

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Noach

פרשת נח

2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Make Your Room a Little Eretz Yisrael! · 5752 Noach, RC Cheshvan §§1-2

Sicha 2: Noach: From a Plan to a New World! · 5752 Noach, §§1-3

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.

Make Your Room a Little Eretz Yisrael!

עשו כאן ארץ ישראל

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, the communal yechidus for guests of Rosh Chodesh MarCheshvan 5752 (1991): section 1 (to all the guests) and section 2 (to the bar and bas mitzvah children). Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 50).

The point: We “open with blessing”, especially at the start of a new year. The year begins on Rosh HaShanah, but our service in the material world, making it a dwelling for Hashem, begins now, after Tishrei: Tishrei (letters of “reishis”, head) is like the head, which directs, while the limbs do the work. Hashem “looked into the Torah and created the world”: everything exists first in the Torah and is then drawn down into the world, so its truth is seen through Torah, and our job is to draw that truth into the physical world. A “dwelling” shows who lives in it: Hashem’s essence will be revealed in the world. So, too, a Jew’s home must be different, openly Jewish, like Eretz Yisrael, the dwelling of the whole people: “Make this place Eretz Yisrael” means every man, woman and child should make his home and room a place where Yiddishkeit is openly seen. “Yisrael” = “li rosh”, “a head for Me”. Our being together (“how good and sweet for brothers to dwell together”) gives strength, especially in a shul, a place of prayer, learning, good resolutions, tzedakah and seudos mitzvah. A shul should be spacious, so each person has his own place to daven. In the Middle Ages Jews davened Maariv early to get home before dark, out of fear; today there is peace, “Hashem is your Protector”, and a mezuzah on every door, even the children’s rooms, protects a Jew wherever he is. The guests got special protection on their journey, and their separation is only geographic. To the bar and bas mitzvah children: on your bar or bas mitzvah you receive a direct command from Hashem to keep His mitzvos and learn His Torah, especially in this year of wonders; your good resolutions reveal every Jew’s inner wish to do Hashem’s will. Parents, grandparents, relatives and teachers celebrate with you, and on that day you should give extra tzedakah, which brings the Geulah near.

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★★ Why does our service “in the world” begin only now, after Tishrei? Explain with the head and the limbs.

Tishrei is a month of Yomim Tovim, not ordinary routine. Tishrei (letters of “reishis”) is like

the head: it directs the body, but the limbs carry out the work. So the actual work of making the

world a dwelling for Hashem starts after Tishrei. (§1)

- ★★★ What does “Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world” teach about every thing in the world?

Everything exists first in the Torah and only then is drawn down into the world. So its truth is

seen only through the Torah, and our job is to draw that truth down into the physical world. (§1)

- ★★ What does the word “dwelling” imply?

A place that shows who lives in it: when the world becomes Hashem’s dwelling, His essence is

revealed in it. (§1)

4. ★ What does “Make this place Eretz Yisrael” ask of every man, woman and child?

To make his home and his own room an openly Jewish dwelling, where the connection to Yiddishkeit can be seen. (§1)

5. ★★ What hidden meaning is in the name “Yisrael”?

“Li rosh”, “a head for Me”: Hashem sees every Jew as His “head”, rooted in His very essence. (§1)

6. ★★ What is a shul (Beis K'nesses) for, and why should it be spacious?

Not only davening and learning: Jews gather there for good resolutions, tzedakah and seudos mitzvah. It should be spacious so everyone has his own place to daven, two or three times a day. (§1)

7. ★★★ Why does the Rebbe say “two or three times”, and what change in our times does this show?

In the times of the Gemara and the Middle Ages, Jews davened Maariv right after Minchah, while it was still day, to get home before dark, because they were afraid at night. Today the world is peaceful, “Hashem is your Protector”, and the mezuzah protects us. (§1)

8. ★ Where should there be a mezuzah, and what does it do?

On every door, even the children's bedrooms. “Hashem will guard your going and coming”: it protects a Jew wherever he is. (§1)

9. ★★ What did the Rebbe tell the guests going home?

They had special protection and blessing on their journey; the separation is only geographic, and spiritually they stay together, “brothers dwelling together”. (§1)

10. ★★ What happens on a bar or bas mitzvah, according to the Rebbe?

You receive a direct command from Hashem to keep His mitzvos and learn His Torah, especially in this “year of wonders”. Your good resolutions reveal every Jew's inner wish to do Hashem's will. (§2)

11. ★ What should a bar or bas mitzvah child do on his or her day, and why?

Give extra tzedakah, as an expression of joy, because “tzedakah brings the Geulah near”. (§2)

12. ★ Your turn: name two things that make your room a “Jewish dwelling”, and one you will add.

Open answer. For example: a kosher mezuzah, a siddur and Chumash on the shelf, a tzedakah pushka, a picture of the Rebbe. (§1)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Sharing the Rebbe's Siddur

Shlomo Besser was born in Eretz Yisrael and came to Crown Heights at age six. His family wasn't Lubavitch, but his father sometimes davened at 770.

One day in 1951, soon after the Rebbe became Rebbe, young Shlomo came with his father. The shul was packed. He felt a little lost and couldn't find a siddur anywhere. Then he saw a siddur on the table where the Rebbe sat.

The Rebbe motioned to him to sit next to him and daven from his siddur together with him. The chassidim didn't like it and signaled the boy to move away. The Rebbe looked up and said: “What do you want from him? My davening is going very well with him!”

Years later, as a father, he told the Rebbe that his oldest daughter would turn five on 11 Nissan, the Rebbe's birthday, and asked what new mitzvah she could take on. The Rebbe smiled: “Had you not asked, I wouldn't have told you. But since you asked: she should start lighting Shabbos candles. The extra light that enters the house will bring in more joy.” This was a full year before the Rebbe began his campaign for every girl to light candles.

Source: Rabbi Shlomo Besser, “The Rebbe and I Shared a Siddur”, *Here's My Story* (JEM; chabad.org)

Think: How does this story show a Jewish place being a real “dwelling for Hashem”?

In shul, the Rebbe made room for a lost boy, “brothers dwelling together”. At home, a little girl's Shabbos candles brought more light and joy, making the house openly Jewish.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Now, after Tishrei, the real work begins: make your home and your own room openly Jewish, have your own place in shul, and when your bar mitzvah comes, take it as a direct command from Hashem, with extra tzedakah.

For example: Check that your room has a kosher mezuzah; put your siddur, Chumash and a pushka where you'll see them. In shul, save a place for the new boy and share your siddur.

Noach: From a Plan to a New World!

נח מצא חן בעיני הוי'

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of Shabbos Parshas Noach, 4 MarCheshvan 5752 (1991), sections 1–3. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 50).

The point: *Shabbos Noach is the first Shabbos after the week that follows Shabbos Bereishis, the first week of regular service, and "Noach" means rest and satisfaction. Shabbos Bereishis blesses the week ahead: it is the potential; Shabbos Noach completes the week: it shows the potential put into action. Both parshiyos are about the whole world: Bereishis tells of creation, Noach of Hashem's promise that the world will last forever. But Bereishis shows the world as Hashem planned it, perfect; Noach shows the world after it fell into sin, and the perfection reached through man's service and teshuvah, which gives Hashem pleasure. Even after a great fall, the world is raised higher: "Noach saw a new world." This service reaches a higher level of G-dliness: Bereishis uses the Name Elokim (= hateva, nature), while "Noach found favor in the eyes of Havayah", above nature, and leads to Havayah and Elokim joined. Hashem's covenant that nature will never stop shows His infinite power ("I, Hashem, have not changed"). Then comes Lech Lecha: leave your level, go "to the land I will show you" ("I will reveal you"): through refining the world, a Jew reveals his true self. So Parshas Noach is the time for a true cheshbon of the new year's service: drawing Havayah into the world. One may assume others are fine, but must check himself in thought, speech and action, and actually change, especially between people (return what you took, make peace), fitting for Shabbos, with its guests and unity. Two ways: look at your weaknesses, or throw yourself into good deeds, since "a little light pushes away much darkness"; best is both, with growth as the focus, so the cheshbon comes with joy, as befits Shabbos and the time after Tishrei. As a whole, "the buttons are already polished": the Jewish people are ready for Moshiach, and like a healthy body heals a small ailment, teshuvah heals the rest. And strengthen Kiddush Levana, connected with the Geulah: say it outside, publicly, in your best clothes, ideally on Motzei Shabbos.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★★ What is the difference between Shabbos Bereishis and Shabbos Noach in how they relate to the week?

Shabbos Bereishis blesses the first week of regular service (the potential). Shabbos Noach

completes that week and brings rest and perfection to it: the potential put into action. (§1)

2. ★★★ How are parshiyos Bereishis and Noach both alike and different?

Both are about the whole world: Bereishis is creation; Noach is Hashem's promise that the world

will last forever. But Bereishis shows the world as Hashem planned it, perfect; Noach shows the

world after it fell into sin and the perfection reached through man's service and teshuvah. (§1)

3. ★★ What does "Noach saw a new world" teach?

Even after a tremendous fall, man's service brings the world to a higher, more refined level than

before. (§1)

4. ★★★ Which Name of Hashem is used in the beginning of Bereishis, and which with Noach? What is the difference?

Bereishis uses Elokim, which equals "hateva", nature, the G-dliness that creates our limited world. With Noach: "Noach found favor in the eyes of Havayah", G-dliness above nature, and it leads to Havayah being revealed within Elokim. (§1)

5. ★★ How does Hashem's covenant with Noach show Havayah and Elokim joined?

Nature continues without stopping, and that steadiness reflects Hashem's infinite power: "I, Hashem, have not changed." (§1)

6. ★★ How does Lech Lecha continue this, and what does "arecka" hint at?

"Go out" = leave your present level, to "the land which I will show you"; "arecka" can mean "I will reveal you": by refining the world, a Jew reveals his true self. (§1)

7. ★★ Why must each person make a cheshbon for himself, even though we assume every Jew behaves properly?

That assumption is only for judging others. About himself, a person must check his thought, speech and action and actually change, since "deed is the main thing". (§2)

8. ★★ What does teshuvah between one person and another require?

Besides regret and resolving to do better, fixing the wrong (if you took something, return it) and making peace with your friend. (§2)

9. ★★★ What two approaches to a cheshbon are there, and what is the best way?

(1) Focus on your weaknesses; (2) throw yourself into Torah and mitzvos with new energy, since "a little light pushes away much darkness". Best: both together, with growth as the focus, so the cheshbon comes with joy, not bitterness. (§2)

10. ★★ What does "the buttons are already polished" mean, and how does the Rebbe explain it with a healthy body?

The Frierdiker Rebbe's words: the Jewish people's service as a whole is complete and we are ready for Moshiach. Like a healthy body easily heals a small ailment, teshuvah can heal the remaining details. (§2)

11. ★★ How should Kiddush Levana be said, and why do some people neglect it?

Some neglect it because it is said outside among non-Jews and feels uncomfortable. It should be said publicly ("in a multitude of people is the King's glory"), in your best clothes, ideally on Motzei Shabbos. (§3)

12. ★ Your turn: make a "cheshbon with joy": name one thing to fix and one good thing to add.

Open answer. For example: fix: apologize to my brother; add: an extra shiur. Focus on the light! (§2)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

"Hayitochen?"

Gershon Schusterman was a lively boy in the Lubavitcher yeshivah in 1958. At age eleven he decided to take his own photo of the Rebbe, who didn't like being photographed. After a wedding he waited by the stairs, and when the Rebbe came up, flash! He ran into the zal, very pleased with himself.

The Rebbe followed him in. "Who is your teacher? Is he pleased with you? Is your whole Chassidishkeit photography?" Then the Rebbe told the principal: "Test him. If he passes, fine; if not, take away the camera." The next day he was tested on his Gemara, passed, and got the camera back.

Some time later he did badly on a test. That night he was called to Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's chief secretary, who had a list of names with his name on it. "The Rebbe saw your mark," Rabbi Hodakov said, "and the Rebbe asks you: 'Hayitochen?' How can this be?"

"I swallowed hard," Gershon remembers. "But I was deeply touched that the Rebbe cared enough to know my mark, and to let me know he was sure I could do better. To this day I think of it as a turning point in my life."

Source: *Gershon Schusterman, "The Kodak Moment" (chabad.org)*

Think: How is "Hayitochen?" like the cheshbon "with joy" the Rebbe describes?

It pointed out a weakness, but its message was "you can do so much better": the focus was on growth and on how much the Rebbe believed in him, so it led him up, not into sadness.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

After Tishrei, make an honest cheshbon of how the new year is going, but with joy: fix what needs fixing, and above all add light. We're ready for Moshiach!

For example: On Motzei Shabbos, think: "What went well this week? What can I do better?" Apologize to someone you hurt, and add one new good thing, like an extra perek of Tehillim. And go out for Kiddush Levana in your Shabbos clothes!