

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Bo

פרשת בא

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: The Nasi Is the Whole Generation! · 3 Shvat, §1

Sicha 2: Come with Me! · Shabbos Bo, §§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.

The Nasi Is the Whole Generation!

הנשיא הוא הכל

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of 3 Shvat 5752 (1992), the start of the week of Yud Shvat. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: *From 3 Shvat we enter the week of the Frierdiker Rebbe's yahrzeit, so a new channel of avodah must open. The Nasi ("nitzutzo shel Yaakov avinu") includes the souls of the whole generation. "Bo el Paroh" means approaching "the source of all lights", and every Jew has a spark of Moshe. His names point to the Geulah: Yosef (the ingathering) and Yitzchak (joy). He served with joy despite great suffering; even though, unlike Moshe, he had no Aharon to speak for him. So: farbrengens everywhere, more Torah to make up for his difficulty in speaking, all with simchah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ Why is 3 Shvat a special day?

From it we enter the week of the Frierdiker Rebbe's yahrzeit, Yud Shvat. The avodah of the yahrzeit should begin now and open a new channel, so it needs special effort. (§1)

2. ★★ "The Nasi is the whole generation": what does the word Nasi hint at, and what does it mean?

Nasi = "nitzutzo shel Yaakov avinu", a spark of Yaakov our father. Just as Yaakov's soul included the souls of all Jews of all generations, every Nasi's soul includes all the souls of his generation, and of every generation before and after. (§1)

3. ★ Who must begin a new stage of avodah this week?

Those who are alive, with a healthy soul and a healthy body. (§1)

4. ★★ How does "Bo el Paroh" connect, and why does it apply to every Jew?

The Zohar says Pharaoh in kedushah is "the source of the revelation of all lights", so Hashem told Moshe to approach that high level. Every Jew has a spark of Moshe in his soul, affecting his thought, speech and action, so every Jew must prepare for a new level of revelation. (§1)

5. ★★ What happens on a yahrzeit, and on the Nasi's yahrzeit especially?

A yahrzeit is a great, unmeasurable ascent of the soul: the kaddish on a yahrzeit is a new, higher ascent. On the Nasi's yahrzeit, "the source of the revelation of all lights" is revealed to everyone in the generation. (§1)

6. ★★ How does the name Yosef connect to the Geulah?

“Yosif Hashem shenis yado”: Hashem will again stretch out His hand to gather His people from the four corners of the earth, the ingathering of the exiles of all generations. (§1)

7. ★★ How does the name Yitzchak connect to the Geulah?

Yitzchak was named for laughter and joy (“all who hear will rejoice with me”), and in the Geulah “our mouths will be filled with laughter”. In Tehillim the name is even written שְׂחֹק, like “schok”, laughter. (§1)

8. ★★★ What was special about the Frierdiker Rebbe’s joy? Compare him to Moshe.

His avodah was marked by joy, even though he suffered severe physical pain that also affected his avodah. A doctor wondered: he taught through speech, yet his illness kept him from speaking properly. Moshe, who had “uncircumcised lips”, was given Aharon to speak for him; the Frierdiker Rebbe had no Aharon, so his teaching was limited, in speech and also in writing. (§1)

9. ★★ What two things should we do for Yud Shvat?

(1) Farbrengens in every place: on the day of the yahrzeit, the Shabbos before and the Shabbos after. (2) Each person should add in learning Torah, as much as he can, to make up for the Frierdiker Rebbe’s difficulty in teaching. All of it with joy, like his. (§1)

10. ★★★ Why must we serve with joy even in the pain of galus? What will it hasten?

We should be healthy (“guard your lives”), yet we must bear the pains of galus, and still “serve Hashem with joy”. Especially now, near the Geulah, with its versions of yetzias Mitzrayim, the splitting of the sea (and the river) and Matan Torah. Torah, tefillah and gemilus chassadim with joy will bring it closer, and we’ll farbreng with the Frierdiker Rebbe at our head. (§1)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“You, the Cause of My Illness?”

In the summer of 1929 the Frierdiker Rebbe visited Eretz Yisroel. He left on Thursday, August 22, two days before the Arab riots in which scores of Jews were massacred in Chevron and Yerushalayim. Among the dead and wounded were relatives and talmidim of his.

The terrible news reached him on Sunday, on the boat from Alexandria to Trieste. As he wrote to Rav Kook: “I fell ill with a kidney ailment out of sheer pain and distress.” Thank G-d, the G-d-fearing Dr. Moshe Wallach, founder of Shaare Tzedek hospital in Yerushalayim, was on the boat and did much to relieve his illness. Even after he arrived, he could not recover for several days, especially after reading the list of the kedoshim.

At the end of the voyage, Dr. Wallach came and begged his forgiveness: “Rebbe! How can I atone for being the cause of your illness?”

“You, the cause of my illness?” asked the Rebbe in amazement.

“Yes,” said the doctor. “There is no doubt in my mind that if I hadn’t been on the boat, you wouldn’t have fallen ill. You, Rebbe, are a man on whom the entire Jewish nation depends. Surely Hashem would not have let a life-threatening illness come upon you unless the means of your cure was on the ship with you.”

Source: *From the letters and talks of the Frierdiker Rebbe, adapted by Yanki Tauber, “Cause and Effect” (chabad.org)*

Think: How does this story show that “the Nasi is the whole generation” (§1)?

The pain of Jews far away in Chevron and Yerushalayim struck his own body, because their souls were part of his. And even the doctor understood that the whole Jewish people depended on him.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Yud Shvat week is a time to start something new, with simchah, and to add in learning, to “make up” for what the Frierdiker Rebbe wasn’t able to say.

For example: You have a cold and a big test this week. Still, go to the Yud Shvat farbrengen with a smile, and take on learning one short sicha of the Frierdiker Rebbe every day this week.

Come with Me!

בא אל פרעה

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Bo, 6 Shvat 5752 (1992). Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 51).

The point: *Pharaoh in kedushah is "the source of all lights", an unbounded revelation, so Moshe was afraid, and Hashem said "Bo", come with Me. Only Hashem's essence can fuse the limited and the infinite, and that fusion is the goal of the exodus: Matan Torah and a dirah in this world. Moshe's heavy speech, from a level too high for vessels, was answered with "I will be with your mouth." That is why the Jews "borrowed" the Egyptians' vessels with their good will: the world itself transformed, not broken. Our generation, led by the Moshe of the generation, sees the world helping Jews, even Russia, so the Geulah will come from prosperity, without fleeing.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What made the exodus possible, and what is Pharaoh in kedushah?

Hashem's command "Bo el Paroh". The Zohar says Pharaoh in kedushah is "the source of the revelation of all lights"; the word "ispariyu" means wild, an unbounded revelation that can't be contained. Because his source is so high, his power in this world is so fallen. (§1)

- ★★ Why did Hashem say "Bo", come, and not "go"?

The Zohar says Moshe was afraid to approach Pharaoh, the source of all evil, so Hashem said "Come with Me, I will go with you." Deeper: thinking about the source of Pharaoh in kedushah filled Moshe with awe: how can a limited human approach Hashem's essence? He needed Hashem to accompany him and join the limited with the infinite. (§1)

- ★★ How is such a fusion possible?

Only through Hashem's essence. Since the light of the essence reveals its source, it brings the power to join opposites to every level, even this physical world, so Moshe, a soul in a body, could receive infinite revelations. (§1)

- ★★ What was the goal of yetzias Mitzrayim?

Matan Torah ("you will serve Hashem on this mountain"), whose goal is a dirah for Hashem in the lower worlds. Just as a person shows who he really is, without holding back, in his own home, Hashem will be revealed without restraint in this world. (§1)

5. ★★ What did Matan Torah change?

Before it there was a decree that the spiritual couldn't come down to the physical, nor the physical go up. At Matan Torah Hashem cancelled it, so His very essence could be revealed in this world and physical things could become holy. This shows most fully in a Jew, body and soul together: "Yisroel and Hashem are all one." (§1)

6. ★★ Moshe said "I am not a man of speech." Give two explanations.

(1) His speech mirrored the world: speech (Malchus) was in galus, and he couldn't wake it, so he felt unfit to redeem. (2) In Chassidus: his level came from Tohu, too high to fit into our world's vessels, so he asked Hashem to send someone who could bring revelation into our limited world. (§1)

7. ★★★ Explain Hashem's answer, "I will be with your mouth."

Hashem's essence can join opposites. On his own Moshe couldn't, but because Hashem was "with his mouth", the high revelations of Tohu could shine inside our finite world. So Moshe's protest was really meant to bring about this joining of finite and infinite, the joining of Matan Torah. (§1)

8. ★★ How did Moshe's "fusion" pass to the whole people?

It became the source for the same at Matan Torah: "a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation", holy while living in the physical world. "Kohanim" means kohen gadol, who had to be healthy, unblemished and wealthy: the Jews can have health and wealth and still be one with Hashem. The fullest form will be at Techiyas HaMeisim, when the soul will even be nourished by the body. (§1)

9. ★★★ Why does the Torah stress "borrowing" the Egyptians' vessels, with a special miracle of favor? Why not leave at once?

Because the goal is a dirah for Hashem within the world as it is. That comes not by breaking nature, taking the wealth by force, but by transforming it: the Egyptians give their wealth to the Jews willingly. (§1)

10. ★★ Why did the Jews have to “flee” Egypt, and how will the final Geulah be different?

The exodus wasn't a complete transformation of the world, so they had to flee. Before the final

Geulah the world will be refined (“I will remove the spirit of impurity”), so “you will not leave

in haste”. Jews will be eager, but not pressured, going from prosperity in this world to the

eternal life of the Geulah. (§1)

11. ★★ How does this apply to Yud Shvat and to our generation?

The Frierdiker Rebbe is the Moshe of our generation, and our generation, “the last of galus and

the first of Geulah”, is a gilgul of the generation of the exodus. We have seen a great increase

in transforming the world: spreading the wellsprings of Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, printing many

seforim, and spreading the seven mitzvos of Bnei Noach. (§2)

12. ★★ What effect has this had on the world, and what will hasten the Geulah?

The nations support Jews and help them keep Torah and mitzvos. Even Russia, which oppressed Jews

and blocked emigration for years, lets them live as they wish and even helps them emigrate.

Farbrengens for Yud Shvat, learning the Frierdiker Rebbe's teachings and his activities will

hasten “those who lie in the dust will arise and sing”. (§2)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

“Maybe Not, but I Can Try”

Michael Rubinoff came from a Modern Orthodox family. In 1954, shortly before he turned sixteen, his father sent him to the Chabad yeshivah in New York. On his birthday, 11 Nissan, which was also the Rebbe's birthday, he went in for a brachah, and the Rebbe spoke to him like a friend for half an hour.

“In those days, I stuttered terribly.” He only didn't stutter when he sang. When the Rebbe said he would like to help, the boy answered, “You can't help me.” “Maybe not,” the Rebbe replied, “but I can try.” He gave him a brachah and suggested a speech therapist. The boy didn't go.

Two years later he came in behind his father, who told him to keep quiet. The Rebbe leaned over the desk to see around his father: “Did you go?” After thousands of people, he remembered.

He became a teacher, and found that while teaching he didn't stutter. Many years later he finally went for speech therapy, and after two years of exercises he spoke fluently. He traveled to New York to thank the Rebbe, who said, “I'm so glad to see you again.” He said the professor had told him fluent speech would change his life. “And something more,” said the Rebbe. “You wait and see.”

As he left he said, “I can never repay you.” The Rebbe answered: “Be good and kind to your fellow Jews.”

Source: Michael Rubinoff, “The Gift of Speech” (JEM, My Encounter with the Rebbe / chabad.org)

Think: Moshe said “I am not a man of speech,” and Hashem answered, “I will be with your mouth” (§1). How does this story echo that?

A limit that looked permanent was overcome with the Rebbe's brachah and help from Above (“maybe not, but I can try”), and the speech he gained was used to teach and to be kind to other Jews.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

When a job looks too big for you, Hashem says “Bo”: come with Me. And change the world around you by winning it over, not by force.

For example: You're asked to say a dvar Torah at the Yud Shvat farbrengen, and you're terrified of speaking in front of everyone. “Come with Me”: prepare it well, say a kapitel Tehillim, and say it.