

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Sefer HaSichos 5752

ספר השיחות · תשנ"ב

Parshas Toldos

פרשת תולדות

3 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Open with a Brachah! · 27 Cheshvan, §§1-2

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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.

Open with a Brachah!

פותחין בברכה

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of 27 MarCheshvan 5752 (1991), at the close of the International Kinus HaShluchim. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 50).

The point: *The Torah opens with a beis, for brachah, and "Bereishis" hints at two "firsts": Torah and the Jewish people. Esav, the firstborn, stands for the great lights of Tohu. Our shlichus is to bring those lights into the vessels of Tikkun, the job of Yaakov, and so make the world a home for Hashem. Parshas Noach (rest and reward) comes before Toldos (good deeds): Hashem promises His blessing before we even start. Then every shliach must keep growing: one who has 100 wants 200. Tzedakah, Chassidus and lekach were given out, like a child starting Torah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ How does the Torah itself follow the rule "Open with a brachah"?

It begins with the letter beis, which stands for "brachah". (§1)

- ★★ Which two "firsts" are hinted in the word "Bereishis"? Which comes first?

Torah and the Jewish people. The Jewish people come first, as Tanna d'Vei Eliyahu says. (§1)

- ★★★ What do Esav and Yaakov stand for in Chassidus? What does Hashem want in the end?

Esav, the firstborn, is connected to the "lights of Tohu", which are higher than the world of

Tikkun (Yaakov). Hashem wants the lights of Tohu to come into the vessels of Tikkun in the end.

(§1)

- ★★ When will this be fully revealed? What can we have already now?

Fully in the times of the Geulah. But even now a person can taste it in his own life, a "private

geulah", and that brings the general Geulah closer. (§1)

- ★ What is the shlichus of every Jew in this world? Can every Jew do it?

To bring the lights of Tohu into the vessels of Tikkun and make the world a dwelling for Hashem.

Every Jew has the koach and can make it happen in real life. (§1)

- ★★ Eliezer said, "Anochi eved Avraham." How does each word hint at our shlichus?

"Anochi" is the first word of the Aseres HaDibros, Matan Torah. "Eved Avraham" means being

Hashem's servants: the avodah of Yetzias Mitzrayim and Matan Torah began with Avraham. (§1)

7. ★★★ What does the shidduch of Yitzchak and Rivkah stand for? What will change in the Geulah?

The unity of body and soul: each reaches its perfection only through the other. Now the soul is the main thing, but in the Geulah the body will be on top and the soul will get its life from the body. (§1)

8. ★★ What is the question on the name "Toldos"?

Parshas Noach also begins "Eileh toldos Noach", and it comes first. So it should have been called "Toldos", and this parsha "Yitzchak". (§2)

9. ★★ How does the order Noach, then Toldos, answer it in this sicha?

Toldos = good deeds ("the main toldos of tzaddikim are their good deeds"). Noach = rest and pleasure. Before a Jew starts his avodah, Hashem promises him in advance a full measure of good, in ruchniyus and gashmiyus. (§2)

10. ★★ In what way does Hashem "need" the good deeds of the Jews?

Just as the Jews need what Hashem gives them, Hashem "needs", so to speak, their avodah. Through it a Jew becomes Hashem's partner in creation. (§2)

11. ★ How does "one who has 100 wants 200" apply to a shliach?

Even after all his past successes, a shliach must keep reaching for more and higher. (§2)

12. ★★ What three things were given out at the end, and why?

Money for tzedakah and a teaching of Chassidus, because both bring the Geulah (it isn't enough just to wait for Moshiach). And lekach, like the cake given to a child of three when he begins learning Torah. Torah is called "lekach tov". (§2)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Candies from the Malach Michoel

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was a small boy, he was brought to cheder for the first time. As is the custom, his father, the Rebbe Rashab, and his uncle threw candies at him and told him they came from the malach Michoel.

The Rebbe Rashab told his son that when he himself started cheder, in the lifetime of his grandfather the Tzemach Tzedek, they did the same for him. He believed it completely, so he refused to eat the candies. Candies from a malach were too precious to eat! On Erev Pesach, when they checked the children's pockets, the Tzemach Tzedek called him over and asked where the candies were. Then he had to eat them.

When the Tzemach Tzedek himself was a little boy, the Alter Rebbe had him wrapped in a tallis and taken to his mother's kever. "Mazel tov, Devorah Leah," the Alter Rebbe announced joyfully, "today I am bringing your son Menachem Mendel to learn Torah!" In shul the melamed taught him the first posuk of Vayikra, and the Alter Rebbe gave the child a honey cake baked in oil and a hard-boiled egg, with pesukim written on them.

Source: *Sefer HaSichos 5701 and Sefer HaSichos Kayitz 5700*, in Eliyahu Touger, *Upsherinish*, "In the Footsteps of Our Rebbeim" (*Sichos in English*, on chabad.org)

Think: How does this custom fit the lekach in §2 and "Noach before Toldos"?

A child starting Torah is first given something sweet. The Torah is "lekach tov", and Hashem gives

His blessing and sweetness first, before the avodah begins.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

You are a shliach. Hashem gives you His brachah first, before you even start, so use it: bring a bit more kedushah into the world, and never settle. One who has 100 wants 200.

For example: Last week you put on tefillin with two people on mivtzoim, or finished a perek of Mishnayos by heart. Great! Thank Hashem for the success, and this week aim for four people, or two perakim.

Do the Job, Don't Count the Prize!

אני נבראתי לשמש את קוני

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sicha of the eve of Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5752 (1991). Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 50).

The point: *The moon is reborn only after it makes itself small: "Go and make yourself small." So too, the neshamah goes down into a body in order to climb higher. Why is this parsha called "Toldos" and not Noach's? Toldos means good deeds, and Noach means reward. The message is to focus on the avodah, not on the reward: "I was created to serve my Creator," and Hashem gave us all the koach we need. "V'yiten lecha" means Hashem gives again and again. Kislev, "kis" plus "lev", brings revelation out of hiddenness. It is the month of Geulah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What happens to the moon on Rosh Chodesh? How does it earn this?

It is renewed, "born again". It earns this through its "avodah" of making itself small beforehand.

(§1)

- ★★ Hashem told the moon, "Go and make yourself small." Why did He say "Go"?

To "go", to make real progress and rise far above its old level, the moon had to make itself

small. (§1)

- ★★ How does the posuk "V'nifkadeta ki yipaked moshavecha" hint at the same idea?

The way to be specially noticed is to make your place "empty", to make yourself small. (§1)

- ★★★ How is the moon like the neshamah?

The neshamah goes down into a physical body, a going-down and a making-small. But this allows it

to reach heights it could never reach before. (§1)

- ★ How will the moon grow, and what will happen in the Geulah?

From the new moon it grows until it is full, and in the Geulah "the light of the moon will be like

the light of the sun". (§1)

- ★★ What do "Toldos" and "Noach" stand for in this sicha?

Toldos = our good deeds ("the main toldos of tzaddikim are their good deeds"). Noach = rest and

pleasure, the reward, which will be above nature, miraculous. (§2)

7. ★★★ So what is the message of the name “Toldos” for this parsha?

Put the emphasis on the avodah of Torah and mitzvos. Even if the reward helps us serve more (as the Rambam says), the reward is something given to us, while the avodah is what we give. “I was created to serve my Creator”: think about the job, not about the reward. (§2)

8. ★★★ In the 27 Cheshvan sicha, what did Noach coming before Toldos teach? How is the lesson here different?

There: before you begin, Hashem promises you the reward and blessing. Here: don’t think about the reward. Think about the avodah you were made for. (§2 (and 27 Cheshvan §2))

9. ★ How can we be sure we have the strength to do our avodah?

Hashem asks of us only “according to our strength”, so He surely gave us plenty of strength to make the world a dwelling for Him. (§2)

10. ★★ Why does Rashi say “V’yiten lecha” starts with an extra “vav”? What does it teach us?

Hashem “will give, and give again”, many brachos. Every Jew should know that Hashem is giving him brachos, and “one who gives, gives generously”. (§2)

11. ★★ How is the name Yaakov connected to the Geulah?

“Yaakov” is written with a vav five times, and “Eliyahu” without a vav five times. Yaakov took the vav as a pledge that Eliyahu will come and announce the Geulah of his children. (§2)

12. ★★ What does the name Kislev mean? Why is it called “the month of Geulah”?

“Kis” = hiddenness (making oneself small). “Lev” = 36 = 6 x 6, the fullest revelation of our six middos. So Kislev is revelation coming out of hiddenness. It has Yud Kislev, Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanukah, days of spreading Chassidus, which brings Moshiach. (§3)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Olam Haba That Cost One Coin

A chassid of the Apter Rav needed a dowry for his daughter, but he had only one coin left. "Go home," said the Rebbe, "and accept the first business offer you get."

At an inn some diamond merchants laughed at him: "Want to buy a diamond with one coin?" One joked, "For one coin I'll sell you my Olam Haba!" A contract was written up, and everyone had a good laugh.

But when the merchant got home, his wife was furious. "A husband with no Olam Haba? Go buy it back!" The merchant returned and offered more and more, but the chassid refused, remembering the Rebbe's promise. Finally the merchant paid one thousand coins, exactly enough for the wedding.

Later the wife asked the Apter Rav, "Was my husband's Olam Haba really worth a thousand coins, or only one?" The Rebbe answered: "When he sold it, it was worth one coin. But when he bought it back by giving a poor man the money to marry off his daughter, it became worth a thousand, and more!"

Source: Hillel Baron, "The Man Who Sold His Place in Heaven" (chabad.org), from *Tzaddikim L'Mofes*

Think: What made the merchant's Olam Haba worth a thousand coins? How does this fit "Toldos" (§2)?

Not the "prize" itself, but the mitzvah he did, hachnasas kallah. A Jew's real "toldos" are his good deeds. The deed is what counts.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Focus on doing your job for Hashem, not on what you'll get for it. He gave you all the strength you need, and He gives brachos again and again. Sometimes making yourself "small" is exactly how you grow.

For example: There's a big contest in yeshivah for learning Mishnayos by heart, with a prize. Learn because it's Hashem's Torah and you were created to serve Him. If someone else wins the prize, the Torah you learned is still yours forever.

Pray Like a Child!

מודה אני לפניך

Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, sichos of the eve of the first day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev and Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 2 Kislev 5752 (1991), edited by the Rebbe as one text. Sections as in the Sichos in English edition (vol. 50).

The point: *"All the days of your life" should be aimed at bringing Moshiach. Rosh Chodesh is the "head" of the month, holding all its energy, and each Jew, like the moon, must renew himself and the world. A child is aware of Hashem's very Essence, "Der Aibershter", with no ladder of levels in between. Every Jew has this child-like bond, and shows it each morning in "Modeh Ani", where "Modeh" comes before "Ani". The Geulah will reveal the essence of the Jewish people, and we prepare by "breathing the air of Moshiach" and by caring for every Jew's Kislev and Chanukah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ How did the Frierdiker Rebbe explain "kol yemei chayecha l'havi limos haMoshiach"?

"L'havi" also means "to bring": all the days of your life should be aimed at bringing Moshiach.

(§1)

2. ★★ Why is it called "Rosh" Chodesh, the "head" of the month?

Just as the head holds the life-energy of the whole body, Rosh Chodesh holds the spiritual koach for all the days of the month. (§1)

3. ★★ The Jews count by the moon. What two things must each Jew do, like the moon?

1) Renew himself personally. 2) Bring something new into the world around him. The two go together. (§1)

4. ★★ How is Moshiach connected to the moon and to Rosh Chodesh?

Moshiach comes from Dovid HaMelech, whose kingdom is compared to the moon. So the spark of Moshiach in every Jew is revealed on Rosh Chodesh. (§1)

5. ★★★ Why are eight Chanukah lights (and eight days) connected to the Geulah?

The Menorah had seven lights, and Pesach and Sukkos are seven days, because nature is built on seven. Eight is above nature, like the Geulah. (§1)

6. ★ What is special about how a child relates to Hashem?

A child doesn't know about the different levels of G-dliness. He is aware only of Hashem Himself, His Essence. (§2)

7. ★★ What advantage does a child have over a great talmid chacham?

The talmid chacham understands the levels of G-dliness, is attached to them, and has to struggle to rise above them to the Essence. A child goes straight to Hashem's Essence. (§2)

8. ★★ What does a child mean when he calls Hashem "Der Aibershter", "the One Above"?

Not that Hashem is only up there, since every child knows He is here too. It means He is above everything we can grasp, and for a child this is real, not just an idea. (§2)

9. ★★★ What does the order of the words "Modeh Ani" teach? Why do we say it first thing in the morning?

"Modeh" (I thank You) comes before "Ani" (I). Before a person feels his own "I", he gives himself over to Hashem. Waking up is like being born again, like a child. This bond is the base for the whole day: brachos, davening, learning, and work in the world. (§2)

10. ★★ The moon is full on the 15th. So why is the Geulah connected to the new moon?

The full moon shows the most revelation, but the moon's essence shows in its rebirth. The Geulah is about the essence of the Jewish people, so it is symbolized by the new moon. (§3)

11. ★★ How does "Matzasi Dovid avdi... b'shemem kodshi meshachtiv" describe two stages of Moshiach?

"Matzasi" is from "metzius": first Moshiach's very essence, beyond all limits. Then he is anointed with oil, and just as oil spreads through everything, his revelation will fill the whole world. (§3)

12. ★★ What does it mean to "breathe the air of Moshiach"? What practical thing does the Rebbe ask for?

"Neshimah" (breath) has the same letters as "neshamah": connect the very core of your being to Moshiach, every moment. In practice: care for every Jew, and help others have what they need for the Kislev Yomim Tovim with joy, and give Chanukah gelt. (§3)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Shepherd Boy's Whistle

In a small town in Poland there lived an orphan shepherd boy who knew very little about Yiddishkeit. Shortly before Yom Kippur he met some people traveling to the Baal Shem Tov in Mezhibuzh, and he joined them.

In the Baal Shem Tov's shul the boy saw everyone davening from the depths of their hearts. He wanted to say something to Hashem from deep inside too, but he couldn't daven. He didn't even know the Alef-Beis. So he took a deep breath and let out the loud whistle he used every evening to call his sheep home from the fields. Right in the middle of davening on Yom Kippur, he whistled as loud as he could.

The people were shocked, but the Baal Shem Tov calmed them. "A terrible decree was hanging over us," he said. "The shepherd boy's whistle pierced the heavens and erased the decree. His whistle saved us, because it was sincere and came from the very bottom of his heart, where he feels love for Hashem even though he doesn't know or understand why."

Source: Malka Touger, "What the Rebbe Said: Yud-Tes Kislev", adapted from the Rebbe's sichos (Sichos in English, on chabad.org)

Think: How is the shepherd boy like the "child" in §2?

He knew none of the "levels" and could not even read, but his heart went straight to Hashem

Himself. That essential bond is what pierced the heavens.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Deep inside, you are connected to Hashem Himself, like a child. Start every day from that bond: Modeh Ani before "me". Live every moment "breathing" Moshiach, and care that every Jew has a happy Kislev.

For example: Tomorrow morning, before you grab anything or think about your day, say Modeh Ani slowly and really mean "thank You". And this Kislev, put aside some of your own money so a family you know can have Chanukah gelt for their kids.