

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 2

לקוטי שיחות · חלק ב

Parshas Vaeschanan

פרשת ואתחנן

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: "Miklat! Miklat!" Be a Signpost · Vaeschanan, p. 363, §§1-6

Sicha 2: A LIVING Sign, Not a Stone One · Vaeschanan, p. 367, §§7-13

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.

“Miklat! Miklat!” Be a Signpost

ערי מקלט

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Vaeschanan, p. 363 (Hebrew edition pp. 69–72), sections 1–6. From the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mattos-Masei 5712 (1952). One sicha, divided here into two parts.

The point: *The parsha says about the cities of refuge: “Then Moshe set apart three cities... for a killer to flee there.” The Shelah explains “the Torah speaks of the lower worlds and hints at the higher ones”: really the Torah speaks of the higher worlds, and we catch only the hint that touches the lower ones. So too with the cities of refuge: every detail of the physical cities of refuge is in the spiritual ones, and on the contrary, the main thing is spiritual, and only by coming down does it appear physically. The roads to the cities of refuge were kept in good repair, 32 amos wide, and at every crossroads stood a sign, “Miklat, Miklat” (refuge), to show the way. So too with the spiritual cities of refuge, the words of Torah, about which it says “words of Torah give refuge” to one who killed spiritually. The true order is the reverse: not that because it is physical it is also spiritual, but the main thing is spiritual, and because it is spiritual it appears physically too. Had we merited, we would understand everything “from above to below”: see each thing as it is spiritually and understand that it surely is so physically. The Frierdiker Rebbe told that his father, the Rebbe Rashab, couldn’t bear being interrupted between washing for bread and HaMotzi, not even in his thoughts, though halacha counts only speech or time as an interruption. In 5654–55 (1894–95) doctors discovered a new vein in the brain that helps memory and deep thinking. A family member told the Rebbe Rashab about it with great excitement during his meal. He listened and said nothing. After Birkas HaMazon he asked them to wait, went to his room, and brought a small handwritten volume of the Mittlerer Rebbe’s Chassidus, showing that six or seven lines there speak about this vein: there is a vein in the brain full of vapors that moves back and forth; moving toward chochmah and binah it helps memory, toward daas it helps deep thinking. That is why, when a person wants to remember something, he lifts his head, and when he wants to think deeply, he bends his head. They asked, “So was the Mittlerer Rebbe a great professor?” The Rebbe Rashab answered: he knew it because it exists above, in the “Supernal Man”, so it surely exists in man below. All the more so the matters of Torah can be grasped “from above to below”, as Igeres HaKodesh says about learning halachos in the future. But since we haven’t merited, we must grasp things from below to above: see them physically and learn from that about the spiritual. Just as the physical cities of refuge helped not only one who killed by accident but also one who killed on purpose (he too had to flee there until the trial, so the avenger wouldn’t kill him), so spiritually the words of Torah give refuge even to one who sinned on purpose. And just as, besides wide, well-kept roads, there was a sign at every crossroads, because a good road isn’t enough if the person doesn’t know which way to run, so spiritually: besides the way to Torah being easy and wide, Hashem shows which way to go. Since there is free choice (“See, I have put before you today life and good, death and evil”), without guidance a person might turn left, choose death and evil. So Hashem stands, as it were, like a sign calling “Miklat, Miklat”, warning to take the right road, “and you shall choose life”; that is “Hashem helps him”. Because of free choice, everyone needs help from Above. Even Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai said, “I don’t know which way they are taking me”, all the more so others, and all the more so in a time of double darkness. But when a person wants Hashem to show him the way, he must do the same himself: “Hashem’s way is measure for measure”. He must go out to the crossroads, to Jews who stand and don’t know which way to go, and call: “Miklat, Miklat! Turn right, to the road to refuge from the avenger, from the Satan; don’t take the left road.” This is everyone’s job: to stand at the crossroads and call “Miklat, Miklat”. Though he is always at a crossroads, where a road leads left, he shouldn’t be impressed, because that is how he does his job. As Reb Mordechai the tzaddik said in the name of the Baal Shem Tov: a soul comes down to the world and lives seventy or eighty years*

to do a favor for a Jew physically, and especially spiritually. So it is worth standing at the crossroads all the time to show one Jew, once, the way to the refuge of Torah. As a result, Hashem will lead him on the way to life and good. He stands like a sign calling "Miklat, Miklat", not knowing if anyone will listen or even hear, not even seeing people, and it doesn't bother him. Though maybe he accomplished nothing, since he did his job, Hashem will show him the way of "choose life". Even though he is only a "beinoni" still in the middle of his avodah, whose yetzer hara hasn't weakened and has even grown stronger with eating, drinking and worldly things, and who might, chas v'shalom, choose evil, Hashem will show him the way to life and good: "Hashem helps him, to save him from those who judge his soul."

Q U E S T I O N S ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★★ What does "the Torah speaks of the lower worlds and hints at the higher ones" really mean, according to the Shelah?

Really the Torah speaks of the higher worlds, and we catch only the hint that touches the lower ones. (§1)

2. ★ How were the roads to the cities of refuge prepared?

Kept in good repair, 32 amos wide, with a sign at every crossroads: "Miklat, Miklat". (§1)

3. ★★ What are the spiritual cities of refuge? What is the "true order" between spiritual and physical?

The words of Torah. The main thing is spiritual, and because it is spiritual it appears physically too. (§2)

4. ★★★ Tell the story of the Rebbe Rashab and the new vein in the brain. What did he answer to "Was the Mitteler Rebbe a professor?"

Doctors found a vein that helps memory and deep thinking; the Rebbe Rashab showed a manuscript of the Mitteler Rebbe describing it (lift your head to remember, bend it to think deeply). He knew it because it exists above, in the "Supernal Man", so surely below too. (§3)

5. ★★ Why must we usually learn "from below to above"?

Because we haven't merited to understand "from above to below". So we see things physically and learn from them about the spiritual. (§3)

6. ★★ Whom did the cities of refuge protect? What is the spiritual lesson?

Even one who killed on purpose, until his trial. Words of Torah give refuge even to one who sinned on purpose. (§4)

7. ★★ Why was a sign needed if the roads were already wide and good? What is the spiritual parallel?

A good road doesn't help if he doesn't know which way to run. Because of free choice, a person needs guidance, so Hashem stands like a sign: "choose life". (§4)

8. ★★ What did Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai say, and what does it teach us?

"I don't know which way they are taking me." If he needed help from Above, all the more so we do, especially in a time of double darkness. (§4)

9. ★★ What must a person do if he wants Hashem to show him the way? Why?

Do the same for others: stand at the crossroads and call "Miklat, Miklat" to Jews who don't know which way to go. "Hashem's way is measure for measure." (§5)

10. ★★★ What did Reb Mordechai the tzaddik say in the name of the Baal Shem Tov? What does it teach?

A soul comes down for 70–80 years to do a favor for a Jew, physically and especially spiritually. It is worth standing at the crossroads all the time to show one Jew, once, the way. (§5)

11. ★★ He doesn't know if anyone hears him. Why should he keep calling?

He is like a sign doing its job. Since he did his job, Hashem will show him the way of "choose life". (§6)

12. ★★★ What help does Hashem give the "signpost" even if his own yetzer hara is still strong?

Though he is still a beinoni whose yetzer hara may even have grown stronger, Hashem leads him to life and good: "Hashem helps him, to save him from those who judge his soul." (§6)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The City the Rebbe Didn't Forget

Before Pesach 1969, six nineteen-year-old bochurim, among them Shmuel Kaplan, were sent by the Rebbe to help build the young yeshivah in Melbourne, Australia, for two years.

During the summer break they traveled in pairs across Australia to visit and inspire Jewish communities, and sent detailed reports to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe read the reports and asked: why was Perth left out? Right away, Shmuel Kaplan and his partner were sent to Perth, "the most isolated city in the world", 2,000 miles from any big city.

There they met Mr. Singer, the principal of the Jewish day school. He told them he had planned to leave for a better job, and no one could change his mind, until an unexpected letter came from the Rebbe asking him to stay. He stayed.

"When I got the letter," he said, "I realized that on Rosh Hashanah, when the Rebbe cries for Jewish communities around the world, there is one special tear for Perth too." Now the bochurim understood why they had been sent: to encourage him and keep the community strong.

Source: *Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan, "When the Rebbe Sent Me to the Other End of the World" (chabad.org)*

Think: How is this like a sign calling "Miklat, Miklat" at every crossroads?

No place and no Jew was forgotten, not even the most isolated city. The Rebbe sent bochurim there to point the way and give strength.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Be a signpost! Hashem guides you the way you guide others. It's worth your whole life to help even one Jew once.

For example: A new boy in shul doesn't know where to find a siddur or what page they're on. Walk over, show him, and help him follow.

A LIVING Sign, Not a Stone One

שלטים חיים

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Vaeschanan, p. 367 (Hebrew edition pp. 72-75), sections 7-13. From the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mattos-Masei 5712 (1952).

The point: *The Frierdiker Rebbe once said the difference between the Baal Shem Tov and the great masters of nigleh of his time was that the students of the great masters of nigleh came to them to learn, while the Baal Shem Tov and his students didn't wait for people to come; they traveled to the towns and villages where Jews lived. In the same way there is a difference in the cities of refuge between nigleh and Chassidus. By nigleh, a pillar or stone stood with "Miklat, Miklat" written on it; it didn't turn to anyone; a person who passed by, looked and at least knew how to read found his way. So spiritually, there is one who leaves home and comes to the crossroads, among Jews standing at the crossroads, and is ready, when someone who can at least "read" asks him, to show the way to the refuge. True, he showed mesirus nefesh by traveling there, but he doesn't move; he is like a standing pillar, a "domem". (They used to say about a clock: it walks back and forth all the time, but doesn't move from its place.) But by Chassidus he may not be a domem; he must be a "mehalech", a person with life and warmth, and not wait for someone to ask. He needs life and speed: as soon as he sees a Jew anywhere whom he might help, he must run to him and show him the way to the refuge. This is the mission the Frierdiker Rebbe gave especially to the students (Temimim): to travel for a few weeks (in vacation time, from city to city, to strengthen Yiddishkeit and chinuch, spread the books and booklets of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, and more) and call "Miklat, Miklat", to be signposts, but living signs, not stone signs stuck in place. The Gemara says, and the Rambam rules: a person should always see himself and the world as balanced. Every person is balanced, so the action he does this moment can tip him to merit or the opposite. More: the whole world is balanced, he and all generations of the future and the past, and the whole world depends on what he does now. When the young man who travels to the crossroads to bring Jewish hearts closer thinks about this, that every good deed a Jew does will tip the whole world, he won't be a still sign but a living sign; he will run with life, in case he can influence a Jew in some way and tip the whole world. And when he meets a Jew, he will explain that whatever his state, he is "balanced": even a big sinner can, with one act in one moment, tip himself completely to good; and with one act he could tip it the other way, chas v'shalom, so he must guard himself and do what brings life and good. Some think they accomplish nothing. In truth, that doesn't decide anything. With bedikas chametz, one who searched well everywhere and found no chametz at all still made a complete bracha; he did his part and kept the mitzvah properly. True, he has nothing to boast about: awake all night, neither learning nor sleeping, he turned the house over and found nothing; but the mitzvah he did. So too with spiritual bedikas chametz: the young man who traveled and thinks he accomplished nothing spent his time not at home but at a crossroads, where there is a danger of turning left; he has nothing to boast about, but he did his job, and the reward of a mitzvah is the mitzvah itself ("mitzvah" from "tzavsa", connection). More: though he thinks he did nothing, comes home tired and is criticized and laughed at by friends, besides the main thing being the doing, he really did accomplish something, only he doesn't know it. Since he did, surely it helped, as the Frierdiker Rebbe said many times in his father's name: propaganda (outreach) never comes back empty. Among the good results: besides the fact that walking or running on a shlichus of a mitzvah refines the very stones he steps on and purifies the air (which isn't seen and won't be in his report), he truly helped the purpose of his shlichus. When a Jew sitting at home sees through the window a young man with a beard running down the street, he remembers that his father looked like that, and his father told him to say "Modeh Ani" every morning and "Shema Yisrael" before sleeping; he says them in his mind or out loud and is stirred. When a child comes home and tells that he met a bearded young man handing out "Talks and Tales" booklets who tried to give him one and he*

slipped away, while telling it to his father and mother they remember their own parents, and "in one moment" etc. True, the young man should be heartbroken that his work isn't seen, since had he merited he would bring about real inner change, not only "surrounding" effects; but he can't say he did nothing, because the very fact that a bearded young man is seen traveling from place to place to stir Jews to Yiddishkeit surely helps, at least in a "surrounding" way. A young man from the Temimim told me about a Conservative rabbi who was at a chassidic farbrengen here. He didn't become a chassid, but he liked it and became interested in chassidim. This rabbi is a teacher or principal of a school, and since he needs interesting things to tell the students, he told them there are Jews called "chassidim", and described their way of life: they learn before davening, daven at length, learn again, and only then eat. The children listened carefully and asked if he meant people who lived long ago or in Europe. He said they are here today, in America. The children didn't believe there could be such people in America today. Looking for a way to prove it, the rabbi remembered the young chassid he knew (the one who told me), went to him and invited him to visit: "You don't have to do anything, just show yourself." The young man agreed. When he, with a big beard, walked into the school, the rabbi said to the children: "Remember I told you about chassidim? Look, this young man is one of them!" The children looked at him carefully, asked if he really was a chassid, and when he said yes, began asking all kinds of questions about the ways of chassidim. All day the children excitedly told at home what happened and asked their parents questions.

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★★ What was the difference between the great masters of nigleh and the Baal Shem Tov, according to the Frierdiker Rebbe?

Students came to the masters of nigleh to learn. The Baal Shem Tov and his students didn't wait;

they traveled to the towns and villages where Jews lived. (§7)

2. ★★ What is the "stone sign" way, and what is the "living sign" way?

Stone sign: he travels to the crossroads but waits until someone who can "read" asks him, like a

still pillar. Living sign: full of life and warmth, he runs to every Jew he might help without

waiting to be asked. (§7)

3. ★★ What did they say about a clock? What does it teach?

It walks back and forth all the time but doesn't move from its place: you can be busy and still be

a "domem". (§7)

4. ★ What mission did the Frierdiker Rebbe give especially to the Temimim?

To travel for a few weeks in vacation time from city to city, calling "Miklat, Miklat": living

signs, not stone ones. (§7)

5. ★★★ "A person should see himself and the world as balanced." How does this turn him into a "living sign"?

Every good deed of any Jew can tip the whole world, all generations. So he runs with life, in case he can influence one Jew and tip the world. (§8)

6. ★★ What should the young man explain to a Jew he meets?

That whatever his state he is "balanced": one act in one moment can tip him completely to good, or the other way, chas v'shalom, so choose life. (§8)

7. ★★ How does bedikas chametz answer someone who thinks he accomplished nothing?

One who searched well and found nothing still made a complete bracha and kept the mitzvah. He did his part. (§9)

8. ★★★ What is the meaning of "the reward of a mitzvah is the mitzvah"?

"Mitzvah" comes from "tzavsa", connection: doing the mitzvah connects him to Hashem. That itself is the reward. (§9)

9. ★★ What did the Friediker Rebbe say many times in his father's name?

Outreach ("propaganda") never comes back empty. Since he did it, it surely helped, even if he doesn't know. (§10)

10. ★★ Give two examples of how a bochur on shlichus helps even without seeing it.

A Jew sees him through the window, remembers his father and says Modeh Ani or Shema. A child who slipped away from a "Talks and Tales" booklet tells his parents, and they remember their own parents. (§11)

11. ★★ Should the young man be satisfied with "surrounding" results?

He should be heartbroken that he didn't bring about real inner change, but he can't say he did nothing; just being seen traveling to stir Jews helps. (§12)

12. ★★ Tell the story of the Conservative rabbi and the young chassid. What does it show?

The children didn't believe chassidim exist in America today; the rabbi brought a bearded young chassid to "just show yourself". The children asked questions and told their parents all day. Just being seen as a living example helps. (§13)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

"Shalom Gefiltefish!"

Every summer, pairs of young Lubavitcher students travel to faraway places to find Jews. Rabbi Yanki Tauber and a friend once loaded a rented car with sefarim, tefillin, mezuzos, tuna and matzah, and drove 4,000 miles in three weeks across Montana.

"Shalom Gefiltefish!" That was how Mr. B., a lawyer at the local university, greeted them. They just smiled and sat down. They spent two pleasant hours with him and his wife. Those two words were all he knew of anything Jewish.

The couple invited the bochurim to use their basement whenever they came back, and for the next three years it was their base in Montana.

"I never even tried to figure out what we said or did," Rabbi Tauber wrote, "that made them look at their Jewishness with new eyes." But Mr. B. began to learn and teach about Judaism, and gave regular talks in schools so that people would understand it better.

Years later, whenever Rabbi Tauber felt discouraged, he would call Montana, and the cheerful "Shalom Gefiltefish!" on the line was music to his soul.

Source: Yanki Tauber, "Shalom Gefiltefish" (chabad.org)

Think: How does this story show that outreach "never comes back empty"?

The bochurim didn't know what they had said that worked, yet one visit to a Jew who knew only two words changed his life. They were "living signs" who went to him, not waiting for him to come.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Don't wait to be asked. Be a living sign: go to others with warmth. Even when you don't see results, it never comes back empty.

For example: On Friday, your class goes to the shopping area to offer Shabbos candles and tefillin. Most people say no. Keep smiling and offering. One "yes" can tip the whole world.