wishing each other that they should one day “see the Rebbe again.”

Source: “The Secret Picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe That Fueled the Soviet Jewish Underground” (chabad.org)

Think: How does this story match the “student’s” bond and thirst when the “teacher” seems far?

They couldn’t see their Rebbe, yet they stayed bound to him through learning Chassidus,

farbrenging and longing, maybe even more than before. That is the thirst the sicha says brings the

new light.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

When things look dark, don’t be impressed. The light is coming! Stay connected and thirsty for Hashem.

For example: You hear sad news in the world and feel down. Instead, add something: learn an extra halacha about the Geulah, and give tzedakah to bring Moshiach closer.