

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 2

לקוטי שיחות · חלק ב

Chag HaSukkos

חג הסוכות

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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 Mitzvah You Live In

תשבו כעין תדורו • ושאתם מים בששון

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Chag HaSukkos, p. 417 (Hebrew edition pp. 121-123), sections 1-7. From the sicha of the second day of Sukkos 5716 (1955).

The point: *Sukkos has several special mitzvos, yet the Yom Tov is named after the sukkah, not the arba minim. One reason: the sukkah is connected with ALL the days of the Yom Tov, from the very first moment, while the arba minim begin only in the morning (even in the Beis HaMikdash). More: the sukkah needs preparation before Yom Tov, since it must be built ("ta'aseh v'lo min he'asui"), and making it is itself a mitzvah. And once you shake the arba minim you have done the mitzvah, but the sukkah, "teishvu k'ein taduru", "dwell as you live", continues all seven days. (§1) Another advantage over all mitzvos: every other mitzvah is "private", done with one limb or another, but the sukkah surrounds the person in ALL he does. Doing the same ordinary things as a week ago, because he does them in the sukkah, he is doing a mitzvah. More: Chazal say "a person without a home is not a complete person"; having a home makes him complete even when he is out in the market. So on Sukkos, when the sukkah is his home, even when he is not in it he is connected to the mitzvah. (§2) Tishrei is a "general" month for the whole year, so its mitzvos are lessons for the whole year. The lesson of the sukkah: "b'chol derachecha da'eihu", "know Him in all your ways": not only in Torah and tefillah but also in ordinary everyday matters, connecting them to Hashem. Since in the sukkah even sleeping is a mitzvah, we must take from it strength for the whole year, that all our matters serve G-dliness. (§3) The Gemara calls sukkah an "easy mitzvah". When a person stands firm, "Whatever happens, I am a servant of the King of kings", it is easy to make all his physical needs proper too, building a home for Hashem down here; and then blessing flows into all his matters, with children, life and plentiful food. (§4) About Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah it says, "Ushe'avtem mayim b'sasson mima'ainei hayeshuah", "You shall draw water with joy from the springs of salvation", which sounds like the water for the nisuch hamayim had to be spring water. But by halachah, the Rambam rules that if they couldn't take from the Shiloach they took from the Kiyor, which isn't a spring, and even mikveh water is fit for it. So it must mean: what matters is "draw water WITH JOY", and then by itself it becomes "from the springs of salvation". (§5) Spring water has two advantages: it purifies in any amount, since connected to its source, quantity doesn't matter; and it purifies while flowing, without needing to be gathered in one place. In ruchniyus: someone going by his own powers and calculations, cut off from the Source, needs conditions: enough intellect and strength, measured and approved by others; otherwise he can't purify others and may become impure himself. But someone connected to the Source purifies with any amount, even flowing, because he relies on "broad shoulders", and he even purifies the most severe impurity. (§6) The nisuch hamayim is kabbalas ol. Wine has taste (understanding); water has no taste. When a person acts with kabbalas ol, he doesn't ask whether it makes sense to him; he connects himself to the Source and does it. When he "draws water with joy", a little water with no pleasure in it, but joyfully, because he will pour it on the mizbe'ach before Hashem as commanded, it becomes "spring water", connected to the Source, and salvation flows in everything, beyond his own powers, because he is one with his Source. (§7)*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ Why is the Yom Tov named after the sukkah and not the arba minim? Give one reason.

The sukkah is connected with all the days of Yom Tov from the first moment; the arba minim begin only in the morning. (§1)

2. ★★ Name two more ways the sukkah is greater than the arba minim.

It needs preparation before Yom Tov (building it is a mitzvah); and it continues all seven days,

“teishvu k’ein taduru”, while the arba minim are done once taken. (§1)

3. ★★ How is the sukkah different from all other mitzvos?

Other mitzvos are done with one limb; the sukkah surrounds a person in all he does, so even

ordinary things become a mitzvah. (§2)

4. ★★★ How are you connected to the sukkah even when you are NOT in it?

“A person without a home is not complete”: having a home makes him complete even in the market.

The sukkah is his home on Sukkos, so he is connected even when out. (§2)

5. ★★ What lesson does the sukkah teach for the whole year?

“B’chol derachecha da’eihu”: connect even ordinary everyday matters to Hashem, not only Torah and

tefillah. (§3)

6. ★★ Why does the Gemara call sukkah an “easy mitzvah”?

When a person stands firm as a servant of the King, it becomes easy to make all his physical needs

a home for Hashem. (§4)

7. ★★★ If the water didn’t have to be spring water by halachah, what does “ushe’avtem mayim b’sasson mima’ainei hayeshuah” mean?

What matters is drawing the water with joy; then it becomes “from the springs of salvation” by

itself. (§5)

8. ★★ What are the two advantages of spring water?

It purifies in any amount (connected to its source), and it purifies while flowing, without being

gathered in one place. (§6)

9. ★★★ Explain the difference between someone going by his own powers and someone connected to the Source.

On your own you need enough intellect and strength, approved by others, or you can't purify and may become impure. Connected to the Source, you purify with any amount, relying on "broad shoulders". (§6)

10. ★★ What is the difference between wine and water in avodah?

Wine has taste: understanding. Water has no taste: kabbalas ol. (§7)

11. ★★ What happens when someone "draws water with joy"?

His little bit becomes "spring water" connected to the Source, and salvation flows to him beyond his own powers. (§7)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

A Tiny Sukkah in Paris

In the 1930s, a young chassidishe student in Paris had no money and no work permit. On Sukkos he ate his bread, cheese and radishes in a shul's public sukkah, bare and dirty, and his heart sank. Worse, by his family's custom he eats in the sukkah on Shemini Atzeres too, and that sukkah would be locked. He walked around sad and gloomy.

Then he met another student in Paris: Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, son-in-law of the Frierdiker Rebbe, who studied engineering and physics, yet never went to theaters or clubs and learned Torah day and night.

Hearing his worry, Rabbi Schneerson said: "I've built a small sukkah. I'll be glad to have you as my guest on Shemini Atzeres."

The sukkah stood in the hotel courtyard: tiny, room for just two. The student realized his host was giving up the meal with his own wife for him. But Rabbi Schneerson made him feel loved and spoke words of Torah. "His eyes shone with a special light," he recalled. "I was sure I could see the walls expanding, turning the sukkah into a palace."

Source: *M. Shafir, "In the Rebbe's Sukkah" (chabad.org)*

Think: Rabbi Schneerson lived a full Jewish life even in the Latin Quarter of Paris. How is that like the lesson of the sukkah?

The sukkah surrounds all of a person's life, even the ordinary things (§2), and teaches "b'chol

derachecha da'eihu": connect everything to Hashem, anywhere (§3). His tiny sukkah became a palace of joy.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

The sukkah teaches: Hashem isn't only in shul. Eat, talk, sleep, play, all "inside" the mitzvah, and do what Hashem wants with joy even when you don't feel the taste.

For example: In the sukkah you're just eating supper, the same food as last week. But now it's a mitzvah! After Sukkos, keep it going: before you eat a snack, make the brachah slowly; before a game, say "I'm doing this to have koach to serve Hashem."

Who Never Saw This Joy...

שמחת בית השואבה

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Chag HaSukkos, p. 420 (Hebrew edition pp. 123-127), sections 8-15. From the sicha of Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah 5716 (1955).

The point: *The Gemara says: "Whoever did not see the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah never saw joy in his life." Simply, it describes how great that joy was. But Chazal speak precisely; why say it in the negative, instead of "it was the greatest joy"? And what difference does it make for us now? The Gemara is teaching an avodah lesson: someone who hasn't "seen" Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah, even when he thinks he sees joy, it is only surface-deep; he is not able to see joy. (§8) Joy means breaking free of limits; a truly happy person does things beyond the measure of his mind. Its cause must also be beyond his limits: when he gets something he never expected, beyond his calculations, it awakens something unlimited in him. That is why "simchah poretzes geder", joy breaks fences. And as water reflects a face, so Above reflects below (the Baal Shem Tov: "Hashem is your shadow"): when a person below is joyful, joy is awakened Above and all limits fall away there too. Torah, avodah and gemilus chassadim must all be with joy: we daven only "from the joy of a mitzvah"; the same for learning; and in tzedakah, "let your heart not be bad", and one who comforts the poor is blessed with eleven blessings. (§9) So for avodah to be joyful, it must come from kabbalas ol. Avodah from his own understanding is limited and can't make unlimited joy. But when he serves with kabbalas ol, above his understanding, he nullifies himself and connects to Hashem through the mitzvos ("mitzvah" from "tzavta", connection), and Hashem is unlimited, so he breaks out of his limits: that is true joy. But isn't a person meant to use his mind, which makes him higher than an animal? Chazal say "asher bara Elokim la'asos", "to fix": everything was created to rise higher: the inanimate into the plant, the plant into the animal, the animal into man, and man's mind into G-dliness beyond the mind, through hisbonenus, love and fear, and mitzvos with kabbalas ol. (§10) That is why you can't see joy without first seeing the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah. It was for the water poured on the mizbe'ach on Sukkos. The Midrash says that when Hashem separated the upper and lower waters, the lower waters cried, "We want to be before the King!" So Hashem promised that water would be poured on the mizbe'ach. That pouring removes the separation, and raises the lower waters even higher than before, since every descent is for an ascent. The separation of upper and lower waters is the separation between spiritual and physical, but the purpose of creation is that everything below rises higher than before. That is why the joy was so great: all the separations and limits of the world were broken by connecting with Hashem. (§11) But isn't nature also Hashem's creation? How can we go against it? (Like the question to Rabbi Akiva: why feed the poor if Hashem made him poor?) The answer: on the very day Hashem made the separation, He said its purpose is to rise: "machatzti va'ani erpa", "I struck and I will heal" ("machatzti" from "mechitzah", a partition). Breaking the limits doesn't go against creation; it completes its purpose: drawing the above-nature into nature. (§12) So the Gemara is teaching: how do we reach joy in Torah, avodah and gemilus chassadim? By looking and thinking deeply until we "see" the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah, the purpose of the descent: a greater ascent. In particular, seeing that the purpose of the mind is to be included in what is above the mind gives the strength to remove the limits of the body, the animal soul and even the G-dly soul, and to accept the yoke of Heaven, and that brings joy into the soul and from there into the whole world. (§§13-14) Why "Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah", the joy of the house of DRAWING? "Because from there they drew ruach hakodesh." The Yerushalmi says Yonah ben Amitai got his prophecy from it. But thousands were there, including great people; why only Yonah? The Zohar says "Yonah ben Amitai" is the neshamah, from "lo sonu ish es amiso" (don't deceive one another): the body must not "fool" the soul; rather, the soul should "outsmart" the body*

and make gashmiyus a home for Hashem. That is exactly the strength drawn from the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah. (§15)

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What does the Gemara say about the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah?

"Whoever did not see the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah never saw joy in his life." (§8)

2. ★★★ Why does the Gemara say it in the negative? What is the lesson?

Someone who hasn't "seen" the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah, even when he thinks he sees joy, only has surface joy; he can't really see joy. (§8)

3. ★★ What is joy, and what must cause it?

Breaking free of limits. Its cause must also be beyond a person's limits, something beyond his expectations. (§9)

4. ★★ How does joy below affect Above?

As water reflects a face ("Hashem is your shadow"), joy below awakens joy Above, and limits fall away there too. (§9)

5. ★★ Show that all three lines (Torah, avodah, gemilus chassadim) must be with joy.

Davening only "from the joy of a mitzvah"; the same for learning; in tzedakah, "let your heart not be bad", and comforting the poor brings eleven blessings. (§9)

6. ★★★ Why does true joy come only from kabbalas ol?

Avodah from understanding is limited. With kabbalas ol he nullifies himself and connects (tzavta) to Hashem, the Unlimited, and so breaks out of his limits. (§10)

7. ★★★ "A person has a mind; why put it aside?" What is the answer?

Everything was created to rise ("la'asos", to fix): inanimate into plant... and man's mind into G-dliness beyond the mind. (§10)

8. ★★ Why did the lower waters cry, and what did Hashem promise them?

They wanted to be "before the King". Hashem promised water would be poured on the mizbe'ach on Sukkos. (§11)

9. ★★ Why was the joy of the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah so great?

All the separations and limits of the world were broken by connecting with Hashem; the lower waters rose higher than before. (§11)

10. ★★★ Isn't breaking nature's limits going against creation? Explain "machatzti va'ani erpa".

No. With the partition (mechitzah) itself Hashem said its purpose is to heal and rise; breaking limits completes creation's purpose. (§12)

11. ★★ How do we reach joy in all three lines?

By thinking deeply until we "see" the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah: the purpose of the descent is a greater ascent. (§§13–14)

12. ★★ Why is only Yonah mentioned as drawing ruach hakodesh there? What does "Yonah" mean?

Yonah is the neshamah (from "lo sonu", not deceiving): the soul should "outsmart" the body and make gashmiyus a home for Hashem, the strength drawn from that joy. (§15)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Only Etrog in Rostov

In 5679 (1918), right after the First World War, there were no etrogim at all. None could be brought into the country.

Only one person had an etrog: the Rebbe Rashab, who lived then in Rostov. One of his chassidim had worked hard to get it for him. Of course, everyone in the city came to make a brachah on the Rebbe's etrog, and each one made the brachah in the Rebbe's presence.

On Chol HaMoed, a chassid arrived in Rostov from out of town, just to make a brachah on that etrog. He held it, made the brachah, did the mitzvah, and burst out with joy and satisfaction: "Ah, thank G-d!"

The Rebbe Rashab said to him: "May the Almighty make the joy of the mitzvah shine for the whole year."

A whole journey for one brachah, and a joy the Rebbe wanted to see last not just for one moment, but all year long.

Source: "Joy of a Mitzvah" (chabad.org)

Think: The chassid's joy came from a mitzvah he had worked hard for and didn't take for granted. How does the sicha explain where true joy comes from?

True joy comes from something beyond your own limits and calculations, and from connecting to

Hashem through a mitzvah with kabbalas ol (§§9–10). The Rebbe Rashab blessed that this joy of a

mitzvah should shine all year, like the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah that is the root of all joy

(§§11, 13).

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Real joy isn't only from things that make sense to you. It comes from doing what Hashem wants, beyond your own "calculations", and that joy breaks every limit.

For example: At hakafos you're tired and feel like sitting. Remember: joy "breaks fences". Get up and dance for Hashem, even if you don't feel like it at first, and then watch how the joy grows and lasts.

Water First, Then Wine

ניסוך המים וניסוך היין

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Chag HaSukkos, p. 425 (Hebrew edition pp. 128-131), sections 16-23. From the sicha of Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah 5715 (1954).

The point: *Sukkos comes after the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, and everything drawn down in those days is revealed on Sukkos with joy. All three parts are connected to Sukkos. Rosh Hashanah: the three letters of "schach" (samech = 60, kaf = 20, kaf = 20) match the 60 tekios, 20 shevarim and 20 teruos of the hundred shofar sounds. Yom Kippur: its main avodah was the cloud of the ketores, and from it come the Clouds of Glory, which are the sukkos. The seven days in between: each weekday between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur fixes all the same weekdays of the year, and they flow into the seven days of Sukkos, which bring joy into every day of the coming year. (§16) The nisuch hamayim was in the morning with the Tamid, so wasn't the first night missing from the seven days of joy? No, for two reasons: the joy of Sukkos is connected to the lulav, whose day begins at night; and the Yerushalmi says that if they poured the water at night, even the first night, it is kosher after the fact. So the joy begins from the night: seven full days and nights. (§17) Why is the water kosher at night? Because the water is "chovas hayom", an obligation of the DAY, while the wine is "chovas hazevach", an obligation of the korban, which must be by day. But both are learned from the same word, "v'niskeha"; why the difference? (§18) "This is the Torah: a man": like a person, the Torah has a body (nigleh) and a soul (pnimiyus), and some halachos can only be understood through their soul. (§19) Wine has taste and pleasure, so we always make a brachah on it; water has no taste, so we make a brachah only when "drinking water to quench thirst". In the soul: avodah with understanding is "wine"; avodah with kabbalas ol is "water", with no pleasure in itself. But when a person thinks how his soul came down from a high roof to a deep pit, and that all his wisdom is nothing compared to what his soul was before, he becomes thirsty for G-dliness, and that thirst brings bittul and kabbalas ol with great pleasure and life: "one who drinks water to quench thirst says 'shehakol nihyeh bidvaro'", he feels that everything exists by Hashem's word. The Alter Rebbe once said that he sees only the power of the Creator in the created. The joy of kabbalas ol is even greater than the joy of understanding, which is limited; that is why the main joy was at the water. (§20) A korban is man's avodah, so it has levels and differences (women were exempt from the half-shekel). A Yom Tov comes from Above; once Beis Din set the month, on the 15th Sukkos comes by itself, the same for everyone. So wine, understanding, depends on the person's level, like a korban; water, kabbalas ol, does not: he doesn't check whether he understands or feels; he simply accepts the yoke of Heaven, the same for all, like a Yom Tov. (§21) And so wine only by day: avodah of understanding works only when it is "light" in his mind; kabbalas ol works even at "night", when nothing shines for him. (§22) So the water comes BEFORE the wine: kabbalas ol alone is not enough; we must also make the mind understand, giving Hashem the best, "kol chelev laHashem", and what is better than the mind? But the foundation is kabbalas ol, and only after it is understanding possible, because without Hashem's help a person can't beat his yetzer hara, and Hashem's help comes through kabbalas ol. So at Matan Torah "na'aseh" came before "nishma"; and Shema comes before V'haya im shamo'a: first the yoke of Heaven, then the yoke of mitzvos, "like an ox that first gets a yoke", as the Alter Rebbe quotes in Tanya. Rava answered the Tzeduki who called us "a hasty nation": "The innocence of the upright will guide them" to understanding, while those who go only by their minds will lose even that. (§23)*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★★ How are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur connected to Sukkos?

RH: the letters of "schach" (60, 20, 20) match the 60 tekios, 20 shevarim, 20 teruos. YK: the cloud of ketores brings the Clouds of Glory, the sukkos. (§16)

2. ★★ How do the seven days between RH and YK connect to the whole year?

Each weekday fixes the same weekday all year; they flow into the seven days of Sukkos, which bring joy into every day of the year. (§16)

3. ★★ The water was poured in the morning. How were there still seven full days and nights of joy?

The joy is connected to the lulav, whose day begins at night; and water poured even on the first night is kosher after the fact. (§17)

4. ★★ What is the difference between "chovas hazevach" and "chovas hayom"? Which is which?

Wine is an obligation of the korban (only by day); water is an obligation of the day (kosher even at night). (§18)

5. ★★★ Why do we always make a brachah on wine, but on water only when thirsty? What does this mean in avodah?

Wine has taste (avodah with understanding); water has none (kabbalas ol). When a person is thirsty for G-dliness, kabbalas ol has great pleasure too. (§20)

6. ★★★ How does a person become "thirsty" for G-dliness?

By thinking how his soul came down from a high roof to a deep pit, and that all his wisdom is nothing compared to what it was before. (§20)

7. ★★ Why is the joy of kabbalas ol greater than the joy of understanding?

The joy from understanding is limited by the understanding; the joy of kabbalas ol has no limit. So the main joy was at the water. (§20)

8. ★★★ Why is wine like a korban and water like a Yom Tov?

A korban is man's avodah, with levels, like understanding. A Yom Tov comes by itself, the same for all, like kabbalas ol, which doesn't depend on the person. (§21)

9. ★★ Why could the water be poured at night, but the wine only by day?

Understanding works only when it is "light" in your mind; kabbalas ol works even in the "night", when nothing shines. (§22)

10. ★★ Why isn't kabbalas ol alone enough?

We must give Hashem the best, "kol chelev laHashem", and the mind is the best, so we must make the mind understand too. (§23)

11. ★★★ Why must kabbalas ol come first? Give two examples.

Without Hashem's help you can't beat the yetzer hara, and His help comes through kabbalas ol.

Na'aseh before nishma; Shema before V'haya im shamo ("like an ox that first gets a yoke"). (§23)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Machzor Copied in a Box

In 1951, Rabbi Moshe Greenberg was a young prisoner in a Soviet labor camp, sentenced to twenty-five years for trying to leave for Eretz Yisrael. About twenty of the thousand prisoners were Jews, and as Rosh Hashanah approached they longed for a machzor.

He whispered in Yiddish to an engineer from outside who seemed Jewish. With great danger the engineer found one, but its owner wouldn't give it up. So it was lent, to be copied and returned.

Rabbi Greenberg built a big wooden box, crawled inside for a few hours every day, and copied the machzor line by line into a notebook. After a month it was done, except for one missing page: Kol Nidrei.

On Yom Tov the Jewish prisoners bribed the guards to let them gather, and he led the davening from his handwritten machzor. Years later, free, he would say with tears that he never again davened as meaningfully as in that prison.

Source: Zushe Greenberg, "My Father's Machzor" (chabad.org)

Think: Rabbi Greenberg kept davening in the darkest place. How does that match the water libation, which could be poured even at night?

Kabbalas ol works even at "night", when nothing shines and there is no "taste" (§22). It comes first and is the foundation (§23), and its joy has no limit (§20): he never davened with more meaning.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

First do what Hashem wants, “na’aseh”, even when you don’t understand or feel it. Then work on understanding, and give Hashem your mind too.

For example: You don’t feel like davening this morning and don’t “get” why it matters today. Daven anyway, that’s “water”, kabbalas ol. Then, later, learn one explanation of a line in Shemoneh Esrei, that’s the “wine”.

The Tzeduki and the Esrogim

הגבה ידך • ורגמוהו באתרוגיהם

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Chag HaSukkos, p. 429 (Hebrew edition pp. 131-134), sections 24-32. §§24-31 are from the sicha of Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah 5715 (1954); §32 is from the sicha of the second day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos 5716 (1955).

The point: *The Rambam explains the Mishnah "an eruv may be made with anything except water": an eruv needs something that nourishes, and water doesn't nourish; it carries the food to all parts of the body. Kabbalas ol, like water, has no "taste" and doesn't "nourish" by itself, but through it we reach understanding. (§24) And just as kabbalas ol adds to understanding, the joy of kabbalas ol adds joy to understanding too. So the joy lasted all of Sukkos, "we didn't taste the taste of sleep", even while the wine was poured. In sleep a person is like an animal; kabbalas ol chases sleep away, all seven days and through them all year. (§25) The Gemara says they told the kohen pouring the water, "Raise your hand!", because once a Tzeduki (Sadducee) poured it on his feet; the Tzedukim didn't accept the water libation, since it isn't written openly in the Torah, only learned by Chazal, and they rejected the Oral Torah. "All the people pelted him with their esrogim." Questions: If he didn't believe in it, why pour at all, and why on his feet? Why did ALL the people pelt him? And why with esrogim? (§26) The Tzedukim held that Torah should be taken according to one's own mind, so they rejected the tradition of Chazal. The truth: "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and passed it on...", until every halachah accepted in Israel; we try to understand as much as we can, but even what we don't understand we keep. The Tzedukim agreed to the wine libation (understanding) but opposed the water (kabbalas ol). In their view, women, unlearned people and businessmen must follow instructions, but the scholars giving them, being immersed in Torah, needn't be bound to the Sages' tradition. So the Tzeduki poured on his FEET: he himself, a kohen serving in the Mikdash, needs no kabbalas ol, but he "pours" kabbalas ol onto the "feet", the 600,000 regular people. Even about himself: his "feet" need kabbalas ol, but his mind and heart should go by his feelings. (§27) That is why ALL THE PEOPLE pelted him, simple Jews, not the kohanim. Scholars, even though their foundation is kabbalas ol, find it hard to answer someone who says the mind alone is enough, because they don't feel so strongly that the mind isn't enough. But simple Jews immediately felt that this was the opposite of Hashem's will. Similarly, in galus the power of mesirus nefesh shines more than in the time of the Beis HaMikdash, and more in simple people than in intellectuals. (§28) Why esrogim? Of the four kinds the esrog is highest, with both taste and smell: in the soul, the intellect. They answered him with their esrogim: with their own minds and pleasure they showed him that his way is the opposite of Hashem's will, because for a person of kabbalas ol even the mind follows kabbalas ol. The Frierdiker Rebbe told how once, in a fire in Lubavitch, a man fled into a very narrow place and afterwards couldn't get out. How did he get in? His great will to live shrank his body. If will can affect the body, how much more the mind; as with a bribe, will bends the mind. (§29) "That day a horn of the mizbe'ach was damaged, and they plugged it with a block of salt." On the mizbe'ach the best (fat and blood) was offered: in the soul, giving one's highest powers, like the mind, to G-dliness. Just as a shechitah knife must have no flaw, the mizbe'ach must have none. That was the answer to the Tzeduki: they showed him the flaw in the mizbe'ach, the lack of kabbalas ol, which causes a lack in the korbanos, the understanding. (§30) The flaw was fixed with salt. The Mishnah says "except water" and also "except salt" for an eruv, since salt doesn't nourish either. In avodah: learning pnimiyus haTorah with emunas chachamim, even without understanding it as one understands nigleh. This gives strength in all six orders of the Mishnah, removes the mind's concealments, and brings a year blessed in Torah and mitzvos, and "I will give your rains in their time". (§31) "V'samachta b'chagecha": the joy must be felt even in the physical heart, so "there is no joy without meat and no joy without wine". In the time of the Beis HaMikdash the main joy was with*

the meat of the shelamim; now, in galus, it passed to the wine. The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch implies that today the joy of wine is a Torah obligation on Yom Tov, even on Chol HaMoed. (§32)

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★★ Why can't an eruv be made with water, and what does this teach about kabbalas ol?

Water doesn't nourish; it carries food to the whole body. Kabbalas ol has no "taste" itself, but through it we reach understanding. (§24)

2. ★★ Why did the joy continue all Sukkos, "we didn't taste sleep"?

The joy of kabbalas ol adds to understanding too; it chases away "sleep" (being like an animal), all seven days and all year. (§25)

3. ★ Why did they say "raise your hand" to the kohen pouring the water?

Once a Tzeduki poured it on his feet, and all the people pelted him with esrogim. (§26)

4. ★★ Why didn't the Tzedukim accept the water libation?

It isn't written openly in the Torah, only learned by Chazal, and they rejected the Oral Torah. (§26)

5. ★★★ Why did the Tzeduki pour on his FEET?

He thought he, a scholar and kohen, needs no kabbalas ol, but the "feet", simple people, do. Even in himself, only the "feet" need it, not his mind and heart. (§27)

6. ★★ What must we do with a halachah we don't understand?

Try to understand as much as we can, but keep it even if we don't understand. (§27)

7. ★★★ Why did the simple people, and not the kohanim, pelt him?

Scholars find it hard to answer "the mind is enough"; simple Jews felt immediately that it was against Hashem's will. Mesirus nefesh shines more in simple people. (§28)

8. ★★★ Why with ESROGIM?

The esrog has taste and smell: the mind. With their own minds they showed him he was wrong, because for a person of kabbalas ol, even the mind follows kabbalas ol. (§29)

9. ★★ What does the fire in Lubavitch prove?

The will to live shrank a man's body to fit a narrow place. If will affects the body, it surely affects the mind. (§29)

10. ★★ What was the damaged horn of the mizbe'ach, and how was it fixed?

The lack of kabbalas ol, which damages understanding (the korbanos). It was plugged with salt: learning pnimiyus haTorah with emunas chachamim. (§§30–31)

11. ★★ How is the mitzvah of joy on Yom Tov fulfilled today?

With wine; in the time of the Beis HaMikdash it was mainly with the meat of the shelamim. (§32)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Alef or Tav?

The Gemara tells: a non-Jew once came to Shammai and asked, "How many Torahs do you have?" "Two," said Shammai, "the Written Torah and the Oral Torah."

"The Written Torah I believe," said the man, "but the Oral Torah I don't. Convert me on condition that you teach me only the Written Torah." Shammai sent him away.

He came to Hillel, who accepted him and began teaching him. On the first day Hillel showed him the letters: "Alef, beis, gimmel, dalet." The next day Hillel reversed them, and called the alef a tav.

"But yesterday you didn't say that!" the student protested.

Hillel answered: "You see? Even to read the Written Torah, you had to rely on me. So rely on me for the Oral Torah too."

Without a teacher's tradition you can't even read the letters. That is exactly what the Tzedukim never accepted.

Source: *Talmud Bavli, Shabbos 31a*

Think: The Tzedukim, like the man in the story, wanted to accept only what they understood themselves. What did Hillel show him, and what did the people with the esrogim show the Tzeduki?

Even reading the Written Torah depends on the Oral tradition. We rely on Chazal and accept even what we don't understand (§27); for a person of kabbalas ol, even the mind follows it (§29).

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Don't be a "Tzeduki": don't keep only the mitzvos that make sense to you. Accept the Torah of Chazal with kabbalas ol, and use your mind to understand as much as you can.

For example: A friend says, "Why wait six hours after meat? It doesn't say that in the Chumash!" Answer like Hillel: "Even to read the Chumash, someone had to teach you. The Torah comes with its explanation from Sinai."