

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Beshalach

פרשת בשלח

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Eleven: Beyond the Limits! · Night after 11 Shvat, §1

Sicha 2: The Long Way Is the Better Way! · Shabbos Beshalach, §§1-2

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.

Eleven: Beyond the Limits!

אחד עשר יום מחורב

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of the night following 11 Shvat 5752 (1992), the Thursday night before Shabbos Shirah. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: *Eleven is the light above the world's ten utterances, brought into the world. The 11th month (moon, a receiver) teaches that we can receive it; the 11th day (sun, a giver) teaches that each Jew can spread it through all the worlds, "an eleven-day journey from Chorev, by way of Har Se'ir", even transforming Esav. Pharaoh "sends" the people out of limits, to Eretz Yisrael, which drinks rain from Hashem's blessing alone, complete and whole, joined with Torah and the Jewish people. Then comes the "shir chadash", hastened by tzedakah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What does "eleven" mean?

The world was created with ten utterances, so eleven is the Divine light above the world's limits.

But since it follows ten, it also means that transcendent light joined with the limits of the world. (§1)

2. ★★ Where is this already hinted on Yud Shvat itself?

Shvat is the eleventh month, and Maariv on the eve of the 11th belongs to both the 10th and the 11th. (§1)

3. ★★ What is the difference between the 11th month and the 11th day?

The month follows the moon, a receiver (mekabel); the day follows the sun, a giver (mashpia). The 11th month teaches that we can receive the transcendent light into the world; the 11th day teaches that each person can be a source, drawing it down through the whole world and strengthening all the worlds. (§1)

4. ★★★ "A Jew was created to serve his Creator": what does that imply?

That a Jew can bring something new to Hashem Himself, as it were. Hashem reveals Himself through the ten Sefiros, the source of the world's limits, and a Jew can reveal a level of G-dliness above those limits. (§1)

5. ★★ Explain “achad asar yom meChorev, derech Har Se’ir”.

Chorev is Har Sinai, where the Torah, linked with the Ten Commandments, came inside the world’s limits. “An eleven-day journey from Chorev” is the Jew going further and bringing the “eleven”, transcendent light, into the world. “By way of Har Se’ir”: it transforms Esav’s mountain into something good. (§1)

6. ★★ How does “Vayehi beshalach Paroh” connect?

To leave Mitzrayim, the limits of the world, the Jews had to be sent out by Pharaoh, meaning the positive Pharaoh, “the source of the revelation of all lights”. (§1)

7. ★★ How does Eretz Yisrael get its water, and why?

Not like Egypt, watered from the Nile “with your feet”; Eretz Yisrael drinks only rain, to show its dependence on Hashem’s blessing: “the eyes of Hashem are upon it from the beginning of the year to the end.” (§1)

8. ★★ What will the completeness of the land be joined with? How are bad influences removed?

The land will stay whole, not an inch touched. Opposing influences will be nullified “like the dust of the earth”, as with chametz, the yetzer hara, which is destroyed and turned into a force that helps the matzah, holiness. The land, the Torah and the Jewish people, complete together, are “a threefold cord”, eternal like the Third Beis HaMikdash. (§1)

9. ★★ What is the difference between the Song of the Sea and the song of the Geulah?

The Song of the Sea is “shirah”, the feminine form; in the Geulah we will sing “shir chadash”, the masculine form, for a redemption that will never be followed by galus. (§1)

10. ★ What will hasten the Geulah?

Giving out money for tzedakah, since “tzedakah brings the Geulah near”, and may it come tonight, the eve of the sixth day. (§1)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Logs, Rain and a Rebbe's Promise

One year there was no rain for months. For the brothers Reb Aharon and Reb Yitzchak Safir and their partner Reb Moshe Shwartz, loggers in the Polish forests, it meant ruin: their logs could only float down the Vistula River to Danzig on high water, and the river was low and weak.

The brothers went to their Rebbe, the Shinover Rebbe. "Please, daven for rain!" "You want me to bring rain?" he answered. "Am I G-d? The Gemara says Hashem holds three keys in His own hands, and one of them is rain!" But they begged: hundreds of families had invested with them, and their failure would be a chillul Hashem.

After Shabbos the Rebbe said: "Rain is in Hashem's hands alone. But I have a tradition from the Chozeh of Lublin: whoever helps the descendants of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk will merit immediate salvation. In my home lives a poor orphan of his family, and we can't afford her wedding. Pay for it, and before the week is out, the Vistula will flow." At once they gave more than enough.

Back in the forest their crew tied the logs into rafts while the other loggers laughed: "The sky is blue! It's not going to rain!" On Friday the sky turned gray and a great storm broke. Everyone else's logs were swept into the river and smashed. Only the tied rafts of Safir and Shwartz floated peacefully down to Danzig.

Source: Aharon Loschak, "Logs, Rain, and a Rebbe's Promise" (chabad.org)

Think: How does this story show that rain comes only from Hashem's blessing, and that tzedakah brings salvation (§1)?

Even the tzaddik said rain is only in Hashem's hands; what opened the blessing was tzedakah,

paying for an orphan's wedding. Then the rain came exactly when and how they needed it, like Eretz

Yisrael, which "drinks rain" under Hashem's eyes.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Be a "sun", a mashpia, not only a "moon" that receives: bring the "eleven", more than the usual, into your world. And give tzedakah; it brings the Geulah.

For example: Your class is collecting for a family making a wedding. Instead of just dropping in a quarter, get three friends to give from their own allowance too, and bring the envelope to your rebbi together.

The Long Way Is the Better Way!

ולא נחם אלקים דרך ארץ פלשתיים

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Beshalach (Shabbos Shirah), 13 Shvat 5752 (1992), printed together with the talks of Thursday, 11 Shvat. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: *Yud Shvat fell on Wednesday, the day the luminaries were hung and the start of preparing for Shabbos, and Shabbos Shirah lifts it higher through song. Hashem didn't lead the Yidden the short, eleven-day way of the Plishtim: the "eleven" (Hashem's essence) had to be drawn into them over forty years and 42 journeys, raising the sparks, just as our wanderings through the galus raise the sparks of the nations. Then comes the "new song" and the new Torah. This 42nd year of the Frierdiker Rebbe's yahrzeit, the journey is complete. On Tu B'Shvat: every Jew is a "cherished land" with seven kinds of fruit.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ Why was it significant that Yud Shvat fell on a Wednesday this year?

Wednesday is the day the luminaries were hung in the sky, and it begins the preparation for

Shabbos (Lechu Neranenah is in Wednesday's Shir shel Yom). On Shabbos the avodah of the week, here the avodah of Yud Shvat, is raised higher. (§1)

- ★ How is song connected with Shabbos, and especially Shabbos Shirah?

"Mizmor shir l'yom haShabbos": song is a way to go up, and on Shabbos the worlds are raised

through song. Shabbos Shirah gives that power to all the Shabbosos of the year, and especially the power to raise the avodah of Yud Shvat. (§1)

- ★ What two sides of Tu B'Shvat does this Shabbos bless?

It is the New Year for Trees, and it is the 15th, when the moon is full, so the month's avodah

shines completely. (§1)

- ★★ How are Beshalach and Yisro connected, and how do both point to the Geulah?

Beshalach completes yetzias Mitzrayim, whose goal was Matan Torah in Yisro ("you will serve Me on this mountain"); and Yisro came because he heard about the splitting of the sea. Both point to the

Geulah: "the Mikdash Hashem established by Your hands", "Hashem will reign forever", the war on

Amalek until the Geulah, and Matan Torah leading to "the new Torah that will come from Me". (§1)

5. ★★ What does the Midrash say about “the way of the Plishtim”? What is “eleven”?

It was an eleven-day journey (“achad asar yom meChorev”), yet they traveled forty years in the desert. Eleven is positive too: “the special commandment, the first of the ten, ‘Anochi’”, in Kabbalah “One, but not in number”, Hashem’s essence above the ten Sefiros. (§1)

6. ★★★ Why didn’t Hashem lead them the short way?

Not to take the “eleven” away, but to draw it into their inner being. The forty years gave them “a knowing heart, eyes that see and ears that hear”. The short way would have revealed it from Above without it becoming part of them; the long way made it theirs, and that prepared them to enter Eretz Yisrael. (§1)

7. ★★ How was it done during the journeys?

Through the 42 journeys, raising the sparks of G-dliness in the things they used, which had fallen to the negative side of “eleven”. Through the Jews’ avodah the negative is nullified and the positive power revealed, bringing more strength into avodah within the world’s limits (the Ten Commandments). (§1)

8. ★★ How do “ten” and “eleven” explain the difference between Matan Torah and the Torah of the Geulah?

The Torah of the Geulah was also given at Sinai but stayed hidden, so it is called “new”. Matan Torah is “ten”, the Torah inside the world’s limits, nigleh that guides our conduct; “the new Torah that will come from Me” is “eleven”, the transcendent. (§1)

9. ★★ What have our wanderings through the centuries been for, and where will they lead?

Like the desert journeys, to raise the sparks of G-dliness in the nations where we lived. That leads to “I will remove the spirit of impurity”, Amalek wiped out, and Eretz Yisrael as the land of ten nations (with the Keini, Kenizi and Kadmoni), spreading over the whole world as Hashem’s dwelling. (§1)

10. ★★ What is the difference between the nine songs and the tenth?

The nine songs are “shirah” (feminine): the Jews’ own efforts to go up and raise their surroundings. The tenth, the “new song” of the Geulah, is “shir” (masculine): revelation from Above. (§1)

11. ★★★ Why is this year’s Yud Shvat especially meaningful?

Shvat is the 11th month; on Yud Shvat all the Frierdiker Rebbe’s deeds, Torah and avodah are raised; it fell on Wednesday, a day of revelation; and the 11th day shows the transcendent in both month and day. It is the 42nd year since his passing, like the 42 journeys: the “journey through the desert” is complete, and we, the last generation of galus and first of Geulah, are ready to enter Eretz Yisrael. That certainty should bring joy. (§1)

12. ★★ What is the lesson of Tu B'Shvat, and what should be done?

Every Jew is “a cherished land” that can bring out the seven species, seven ways of serving Hashem, including dates (honey), the secrets of Torah (“honey and milk under your tongue”). Farbrengens should be held everywhere on Tu B'Shvat to stress this, and through it, “a shoot will come out from the stem of Yishai”. (§2)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Mystery Detour

Reb Alexander, a devoted chassid of the Alter Rebbe, was getting ready for a business trip when the Rebbe made an unusual request: "When you finish your business, please stop in this nearby town." He had no idea why, but he trusted the Rebbe.

As soon as he arrived he saw that something was different: the Jews there dressed in the modern style, touched by the "enlightenment" blowing from the West. Uneasy, he took lodging for Shabbos at the only kosher inn, run by a woman named Hindel.

At the Shabbos davening and meals he shared divrei Torah and chassidishe niggunim, and people were deeply moved. He still didn't know why he'd been sent, until he noticed a young boy at the end of the table, eyes wide open, taking it all in. Then he heard Hindel crying in the corner.

Her father, the town rav, used to make a Shabbos like this every week, she explained. Since he passed away the town had lost its Jewish heart, her husband was often away, and she worried about her son's chinuch. Reb Alexander offered to bring the boy to the Alter Rebbe in Liozna to learn, and she agreed.

Now he understood his mission. The boy grew up to be one of the Alter Rebbe's greatest talmidim, Reb Peretz Chein, father of a large family of rabbanim and communal leaders.

Source: Hillel Baron, "The Mystery Detour" (chabad.org), from *Sippurei Mofes: Baal HaTanya*, p. 225

Think: Why did Hashem lead the Yidden the long way (§1)? How was Reb Alexander's detour the same?

The long way had a purpose: raising sparks along the way and making the light truly part of the world. Reb Alexander's detour, which looked pointless, was to find one special neshamah and bring it to the Rebbe.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

The long way isn't wasted: slow, real growth becomes part of you, and every "detour" has a purpose. And you are a "cherished land" with seven kinds of fruit to grow.

For example: You want to race through the masechta to make the siyum first, without reviewing. Take the "long way": review each daf until you know it, so the Torah becomes yours.