



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

בס"ד

כ"ו תשרי
26 Tishrei

∞ Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ (א:א)

In the beginning of Hashem's creating the heavens and the earth (1:1)

The Torah was written with the twenty-two holy letters of the Aleph-Bais, through which the Holy One, Blessed is He, created His world.

A hint to this is that the *Gematria* – numerical value – of the first letter of the seven words in the first *Pasuk* of the Torah is twenty-two, the same as the number of letters used to write the Torah.

The *Ben Ish Chai* says that it is for this reason that many *Tefilos* (prayers) are based on the Aleph-Bais, in order that we can incorporate into our prayers all of the twenty-two holy letters with which the world was created and through which the Torah was given, and through their merit our salvation will come.

(Umatuk HaOhr)

∞ Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Part of the *Davening* on Shabbos night is to say the *Pesukim* of *Vayechulu*, which appears in our *Parshah* (*Bereishis* 2:1-3). Rav Avigdor Miller, *zt"l*, emphasizes the importance of this. By saying these words, we are affirming Hashem's involvement in the world, and we are recognizing Him. The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 119b) teaches that this affirmation is so significant, that it is comparable to the loftiness of Yom Kippur!

∞ Working on our Middos

Rav Shimshon Pincus, *zt"l*, says that on *Shabbos Bereishis*, now that Succos is over and a wonderful year ahead of us full of *Parnasah*, health, *Brachah*, and *Nachas* has been signed and sealed, it would be an enormous mistake to just sit back and take it easy. He explains that our good year is given to us as a coupon—the “*Petek*” from *Hoshanah Rabbah*. We just simply now need to go to one of the ‘distribution centers’ to cash in our coupons. Where are these centers? It is the *Shul*. Just like all the trees and vegetation were created during the six days of Creation, yet, they waited below the ground and did not sprout until *Adam HaRishon* Davened to Hashem. So too is the abundance of *Brachah* waiting for us in *Shamayim*, and will not come down until we call up to Hashem and ask for it!

∞ The Siddur Speaks

Rabbi Zev Leff taught that in the two blessings that precede *Krias Shema*, each contains the *Mitzvah* to love of Hashem. The first *Brachah*, *Yotzer Or*, deals with nature, the luminaries and all of their aspects. The second *Brachah*, *Ahavah Rabbah*, deals with the study of Torah. The *Brachah* of Creation precedes the *Brachah* of the giving of the Torah, because chronologically, the Creation of the world preceded the giving of the Torah, and therefore, the *brachah* on nature is said first. The *Brachah* of *Ahavah Rabbah*, however, begins with an Aleph, to teach us that in actual practice, the study of Torah must be given priority, and is the most important thing we can do with our time!

Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

A *Chashuve Yid* approached me and shared a personal story. He said that his son was having difficulty finding his *Shidduch*. Then, the October 7th attack occurred in *Eretz Yisroel*, and this *Yid* was inspired to do something extra in his *Avodas Hashem* because of it. He knew that there was a certain area in *Shemiras Shabbos* that he could do a little better in. It wasn't a major change, but for him it was big, and he decided that as a *Zechus* for his son to get married, he would start working on this, and it would enhance his *Shabbos* because of it. Strikingly, exactly one year later to the date of his accepting this *Kabalah* to make *Shabbos Kodesh* better, his son became a *Choson*!

פרשת בראשית תשפ"ו

Parashas Bereishis 5786שבת מברכים • *Shabbos Mevorchim**Rosh Chodesh Mar Cheshvan is on Wednesday & Thursday*

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 5:04

Candle Lighting: 5:54

Sh'kiah: 6:12

Tzeis: 6:54

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 9:20 Gra: 9:56

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:51

Chatzos: 12:41 Sh'kiah: 6:11

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 6:53

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 7:24

(some say 7:33)

Next Week: No'ach

Candle Lighting: 5:45

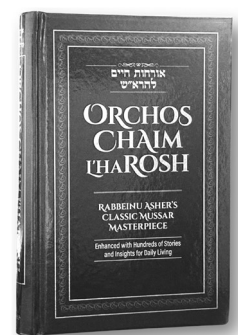
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הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו!!



Working on our Middos

The *Alter of Kelm*, *zt"l*, said that when one kills his *Yetzer Hara*, it is considered as if he offered a *Korban* on the *Mizbei'ach*, and just as one who performs *Shechitah* has to know the proper *Halachos*, one must learn the proper way to conquer his *Yetzer Hara*, and that will be accomplished through learning *Mussar*. Someone once asked Rav Yosef Yozel Hurwitz, *zt"l*, the *Alter of Novardok*, "How long must one work at learning *Mussar*?" The *Alter* answered, "Until he changes himself from bad to good. It is like a wagon that has turned over. How long should one work to set the wagon on its wheels again? Obviously, he must work until the wagon is upright again. The same is true with a person looking to improve himself. He must work until his *Middos* are upright!" The *Chofetz Chaim* taught that one should fix times to learn *Mussar* every single day. He taught, "Even if one has learned *Mussar* for a long time but has not seen good results, he should still persist learning *Mussar*. Doctors prescribe medicine to be taken many times before a disease is cured, and it is the same with a person who suffers a spiritual illness. He must take many doses of *Mussar* before he is cured!" The *Chofetz Chaim* said that learning *Seforim* of *Mussar* are the *Halachos* of good *Middos* and *Yiras Shamayim*.

Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

Rav Mottel Slonimer, *zt"l*, writes (*Ma'amar Mordechai* p.342) that sometimes it seems impossible to overcome the *Yetzer Hara* and to change one's ways, and indeed it is impossible without *Hashem's* help. However, if we only try, then *Hashem* will help us. He notes the following story: Two *Tzadikim* once made a pact with each other that whichever of them passes away first would come to his friend in a dream and tell him what happened in his judgment in *Shamayim*. A while later when one of the *Tzadikim* was *Niftar*, as promised, he soon afterward came to his friend in a dream to reveal what had happened to him. He said, "When the court reviewed all my deeds, they saw that everything was perfect except for one *Aveirah* that I had, and that was the sin of taking a bribe." He explained, "Once, when I was serving as the head of the *Bais Din*, one of the people involved in the case I was judging placed money into my pocket without me knowing about it. I later found the money but I didn't know that it was related to the court case from earlier, and I used it assuming it was money that I had placed there and forgotten about. For this, I was told that I would need to go to *Gehinom* to be cleansed, but I told the court that I didn't want to go there, so instead, they brought me to a very large building. They told me that instead of going to *Gehinom*, I would have to demolish this building, and they handed me a small hammer to use. They said, 'Tear down this building with the hammer, and when you finish, you will go straight to *Gan Eden*.' I was devastated. It seemed that I would be working on knocking down the building for many years, as it was a very large building and I only had a small hammer to work with. But then I thought to myself, 'Didn't I wear a *Talis* and *Tefilin* every day during my lifetime, and learn *Torah* and keep all the *Mitzvos*, only because I chose to do *Hashem's* will? Well, right now, it is *Hashem's* will that I break a large building with this small hammer. If so, what is there to be upset about? This is the will of *Hashem*, and I will do it with joy—even if it will take me many years to accomplish! With a heart full of *Simchah*, I raised the hammer and hit the building with all my might, and to my great astonishment, the entire building collapsed! I was then swiftly brought to my place in *Gan Eden*." Rav Mottel Slonimer teaches that this reminds us that at times it can seem like it will take forever to change ourselves, but we only just need to put up a little fight with the *Yetzer Hara*. Things may only seem impossible, but they aren't. It is very likely that one strong blow against the *Yetzer Hara* will topple him, and we can grow into the person we have set out to be!

For many years until his death in 1969, the *Ponevezher Rav*, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kaheneman, *zt"l*, would visit Miami Beach, Florida, each year, in order to raise funds for his *Yeshivah*. Rav Berel Wein, *zt"l*, who was a *Rav* in a Miami *Shul* during that period, developed a close relationship with the *Ponovezher Rav*, and on many occasions, he would drive him around to the homes of wealthy members of his congregation to collect money. The *Ponovezher Rav* had a magnetic personality, and his love for every single *Yid* was clear and apparent at all times. As a result, these wealthy individuals enjoyed the time spent in their homes with the *Rav*, and looked forward to his visits while the *Rav* was in town. Rabbi Wein recalls that there was one man in his congregation, a widower with no children, who had retired years earlier and moved to Miami from New York City. This man had been a successful attorney until a number of medical issues stopped him from working. The doctors were not very optimistic about his recovery, and the man decided to retire and move to Miami. He purchased an annuity (a financial product that pays out income, a reliable means of securing a steady cash flow for an individual during his retirement years, and to alleviate fears of outliving one's assets) that would last until the age of ninety, bought a beautiful home and awaited the inevitable, living in comfort. Fortunately for this man, the inevitable was very long in coming, and at the age of eighty-eight, he was still energetic, and sharp. He was also an outstanding member and donor to the Miami community. The *Ponovezher Rav* developed an attachment to this gentleman, and the two would engage in hours of conversation. Rabbi Wein would drive the *Rav* to the man's home at least two or three times each winter, and the wealthy retiree would always conclude their meetings with a check of no less than \$5,000 each and every time. However, Rabbi Wein became aware of a change in the man when he turned ninety and his annuity ran out. Now, he had no more income, and aside from his home, he had very few assets. Rabbi Wein wasn't even sure if the man had any cash available for necessary staples. So when the *Ponovezher Rav* came to town and asked him one morning if they can go visit his elderly friend, Rabbi Wein was uncharacteristically hesitant. He explained to the *Rav* that the man's situation had changed and he barely had enough money to live. He didn't feel it was appropriate to visit him at this time and expect a donation, but the *Ponovezher Rav* wouldn't hear of it. "Of course, we must go visit him! Now, especially, he would want us to come see him!" The two got in the car and drove out to the man's home. They rang the bell and the man opened the door. When he saw who was standing there, his face immediately fell and turned white. He began to stammer that perhaps it was not a good time for visitors, but the *Ponovezher Rav* just smiled, shook his hand warmly and kissed him on the cheek. They sat down together inside and the man began telling the *Rav* how his income had dried up and he was sadly unable to write out even a small check to the *Yeshivah*. The *Ponovezher Rav* stopped him in mid-sentence and said, "My dear friend, you don't need to worry. For so many years, you took care of the *Ponovezher Yeshivah*. Now, the *Ponovezher Yeshivah* is happy to take care of you!" The *Rav* asked how much the annuity had paid him for all the years, and then assured the elderly man that as long as he lived, the *Yeshivah* would continue making payments in that exact amount! The man ended up living until the age of ninety-six, and for the final six years of his life, he indeed received a check every quarter in the amount he was used to. Rabbi Wein later learned that the bulk of the money came from the *Ponovezher Rav's* personal bank account and allowed the man to live out his years in comfort, peace of mind, and with dignity. When the man passed away, he made his final donation—he left his beautiful home to the *Ponovezher Yeshivah*!

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