



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

י' תשרי
10 Tishrei

Besamei HaTorah

...Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ועניתם את נפשותיכם (במדבר כט:ז)

...and you shall afflict yourselves (lit. your souls)
(Bamidbar 29:7)

The world asks: Why do we refer to abstention from eating and drinking as 'affliction of the soul'? This is actually an affliction of the body, as the soul does not derive benefit from the eating! A similar question can be asked regarding the *Bnei Yisroel* when they complained about the *Mann*: ועתה נפשנו יבשה אין כל בלתי (במדבר יא:ו) *But now our life (lit. soul) is parched, there is nothing; we have nothing before our eyes but the Mann!* (Bamidbar 11:6) Were they not speaking about eating and the body should benefit from it? The *Tchebiner Rav* explains, on the *Mann* they only recited one *Brachah*, 'Hamotzi Lechem Min Ha'aretz' before they ate it, and *Birchas HaMazon* after they ate it. But the *Brachos* of 'Borei Pri Ha'eitz', 'Ha'adamah' and 'Shehakol', 'Borei Nefashos' and 'Asher Yatzer', they could not recite. Therefore, their soul was also parched. The same applies to Yom Kippur. This is the one day a year when it is very difficult to recite 100 *Brachos*. Therefore, there is also affliction to the soul. (*Umatuk HaOhr*)

Yom Kippur Thoughts

By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

We approach Yom Kippur with a sense of trepidation, especially once we realize that our fate as a nation and as individuals for the coming year is being sealed on this great day. With this in mind, we are forced to question ourselves, have we done our part to deserve a positive judgment? Before we can ask the question, we first have to understand what our purpose is to know if we are fulfilling it. Rav Yaakov Galinsky, *zt"l*, explains that we may be able to find the answer to this question in the book of *Yonah*, which is read on Yom Kippur. Hashem sent Yonah to the city of Ninveh to redirect them from their ways of sinning and to help them repent. Each one of us is Yonah, born into a world where it is incumbent on us to do the most we can to benefit and help others. Our purpose in this world is to do the most we can for others. On Yom Kippur, we read *Sefer Yonah* to remind us of our responsibility and to refocus ourselves on our priorities. When we are wondering where we stand, the first question we have to answer is, "Am I doing the best and most I can to benefit and help others?"

יום כיפור תשפ"ו

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Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

Yom Kippur Treasures

An Inside Look

Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin writes, "If you walk into any old-fashioned *Shul* on the morning of *Erev Yom Kippur*, you will see people on all sides busily collecting *Tzedakah* in little bowls for all kinds of worthy causes. The congregants of *Mezhibuzh*, the town where the *Baal Shem Tov* lived, decided that in consideration for the public interest, this custom had to be abolished. It simply caused too much clatter and disorder. When word of this reached the *Baal Shem Tov*, he did not allow the proposed regulation to be enacted. He explained that one year all the forces of impurity in the universe banded together on *Erev Yom Kippur* in order to make an impenetrable barrier that would not allow the *Tefilos* of *Klal Yisroel* go up to *Shamayim*. However, as soon as people in the world below started rattling their little bowls collecting *Tzedakah*, and people from around the globe would create a loud clatter with the coins they threw in energetically, the barrier of impure forces was torn apart by that very noise!"

Yom Kippur Gems

The *Sefer Yerei'im* writes (5:180) that having a sad facial expression is a form of *Ona'as Devarim*, oppressing others with words. Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, *zt"l*, the *Alter of Slabodka*, once remarked that a person who walks around with a sad expression on his face is likened to a 'Bor Birshus HaRabim', a pit in a public place. Just as a pit causes people to stumble and fall into it, so does a person whose face is sad causes others to be sad. Rather, people should strive to greet others with a cheerful expression, as we learn *Pirkei Avos* (1:15). Rav Avrohom Grodzinsky, *zt"l*, the last *Mashgiach* of the *Slabodka Yeshiva* in Europe, worked for two years on greeting people with a pleasant and cheerful facial expression until he mastered this trait. Even during the last days of the *Slabodka Ghetto*, when the Jews were being taken away daily to be killed, he would still greet people with a smile to uplift their spirits! Rav Yisroel Salanter, *zt"l*, once saw someone who had a sad expression on his face. After engaging him in conversation in order to try and comfort him, it became clear that all was well in this man's life. Puzzled, Rav Yisroel asked him, "If all is good by you, why do you seem to be so sad and troubled?" Surprised at this question, the man replied, "Rebbe, aren't you aware that we are in the *Aseres Yimei Teshuvah* now? Yom Kippur is only a few days away, and I'm nervous about my upcoming judgment!" Rav Yisroel said to him, "I understand that it is almost Yom Kippur and you are concerned, but why do I have to suffer because of your *Yom HaDin*? Your sad face is troubling me! Just because Yom Kippur is a serious day does not mean that you have to be sad!"

(*Alei Shur*, vol. I p. 192)

Pearls of Wisdom ...A Word for the Ages

There was a businessman who would often take business advice from his *Rebbe*, the *Sfas Emes*. Once, this businessman arrived before the *Yamim Nora'im*, and the *Sfas Emes* told him,
"If you want to make the best investment,
I recommend investing in *Teshuvah*, because right now
that earns the highest dividends —
both spiritual and material!"

A Tale to Remember

Rav Menachem Mendel Yosef Zaks, *zt"l*, the son-in-law of the *Chofetz Chaim*, *zt"l*, wrote, "Once, before Yom Kippur, the *Chofetz Chaim Bentched* me, and said, 'Reb Mendel, *Hashem* should help that you not become wealthy!' At that moment, a man standing behind me who was also waiting for a *Brachah* from the *Chofetz Chaim*, said out loud, 'Rebbi! What are you saying? How could you *Bentch* someone like that?' The *Chofetz Chaim* responded, "*Hashem* should give you all that you need, but for Rav Mendel, I am *Bentching* him with the same exact *Brachah* that I would want for myself!"



In his later years, the long, often hot day of the fast of Yom Kippur, would be hard on Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zt"l*. One Yom Kippur, he felt particularly unwell, so he went to lie down in one of the rooms and asked a *Bachur* to bring him a pillow. Half an hour later, he returned to the *Bais Medrash*, and one of his close *Talmidim* asked him if he felt any better. Rav Isser Zalman replied that in fact, the rest had made him feel a little worse. The *Talmid* asked, "Why did the *Rebbe* not return immediately, if resting was worsening the condition?" Rav Isser Zalman looked surprised, and said, "If I came back too quickly, the *Bachur* who brought me the pillow might feel bad, and that he bothered himself for no reason. I could never do that to another person!"



Rav Mendel Kaplan, *zt"l*, would say, "The main thing about Yom Kippur is not to bang your chest, but to look for ways to improve yourself. Nowadays people enjoy saying a long *Viduy* on Yom Kippur. Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, *zt"l*, and Rav Elchonon Wasserman, *zt"l*, were brothers-in-law, and one year Rav Elchonon asked Rav Chaim Ozer how his Yom Kippur fast had gone. Rav Chaim Ozer answered that the fast was bearable but confessing his *Aveiros* was too hard for him! That's how the *Al Cheits* are supposed to be — more painful than the fast!"



Once, a broken-hearted man went to his *Rav*, and related that no matter how much effort he put into anything, whether spiritual or physical, he felt like he was trudging through mud. He removes one leg, and the other sinks in. His *Rav* told him, "It is good that you know your situation. You are stuck in the mud and you are trudging through it. But you should know that if you give up and stay where you are, you will remain there forever. However, if you continue to move, every step brings you closer to the end!" The *Rav* taught that we only have to know what our destination is and try to figure out how to reach it. This is what it means to live for the future!

Rav Yisroel Reisman, *Shlit"a*, once related the following story, which happened to someone on the west side of Manhattan, and it gives an incredible insight into the requests we ask of *Hashem*. A wealthy, Jewish individual who lives in one of the tall, prestigious buildings on the west side, was one day going down the elevator of his building. There was someone else in the elevator with him, and he asked the other fellow why there were so many police cars in front of the building that day. The fellow answered him that he lives in the penthouse of the building, and he is the son of the king of Morocco, and he is a prince. He explained that his father, the king of Morocco was visiting America, and he also came to visit his son that day, and that was why there was a police presence outside the building. The man couldn't believe what he heard, and the prince asked him if he would like to meet his father, the king, and the man said that of course he would. It is no small thing to meet a king, as there is a *Brachah* to recite over it. The prince told this man to come over that night at eight o'clock to meet him. This man happened to have had a son who had just become *Bar Mitzvah*, and he took his son along with him to meet the king. They went up to the penthouse, were escorted inside, and they met the king of Morocco and spoke with him for a few minutes. The king was very moved by the *Bar Mitzvah Bochor*, and he asked him a few questions. He asked him how old he was, and the boy answered that he was 13. The king said that he knew that 13 is a special age for a Jewish boy, and the boy said, "Yes, I was just *Bar Mitzvah*. I am going to *Eretz Yisroel* to see the *Gedolim* there and *Daven* there. It is a week after my *Bar Mitzvah*." The visit ended shortly after that, and it was very pleasant. The next day, this man went to his mailbox to get the mail, and he found that the king had left a check for the *Bar Mitzvah* boy as a gift. He was completely stunned when he saw that it was written out for \$50,000! The father was very embarrassed and he went straight back up to see the prince. He thanked him for the gift, and he said, "I don't know what you think the Jews do for *Bar Mitzvah* presents. Some people give \$180, some will give \$360, but we don't give \$50,000 gifts to *Bar Mitzvah Bochorim*." The prince smiled and said to him, "You don't understand. *Bar Mitzvah* boys may get \$180 gifts, but for the king of Morocco, it is inappropriate to give a gift of anything less than \$50,000." This father then went with his son on their trip to *Eretz Yisroel*, and when he was by Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *zt"l*, he told him what happened with the king of Morocco. Rav Chaim said to him, "Now I understand." The father was confused and asked what the *Rav* had understood. Rav Chaim explained, "We say during the *Yomim Nora'im*, *Avinu Malkeinu Asei L'ma'ancha V'lo L'ma'aneinu*, 'Our Father, our King, act for Your sake and not for ours!' Why do we say this? Do we really care if *Hashem* acts for His Own sake or for ours? What do we mean when we say this?" Rav Chaim said, "We only deserve \$180 gifts, but for the *Ribono Shel Olam*, the King of the world, it is not appropriate to give a less fitting gift. *Hashem* gives Royal Gifts! That's what we mean when we ask *Hashem* to give for His sake, that *Hashem* should give us as is fitting for the King to give a gift, not merely for our sake, or on our level!" Rabbi Reisman concluded, "Let's take these words and not limit what we ask for, because *Hashem* is listening in these days of mercy, where our *Tefilos* and requests are answered, and we can ask *Hashem* for everything, because *Hashem* does everything for us!"

*And as a Zechus for the Entire Klal Yisroel
to have a G'mar Chasimah Tovah and a Gut G'Bentched Yar!*

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