

SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 1

לקוטי שיחות · חלק א

Parshas Shemos

פרשת שמות

4 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Don't Throw Them in the Nile! · p. 111, §§1-5

Sicha 2: A Jew Makes Another Jew! · p. 113, §§6-8

Sicha 3: Chinuch Is a Fire! · p. 114, §§9-10

Sicha 4: The 101st Time! · p. 115, §§11-17

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.

Don't Throw Them in the Nile!

וכל הבת תחיון

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Shemos, p. 111ff, sections 1-5. From sichos of Pesach 5712 (1952) and 5714 (1954).

The point: *Pharaoh's "let the girls live" meant raising Jewish children the Egyptian way, killing the soul, which is worse than killing the body. Today's "Pharaoh" is the street that wants to drown children in the "Nile" of parnassah and the country's ways. Give children a full Torah chinuch with no calculations; Hashem provides. In the merit of the righteous women we left Egypt, and so will the Geulah come.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ Pharaoh decreed, "Every boy that is born, throw into the Nile, and every girl, let live (tichayun)." Why did he need to add the part about the girls?

It looks unnecessary, since the girls weren't his concern. It teaches that "v'chol habas tichayun"

is also part of the decree: "you Egyptians, give the survivors 'life' your way", raising the

Jewish children in the Egyptian way of life, killing their neshamah. (§1)

- ★★ To the midwives Pharaoh said "vachayah" (let her live), but here "tichayun". Why the change? What do we learn from the two decrees being in one posuk?

To the midwives he just meant "don't touch the girls", to get them to agree. "Tichayun" means you,

Egypt, actively give them life your way. The two decrees in one posuk show that killing the soul

is no lighter than killing the body; it is even worse ("a spiritual death is harder than a

physical death"). (§1)

- ★★ Why was the Nile Egypt's avodah zarah? What two things does "throw him into the Nile" mean?

It doesn't rain in Egypt; the Nile watered the fields and was the source of parnassah. (1)

Physical galus: killing the Jewish body. (2) Spiritual galus: throwing Jewish children into

Egypt's avodah zarah, drowning their neshamos in the waves of Egypt's pleasures ("water grows

every kind of pleasure"). (§2)

4. ★★ Since Mitzrayim is the root of all galuyos, who is "Pharaoh king of Egypt" today, and what does he want?

The spirit of "the street", which wants to throw Jewish children into the river of the country's

ways, which it calls the source of parnassah, and build Pisom and Ramses from their neshamos.

These claims come from Pharaoh, who wants to leave no remnant of Yiddishkeit, and through that, of

Jewish bodies too. We must stand firm and raise children in the spirit of Yisroel Saba. (§3)

5. ★★ What do some parents say about sending a son to yeshivah, and how does the Rebbe answer?

"So-and-so's son will have a building, a car, be a doctor or a lawyer, or at least a shoeshiner;

mine in yeshivah won't even know how to hold the brush!" Answer: Hashem feeds and sustains

everyone; whoever does His will ("v'shinantam l'vanecha") He fulfills his requests for himself and

his children. (§4)

6. ★ What kind of melamed should a child be given?

A melamed who himself lives by Toras Chaim and its mitzvos, so he raises the children in the way

of life of Torah and mitzvos. That saves the children and through them all of klal Yisroel. (§4)

7. ★ In whose merit were our fathers redeemed from Mitzrayim, and what did they do?

In the merit of the righteous women (nashim tzidkaniyos) of that generation. They raised a

generation for Yisroel: they paid no attention to Pharaoh's decree, and did what Hashem commanded

without calculating. (§5)

8. ★★ What is the lesson for today from the nashim tzidkaniyos, and what will it bring?

In every country, especially America, don't be impressed by the noise of the country or make

calculations: educate the children as Hashem commanded, and He will take care of the children and

the parents. Ignoring Pharaoh's decree saves the children and brings the Geulah through Moshiach,

"like the days you left Egypt". (§5)

9. ★★★ Why does the future Geulah have to be prepared the way Yetzias Mitzrayim was?

“Like the days you left Egypt I will show you wonders”: the Geulah will be like the Egypt Geulah, so the preparations that bring it must also be like those that brought the Egypt Geulah, raising children with no compromise, like the righteous women did. (§5)

10. ★★★ Pharaoh’s Nile was the source of parnessah. Why is that exactly the argument the yetzer hara uses about chinuch today?

The “street” says the river of the country’s ways is where parnessah comes from, so children should be drowned in it. But parnessah comes from Hashem, and the only way to life is a full Torah chinuch, Toras Chaim. (§§2–4)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Girl Who Wouldn’t Hold the Chalk

In Bolshevo, near Moscow, in the 1950s and ’60s, the Chazan family kept Shabbos and Yom Tov in spite of the Soviets. They had to send their children to the Soviet school, but the children never came on Shabbos. The parents were called in again and again and threatened: the mayor said he would take them to court, and the children could be taken away from home.

Their father gathered the children. They decided that the school-age children would take turns going to school on Shabbos, sitting in class without writing. The next Shabbos was also Rosh Hashanah. The boys were needed for the minyan, so Batya, about eleven or twelve, volunteered to go first. Her school bag was brought to class on Friday, so she wouldn’t carry.

In math class the teacher called her to the board. “I can’t use chalk on my Shabbos,” Batya said. The teacher tried to force the chalk into her hand; the principal and vice principal came in and tried too. Then the town’s mayor walked in. He looked at her notebook, saw her excellent grades, took the chalk himself and told her to say the answer out loud. She solved it, he wrote it on the board, and he told the teacher to leave her alone.

The family stayed strong until they left Russia in 1966.

Source: Etti Hazan, “The Girl Who Refused to Write on Shabbat” (chabad.org, 2021), about her aunt, Batya Cohen

Think: How did this family act like the nashim tzidkaniyos against “Pharaoh’s decree” (§§3–5)?

They didn’t let the Soviet “Nile” drown their children’s neshamos; they kept Shabbos without calculations, and Hashem took care of them, even through the mayor himself.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Don't let the "street" decide what you are. Torah is your life, and Hashem, not the "Nile", gives parnassah. Stand firm, without calculations, like the righteous women in Mitzrayim.

For example: Your friends say, "Why are you learning so much? You need a real job one day." You smile and keep your seder. Hashem takes care of the job; your job now is Torah.

A Jew Makes Another Jew!

ואת עמלנו - אלו הבנים

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Shemos, p. 113ff, sections 6-8. From a sicha of the second night of Pesach 5716 (1956).

The point: *"Our toil, these are the children": it is so obvious it needs no proof. Children and students need real toil, even when they listen. The children raised with mesirus nefesh in Mitzrayim were the first to say "Zeh Keli". And it is for every Yid: the first mitzvah, "pru urvu", teaches that a Jew must make another Jew.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ The Haggadah says, "V'es amaleinu, eilu habanim, as it says, every son... let live." What does the posuk prove, and what doesn't it prove?

It proves only that there was trouble with the sons. It brings no proof that "our toil" means the children. That needs no proof, because it is obvious. (§6)

- ★★ What do we learn from the fact that "our toil = the children" needs no proof?

For children, and students (who are called "sons", Sifri), to be as they should, toil (amal) is a must. Even when your children obey, even if your students listen to one word of yours, don't think you've done your job: chinuch needs toil that the Torah itself would call "amal". (§7)

- ★★ When there is "amaleinu - banim", what happens to Pharaoh's decree? Who recognized Hashem first at the Yam Suf?

We pass the decree, and more: the children born and raised during the decree "recognized Him first" at the Yam Suf, not Moshe and Aharon, not the elders, but the Jewish children raised with mesirus nefesh, who could point: "Zeh Keli v'anvehu." (§7)

- ★★ Is this lesson only for parents and teachers? Why?

No, it is for every Yid. "Hocheiach tochiach es amisecha" is a mitzvah, and "pru urvu", the first mitzvah, means also spiritually. (§8)

- ★★ What saying (of the Alter Rebbe's chassidim, or of the Alter Rebbe himself) is learned from "pru urvu" being the first mitzvah?

The order of the Torah is also Torah, and the first foundation of a Jew's life is: "a Jew must make another Jew." (§8)

6. ★ So what must every Yid toil to do?

To “make” another Yid, in general and especially through kosher chinuch. (§8)

7. ★★★ Connect: why were the children of the decree the first to say “Zeh Keli”? What does that teach a melamed or a big brother?

Because they were raised with toil and mesirus nefesh against the decree, the Yiddishkeit became their own, so much they could point to Hashem. Effort in chinuch builds children whose Yiddishkeit is strongest of all. (§7)

8. ★★ A boy says, “My little brother already davens nicely. I don’t need to bother.” What would this sicha say?

Even when they listen, chinuch needs real toil (“amaleinu”); you’re never finished. And every Yid must make another Yid. (§§7–8)

9. ★ Which of the two decrees in §1 is the “amaleinu” fighting?

Both “throw him in the Nile” and “tichayun” (raising them the Egyptian way): with toil in chinuch we overcome the decree. (§§1, 7)

10. ★★★ How is “making another Jew” a kind of “pru urvu”?

Pru urvu, having children, is the first mitzvah; spiritually, bringing another Yid to Torah and mitzvos is “giving birth” to a Yid. That is the first foundation of a Jew’s life. (§8)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Fifty Steps on Fairfax Avenue

Reb Gutman Locks spends long hours at the tefillin stand at the Kosel. Most men say yes, but every so often someone says no. When that happens, he remembers what a middle-aged man once told him.

"Five years ago I was walking along Fairfax Avenue in Los Angeles when a Chabad yeshivah bochur asked me to put on tefillin. I blew up. I yelled at him, 'You rotten Jew! You just embarrassed me in public. You've lost your share in the World to Come!' And I stormed off angrily.

"But then, after fifty steps or so, I stopped and asked myself: how low have I fallen, that I could lose my temper at a fellow Jew just because he asked me to do a good deed? I turned around at that moment. I went home, put on my own tefillin, and I have been putting them on every day since."

The bochur on Fairfax never found out. As far as he knew, he had been yelled at and failed. In truth, he had "made another Jew."

Source: Gutman Locks, "The Man Who Refused to Put on Tefillin on Fairfax Avenue", from *There Is One* (chabad.org)

Think: What does the bochur on Fairfax teach about "amaleinu" and "a Jew must make another Jew" (§§7-8)?

Effort for another Yid is never wasted, even when it looks like a failure. You do the toil; Hashem decides when it bears fruit.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

A Jew must make another Jew. Helping someone grow in Yiddishkeit takes real effort, even when it looks easy or when it seems to fail, and none of that effort is ever wasted.

For example: At the mall on Friday, you ask a man to put on tefillin and he says no rudely. Don't take it personally; smile, wish him a good Shabbos, and ask the next one. Maybe he'll put them on fifty steps later.

Chinuch Is a Fire!

זכור אותו האיש לטוב

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Shemos, p. 114ff, sections 9–10. From a sicha of Shushan Purim 5714 (1954).

The point: *Yehoshua ben Gamla is remembered for good for setting up teachers of young children in every city. The Yevseksia banned exactly that, and Yidden resisted with mesirus nefesh. Insist on full Torah chinuch from the youngest age, no compromises. In a fire, nobody asks whose job it is: everyone helps, with money, body and soul, and never says "I've done enough".*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What did Rabbi Yehoshua ben Gamla set up, and why is he “remembered for good”?

At first only a boy with a father learned Torah. Then teachers were set up in Yerushalayim, then in each district for 16-17-year-olds. Yehoshua ben Gamla set up teachers of young children in every country and every city, to teach Torah free from age five or six. For this he is remembered for good for all generations. (§9)

2. ★★ When the Yevseksia (the Jewish Communists) banned Torah study, what exactly did they ban, and why did Yidden stand against it with mesirus nefesh?

They didn't ban all learning; an adult who chose to learn could, but teaching young children was forbidden. Yidden resisted with mesirus nefesh because the whole existence of Yisroel depends on chinuch in childhood. (§9)

3. ★ What must we insist on today?

That children be educated from the very youngest age by the complete Torah, with no compromises, because the whole existence of the Jewish people depends on it. (§9)

4. ★★ Someone says, “Teaching aleph-beis isn't for someone of my standing; a simpler person can do it. Asking for money for a cheder is a meshulach's job.” What is the answer?

Such calculations are for normal times. During a fire nobody holds meetings about whose job it is to put it out; everyone does what he can. Chinuch now is a “fire”. (§10)

5. ★★ Another says, “I've already worked hard enough for chinuch; let someone else do it now.” What is the answer?

“Man is born to toil”; one must always toil. The neshamah suffers by coming down into a body, and in any moment a person is not toiling, the soul's suffering is for nothing. (§10)

6. ★ With what three things must everyone who can help strengthen kosher chinuch?

With his money, his body and his soul. (§10)

7. ★★★ Why does the Rebbe compare the state of chinuch to a fire?

Because children's neshamos are in danger right now, like in a fire. In a fire, honor, roles and

"it's not my job" don't count; whoever can help, helps immediately. (§10)

8. ★★ How do "a person for himself" and "his relationship with another" compare here?

Just as a person must always toil for himself, so he must always toil for another, especially in chinuch. (§10)

9. ★★★ How does this sicha connect to Pharaoh's decree in §1?

Pharaoh (and the Yevseksia after him) aimed at the children. The answer is full Torah chinuch for little children, with mesirus nefesh, by everyone, all the time. (§§1, 9–10)

10. ★★ What did Yehoshua ben Gamla change that the earlier takanos missed?

Earlier, children without a father, or in places without a teacher, were left out, and older boys only. He made sure every child in every city learns from a young age, for free. (§9)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Rebbe Who Would Not Stand

In Soviet Russia the Frierdiker Rebbe put most of his strength into one thing: Torah for young children, with chadarim and melamdin all over the country. That was exactly what the Communists fought hardest, and it was the main reason he was arrested in 1927. He could have “reasoned” that it was wiser to work where there was less danger. He made no such calculations: without children learning Torah, there is no future.

In prison he decided his jailers would not control him. He refused to answer their questions, and was locked for a day in a filthy, narrow cell full of rats. On Rosh Chodesh Tammuz the guards came in and ordered him to stand, as every prisoner had to, to show they were in charge. He refused. Three times he refused, and three times he was beaten, until they gave up.

That day he was told his sentence: three years’ exile in Kostroma, leaving that night. But the train would arrive on Shabbos. He refused to go, and chose to stay in prison until Sunday, the third of Tammuz. “Thank G-d,” he said later, “I did not end up travelling on Shabbos.”

Source: “*Mesirus Nefesh: Third and Twelfth-Thirteenth of Tammuz*”, in the Rebbe’s teachings on the Frierdiker Rebbe (chabad.org / *Sichos in English*)

Think: Why was the Frierdiker Rebbe ready to risk so much for chinuch of young children (§9)?

Because the whole existence of the Jewish people depends on children learning Torah from the youngest age. That’s why the Yevseksia attacked exactly that, and why he made no calculations.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Chinuch is a “fire”: whoever can help, helps now, without asking whether it fits his honor or whose job it is. And never say “I’ve done enough”: a Jew is born to toil.

For example: Your little cousin is struggling with reading Hebrew. You think, “His rebbe will do it.” Instead, sit with him ten minutes every Shabbos afternoon and read together.

The 101st Time!

למה הרעתה לעם הזה

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Shemos, p. 115ff, sections 11-17. From a sicha of Shabbos Parshas Va'eira 5711 (1951).

The point: *Galus prepares for the revelations of the future, yet "lamah hareiosah" still stands, because galus can be exchanged for spiritual "slavery": toil in Torah (kushya, kal vachomer, clarifying halachah) instead of parnassah worries, and avodas perech, going beyond your habit. The 101st review makes an "oved Elokim", even when you only force yourself (iskafya), like the hired donkey that goes an extra parsah.*

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What did Moshe ask Hashem at the end of Parshas Shemos, and what did Hashem answer?

"Lamah hareiosah la'am hazeh?" Hashem answered (start of Va'eira): "Ani Havayah... with My name Havayah I was not known to them... and you will know that I am Havayah." (§11)

- ★★ How does Torah Or explain the answer?

At Matan Torah the name Havayah was revealed, which the Avos did not have. For that revelation the preparation of galus Mitzrayim was needed. That is also the reason the last galus is so long: it prepares for the revelations of the future. (§11)

- ★★ Why does the question "lamah hareiosah" still have a place even after the answer?

Everything in Torah is true and eternal, so a question written in Torah still has room even with an answer. Like the Friediker Rebbe said about why Simchas Torah isn't on Shavuos: since the question is in Torah, there's still room to say it should be. (§12)

- ★★ Why is there still room to ask "lamah hareiosah"? How does Torah Or explain the hard labor spiritually?

Though galus is needed as preparation, it can be exchanged for a spiritual "slavery". "Vayemareru es chayeihem" = the Torah, our life; "b'avodah kashah" = a kushya; "b'chomer" = kal vachomer; "bilveinim" = libun hilchesa (clarifying the halachah); "b'chol avodah basadeh" = a braisa. (§13)

5. ★★ How can the worry of parnassah, the main part of galus, be exchanged?

For toil and worry in Torah. Parnassah worry is "many thoughts in a man's heart", not knowing what to do. Instead, toil in Torah until you have reasons for both sides and can't decide, which is very tiring and troubling. (§14)

6. ★★ Why did the Rogatchover say Shabbos was his hardest day? Why did the Mitteler Rebbe sometimes say "sha, sha" while saying Chassidus?

On weekdays, when sevaros raced in his mind, he could write them down, and writing limits the flow so he could decide; on Shabbos he couldn't write. The Mitteler Rebbe said "sha, sha" to stop the flow of his mind (the Rebbe Rashab), because the flow kept bringing deeper, opposite sevaros ("dlo k'nal"). (§14)

7. ★★ What was "avodas perech", and how can it be exchanged spiritually?

Giving men's work to women and women's work to men, which is unusual. Spiritually: avodah in Torah and mitzvos beyond your habit. Even a small thing, if it changes your habit, takes the place of avodas perech. (§15)

8. ★★ Why is one who reviews his learning 101 times called "oved Elokim", while 100 times is "lo avado"?

In their days the habit was 100 times; the one extra time changes the habit, nature. (Through that "one" he reaches the yechidah of the soul: 100 = ten kochos each of ten; 101 = yechidah, keser.) (§15)

9. ★★★ What if the change of habit is only on the outside, and inside a person stays the same, just forcing himself?

He is still "oved Elokim", because a Jew's inner will is good; only the yetzer hara forces him (Rambam, Gerushin). So even forcing yourself counts. (§16)

10. ★★★ Why does the Tanya bring the donkey drivers' market (10 parsas for a zuz, 11 for two zuz)? What two ways of refining the body ("chamor") does it hint to?

Every detail of a Torah mashal fits. Chamor = body; "azov ta'azov imo": refine the body too. (1)

Is'hapcha: make the body stop being a "donkey" (R' Avraham HaMalach, "whip the horses until they

stop being horses"). (2) Iskafya: the body stays as it is but is pushed beyond its habit. The

donkey is hired, not bought (it stays as before), yet worked more than its habit; that too is

"oved Elokim". (§17)

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Tefillin for No Reason

In 1982, near the end of the war in Lebanon, Rabbi Tuvia Bolton was one of ten chassidim who went into Beirut to cheer up the soldiers. At dawn they took out tefillin. Rabbi Bolton came to a line of jeeps, motors running, soldiers in helmets and vests about to go out on a mission.

The first soldier agreed. The driver of the second jeep stared ahead and then exploded with curses: "Get out of my sight, or I'll tear you to pieces!" Then the driver of the third jeep called out nervously, "Rabbi, if I put on tefillin, will G-d protect me?"

"Hashem will protect you whether you put on tefillin or not," Rabbi Bolton answered. "He loves you because you're a Jew. But if He protects you for free, why not do something for Him for free?"

As he finished with the third soldier, the angry driver called, rolling up his sleeve: "Rabbi! Come here. To put on tefillin to go to heaven or to be religious, that's not for me. But to put on tefillin for no reason, that I'm willing to do!"

A Jew may reject every reason, but deep inside he wants to do what Hashem wants.

Source: Tuvia Bolton, "A Jew in a Jeep" (chabad.org)

Think: Which section explains the soldier in the second jeep?

§16: a Jew's inner will is good, and only the yetzer hara forces him. Even when he doesn't "feel"

it, the deed itself is real avodah.

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Turn your worries into Torah worries, and serve Hashem a little beyond your habit: the "101st time" makes you an "oved Elokim", even if inside you have to push yourself.

For example: You always daven Shacharis in 20 minutes. This week, add one thing you usually skip, like saying Ashrei slowly, even if you don't feel like it. That one extra is your "101".