

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Bereishis

פרשת בראשית

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Tishrei Goes to Work! · 5752 Bereishis, §1

Sicha 2: Chosen, Even in Galus! · 5752 Bereishis, §2

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.

Tishrei Goes to Work!

ויעקב הלך לדרכו • בי"ת ראשית

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Bereishis, Shabbos Mevarchim MarCheshvan, 27 Tishrei 5752 (1991), section 1. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 50).

The point: *The Frierdiker Rebbe publicized the saying: "The way we set ourselves up on Shabbos Bereishis determines our conduct for the whole year." But all of Tishrei affects the whole year: Rosh HaShanah is the "head" that holds the life of the year, and Yom Kippur, Sukkos, Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah also influence the year. So why Shabbos Bereishis? Because it is the bridge from the Yom Tov atmosphere of Tishrei to everyday life. It ends Tishrei: Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah gather in all of Tishrei, and Shabbos raises up the week before it. And it begins the rest of the year: on Shabbos Bereishis we bless MarCheshvan, a month with no Yomim Tovim, the regular service of "Yaakov went on his way", within nature. Tishrei's influence is above the world; Shabbos Bereishis brings it into our worldly life. Also, the Torah-reading cycle begins now ("live with the times"), and the parsha tells of creation: "Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world; a person looks into the Torah and renews the world." Chazal read Bereishis as "beis reishis": the world was created for two "firsts", the Torah and the Jewish people. This doesn't mean they are only above the world, but that they are the purpose of the world. Like terumah, which is part of the harvest and then separated, the Jews are "chosen". Tanya explains that the choice refers to the Jew's physical body, which looks like the bodies of the nations: real choice is only between two things that look alike; the souls, "a part of Hashem above", are beyond comparison. Through this choice there is a connection with Hashem's Essence. So, too, the Torah's fullest expression is in this physical world ("it is not in heaven"). That is why Rashi begins: if the nations say "you are robbers", we answer "the whole world is Hashem's, and He gave it to whom He wished."*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What saying did the Frierdiker Rebbe publicize about Shabbos Bereishis?

"The way we set ourselves up on Shabbos Bereishis determines our conduct for the whole year to come." (§1)

2. ★★ Why is this saying hard to understand?

All of Tishrei affects the whole year: Rosh HaShanah is the "head" that holds the life of the year, and Yom Kippur, Sukkos, Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah affect the year too. So why is Shabbos Bereishis special? (§1)

3. ★★ How is Shabbos Bereishis both the END of Tishrei and the BEGINNING of the year?

End: it is the Shabbos after Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah, which gather all of Tishrei, and Shabbos raises up the week before it. Beginning: on it we bless MarCheshvan, a month with no Yomim Tovim, the regular service of "Yaakov went on his way". (§1)

4. ★★ What is the difference between Tishrei's influence and Shabbos Bereishis's influence?
Tishrei's influence is spiritual, above the world. Shabbos Bereishis brings Tishrei's influence into our everyday, worldly life. (§1)
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5. ★ What two more reasons make Shabbos Bereishis affect the whole year?
The yearly cycle of Torah readings starts then, and we "live with the times" (the parsha). And the parsha tells of creation: "a person looks into the Torah and renews the world." (§1)
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6. ★ What does "beis reishis" mean?
"Two firsts": the world was created for two things called "first": the Torah and the Jewish people. (§1)
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7. ★★★ Does "the Jews and the Torah came before the world" mean they are above the world? Explain with terumah.
No: it means they are the PURPOSE of the world. Terumah is part of the harvest and then separated and made holy; so too the Jews are part of the world and are "chosen" within it. (§1)
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8. ★★★ According to Tanya, what did Hashem "choose" in a Jew, and why?
The physical body, which looks like the bodies of the nations. Real choice is only between things that look alike; if one has an obvious advantage, the advantage forces the choice. The souls, "a part of Hashem above", are beyond comparison, so "choice" fits only the body. (§1)
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9. ★★ What does this choice create, and how is the Torah similar?
A connection with Hashem's very Essence. The Torah too is most fully expressed in this physical world: "it is not in heaven", and halacha follows the understanding of Jews living in this world. (§1)
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10. ★★ How does this explain Rashi's first comment on the Torah?
If the nations say "you are robbers", we answer "the whole world is Hashem's; He gave it to whom He wished." It speaks about the Jews as they live within the world, and even there it will be revealed that Hashem gave them Eretz Yisrael. (§1)
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11. ★ Your turn: what is one Tishrei “purchase” you will “unpack” and use in your regular days?

Open answer. For example: the Simchas Torah joy in davening on a regular Tuesday; a hachlatah from

Yom Kippur about speaking nicely. (§1)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“V’Yaakov Halach L’Darko!”

In Lubavitch, Tishrei was a month of joy and inspiration. Chassidim came from near and far to spend the Yomim Tovim with the Rebbe Rashab.

Then came Simchas Torah. After the grand Simchas Torah meal, the Rebbe Rashab turned to the temimim and said: “Now is the time of ‘V’Yaakov halach l’darko’, Yaakov goes on his way. After the avodah of Tishrei, now ‘Yaakov’ (from ‘eikev’, the heel, the lowest level of the soul) must go on his way, serving Hashem with Torah and mitzvos in everyday life all year long.” And on Motzei Simchas Torah in Lubavitch, they would announce it out loud for everyone to hear: “V’Yaakov halach l’darko!”

His son, the Frierdiker Rebbe, compared it to a merchant coming home from the big fair. He doesn’t leave his new merchandise packed in its boxes; he unpacks it and starts selling right away. So too, everything we “bought” since Rosh Chodesh Elul (the shofar, the tefillos, the fast of Yom Kippur, the dancing) must be unpacked and put to use in the days ahead.

Source: *Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe vol. 1 p. 194, in “Unpacking Our Bags From Tishrei” (A Chassidishe Derher, via anash.org)*

Think: How does “V’Yaakov halach l’darko” fit what the Rebbe says about Shabbos Bereishis?

Shabbos Bereishis is the bridge: it takes everything we gained in Tishrei, which is above the

world, and brings it into everyday life, like a merchant who unpacks his goods and starts selling.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Don’t leave Tishrei in its box! Set yourself up on Shabbos Bereishis for the whole year, and bring the Yom Tov inspiration into regular days. You were chosen and created for a purpose.

For example: After Simchas Torah, keep one thing going, like coming to davening on time or the extra shiur you started. When a regular Monday feels boring, remember: the world was created for you and for the Torah.

Chosen, Even in Galus!

שנת נפלאות בה

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Bereishis, Shabbos Mevarchim MarCheshvan, 27 Tishrei 5752 (1991), section 2. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 50).

The point: *Since Hashem's choice of the Jews is about them as they live in this physical world, a Jew must know that even in galus, whatever difficulties he faces, he is one of Hashem's chosen people and the world was created for him. The nations have no real power over his existence, spiritual or material. Rules like "the law of the land is the law", "don't rebel against the nations" and "don't challenge the nations" don't come from fear. They are like "don't provoke Moav": the Jews didn't fear Moav, but Hashem hadn't given them that land. They apply only to some material matters (business, taxes), never to Torah and mitzvos: "our souls were not sent into galus." We should be grateful for the nations' kindness ("seek the welfare of the city"), and when they help our Torah and mitzvos, that is really Hashem's kindness through them. This year is "shnas niflaos bah", a year of wonders: many wonders ("50 wonders", connected with eternity), even greater and more revealed than last year's, in everything. They will show Hashem's choice of the Jews: the Russian government allowing and helping thousands of Jews to leave for Eretz Yisrael and other countries; Jews in America serving Hashem freely, even with government help. This is a foretaste of "the nations will walk by your light." The Jews are an eternal people, and the Torah begins with Bereishis to show that the world exists for them. So we must stress the uniqueness of the Jewish people and Torah study, especially Chitas, and this will bring the greatest wonder: the Geulah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What must a Jew know even in galus, whatever difficulties he faces?

That he is one of Hashem's chosen people and the world was created for him; the nations have no real power over his existence. (§2)

- ★★★ If we are chosen, why are there rules like "the law of the land is the law" and "don't challenge the nations"? Compare Moav.

Not because of fear. Like "don't provoke Moav": the Jews didn't fear Moav, but Hashem hadn't given them that land. So too in galus, this is the order Hashem set, as a punishment for our sins. (§2)

- ★★ What does "the law of the land is the law" apply to, and what does it NOT apply to?

Only some material matters, like business and taxes. Never Torah and mitzvos: "our souls were not sent into galus" (the Frierdiker Rebbe). (§2)

- ★★ How should we look at kindness we get from the nations?

Be grateful ("seek the welfare of the city"). When they help our Torah and mitzvos, it is really Hashem's kindness, sent through them. (§2)

5. ★ What is 5752 called, and what do the letters stand for?

“Shnas niflaos bah”, a year of wonders; the letters of the year also stand for “tihei shnas niflaos bakol”, a year of wonders in everything. (§2)

6. ★★ What do we learn from the word “niflaos”?

It is plural: many wonders. It can be read “nun pela’os”, 50 wonders, and 50 is connected with eternity, so the wonders will have an eternal effect; and they will be even greater and more revealed than last year’s. (§2)

7. ★★ What examples of wonders that show Hashem’s choice of the Jews does the Rebbe give?

The Russian government allowing and helping thousands of Jews leave for Eretz Yisrael and other countries; and Jews in America serving Hashem freely and in prosperity, even with government help. A foretaste of “the nations will walk by your light.” (§2)

8. ★★ The Torah begins with Bereishis, the creation of the world. What does this show about the Jewish people, according to this sicha?

The world was created for the Jews and the Torah, and the Jews are an eternal people, so their existence never depends on the nations. (§2)

9. ★★★ “Our souls were not sent into galus.” What does this mean for a Jewish boy living among the nations today?

Only our bodies, and some material matters like business and taxes, are under the nations. Our Torah and mitzvos are never in galus, so nothing and no one can stop us from keeping them proudly. (§2)

10. ★ What should we strengthen, especially which daily shiurim, and what will it bring?

The uniqueness of the Jewish people and Torah study, especially Chitas (Chumash, Tehillim, Tanya). This will bring the greatest wonder, the Geulah. (§2)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“Don’t Have Any More Doubts!”

Tzvi Hersh Tsatskis grew up in the Soviet Union, where keeping Torah was against the law. A Chabad chassid secretly taught him Torah. As a music student in Moscow he was arrested twice just for going to shul.

For years his family tried to leave. In 1970 a shliach asked the Rebbe for a brachah, and less than a year later, when it was almost impossible, they got permission to go.

At his first farbrengen in 770 he stood in line for l’chaim. The Rebbe poured wine into his cup, called him back, poured again, and said to him in Russian: “Don’t have any more doubts!” Then: “Sing!”

Later Tzvi Hersh, a pianist, was invited to give a big concert in Manhattan for a Jewish group. At intermission someone asked him to take off his yarmulke. He refused. Then the group’s vice president asked again. “If one more person asks me,” Tzvi Hersh said, “I won’t just keep my yarmulke on; I’ll take out my tzitzis too!” That ended it.

When he told the Rebbe, he said, “The audience wasn’t observant...” The Rebbe stopped him: “Why do you say they were not observant? They are observant; they just don’t know that they are observant!”

Source: Tzvi Hersh Tsatskis, “The Rebbe’s Response to the Russian Refusenik Who Was Told to Remove His Kippah”, *Here’s My Story* (JEM; chabad.org)

Think: How does Tzvi Hersh show that a Jew is “chosen” and doesn’t need to fear, even in galus?

In Soviet Russia and in America, he wasn’t afraid to be openly Jewish, even when pressured. And

the Rebbe showed that every Jew is chosen and special, even those who don’t know it yet.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

You are part of Hashem’s chosen people wherever you are. Don’t be afraid or embarrassed about your Yiddishkeit, and be thankful for the good Hashem sends you through others. Learn your Chitas every day!

For example: On a trip or at the doctor’s office, keep your kippah on and say a brachah out loud. And if someone tries to make you feel small for being Jewish, remember: the whole world was created for the Torah and for you.