



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

בס"ד

כ"ג אלול
23 Elul

Besamei HaTorah... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ראה נתתי לפניך היום החיים ואת הטוב (ל:טו)

See, I have placed before you today life and good... (30:15)

Rebbi Shlomo Ephraim M'Lunzitz, the author of the *Kli Yakar*, asks: Why does the *Torah* write the order of life before good, shouldn't the *Pasuk* write good before life, as a person's good deeds merit that he lives a long life? The *Kli Yakar* answers that the *Torah* is warning us that we should not have the intention to do good deeds in order to live long, but rather, our intention should be that we live in order to do good deeds. (*Parperaos LaTorah*)

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Towards the end of *Parashas Nitzavim* (30:19), Moshe tells *Bnei Yisroel* in the name of *Hashem*: "Choose life so that you and your children will live". This reasoning is seemingly perplexing, as just a few verses prior (30:15) we are told that the alternative for choosing life is death, which alone should suffice as to why one should choose life! Rav Moshe Feinstein answers that the reasoning in *Pasuk* 19 is to tell us: don't choose to do *Mitzvos* only because we don't want the alternative of life. Choose to do *Mitzvos* with a passionate drive and an enjoyment. That way, your children will also choose the option of life!

Working on our Middos

The *Chazon Ish* once said that there are many ups and downs in this world. One tries to climb up in *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, but sometimes he falls back. The idea is to keep climbing up again, as many times as is necessary, and one who really wants to reach his goal will reach it. By following the *Chazon Ish's* advice, despite the tremendous setbacks that one may face, even one who has fallen so low that he is unsure if he will ever climb up again, will be successful. In the beginning of *Selichos*, we say a *Pasuk* from *Tehilim* (89:10), *You rule over the majesty of the sea; when it raises its waves, You calm them*. The *Baal Shem Tov* explains that the word *T'shabicheim*, (You) calm them, can also be translated as *You praise them*. Thousands of years ago, at the time of Creation, *Hashem* set the boundaries where the waters of the ocean should go until and not further. Yet, we see that for thousands of years when each wave reaches the shore, it tries to go over the boundary and onto the land, as it says, *when it raises its waves...* However, it does not succeed and the wave falls down and goes back to sea. Despite the fact that it fails *so many times*, it remains persistent time and again to try to go over its boundary. It is this stubbornness and persistence of the waves that *Hashem* praises, because it is a lesson to never give up. This is why we say this *Pasuk* in the beginning of *Selichos*. It teaches us that *Hashem* is full of mercy and is looking out only for our good, even if we have rebelled against Him, *Chas V'Shalom*. Even if one has gravely sinned against *Hashem*, he still has the chance to get close to Him, with a full heart. We have to always keep trying, no matter how many times we fall! (*Tuv'cha Yabi'u*)

Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

The *Shem Mi'Shmuel* explains that the *Kedushah* of *Shabbos* lingers the entire week and its influence carries us throughout the week until the next *Shabbos* comes. Therefore, on the *Shabbos* before a new month, we *Daven* that the power of *Shabbos* should spill over into the new month as well. On the *Shabbos* before Rosh Hashanah, which is a new month and a new year, we certainly should *Daven* on the *Shabbos* prior to it, yet we don't. The reason is because Rosh Hashanah is a new beginning, as it says in the *Yerushalmi*, *Zeh HaYom Techilas Ma'asecha, today is the beginning of Your work*. Just like when *Hashem* created the world there was no *Shabbos* before it, so too Rosh Hashanah is a new beginning— as if nothing took place previously. This teaches us that we have a chance to start fresh, without any consideration of being locked into to our previous patterns!

פרשת נצבים-וילך תשפ"ו

Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5786 Pirkei Avos 5-6

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg
Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 6:03

Candle Lighting: 7:05

Sh'kiah: 7:23

Tzeis: 8:06

Rabbeinu Tam: 8:36

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 9:05 Gra: 9:41

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:45

Chatzos: 12:54 Sh'kiah: 7:22

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 8:04

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 8:35

Next Week:

Rosh Hashanah

Candle Lighting: 6:54

The Siddur Speaks

The Maharal (*Derech Chaim* 2:4) quotes the *Gemara* in *Brachos* (8b) that says: *When is an Eis Ratson, a time of favor? It is at the time when the public Davens. Hashem desires and favors people Davening together for their needs and requests*. This represents a very powerful and profound concept because the *Tefilos* of many people are very strong and the *Satan* cannot interfere with it. They have a certain combined strength that even outweighs *Aveirah*, meaning that the *Aveiros* of an individual will not hold back the *Tefilos* of the public when they *Daven* together! When these group *Tefilos* take place in a *Shul*, it is even more auspicious, and this creates an *Eis Ratson*, a favorable time with *Hashem*. *Shiras Dovid* notes that we learn from this *Chazal* that there are times when it is more opportune to have *Tefilos* answered than others. We take this teaching and apply it when we *Daven* the *Tefilah* of *Avinu Malkeinu*. One of the *Tefilos* we mention here is that we ask *Hashem* that *this time that we are Davening should be a time of mercy and favor before Hashem*, because through *Tefilah*, we can create an *Eis Ratson*, a favorable time before *Hashem*. Additionally, the *Menoras HaMe'or* writes that an *Eis Ratson* can also be created when one *Davens* with *Kavanah*— focus and intent. This is a tremendous help for one to have his *Tefilos* heard!

Middos

Rebbi Abba once sat outside the town of Lud. He saw a traveler approaching and sit down on a pile of rocks at the edge of a mountain overlooking a cliff. The man was exhausted from his journey and immediately fell asleep. Rebbi Abba watched him for a moment, and shockingly, saw a poisonous snake slither out of the rocks and make its way towards the sleeping man! Before he could do anything to scare the snake away, a giant lizard suddenly jumped out from between the rocks and killed the serpent by biting its head off. The man woke up from the commotion, saw the beheaded snake lying in front of him, gathered his possessions, and rose to continue on his journey. As he got up and left, the pile of rocks he was sitting on collapsed and fell into the ravine below. Rebbi Abba ran up to him and recounted everything he had just witnessed, and asked the man, "What do you attribute all these miracles that just happened to you?" The traveler responded, "Throughout my life I have never failed to calm down a person who has harmed me. I have never gone to sleep without forgiving someone with all my heart for hurting me in any way, and I would always do acts of kindness for the person involved." Rebbi Abba understood that this man, who forgives anyone and everyone, has miracles performed by Hashem for him on a daily basis!

Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

Even though the Steipler Gaon's hearing was impaired, he refused to use a hearing aid for several reasons. He would ask, "Why is it important to hear well? No one will go to the trouble of shouting *Lashon Hara* into my ears. The things that are necessary for me to hear, I somehow manage to hear. So what do I need a hearing aid for?"

Middos

Rav Meilich Biderman relates a story. A distinguished guest once arrived in Golders Green, London. On *Erev Shabbos* he went to Rav Chuna Halperin, *zt"l*, and said, "I am a professional *Baal Tefilah*. Can I be the *Chazan* for *Mussaf* in your *Shul* this week?" Rav Chuna replied, "You will have to ask permission from one of the wealthy members of our *Shul*, because he has *Yartzeit* next week, and he was planning to daven *Mussaf*. If he is ok with it, then it is fine with me as well." The man went straight to this wealthy individual, and explained that since he has a very sweet voice, he wants to *Daven Mussaf* by the *Amud*. The wealthy man decided to let the guest have his way, and allowed him to be the *Chazan*. The guest then said, "Since I am such a special *Baal Tefilah*, it would be proper that you pay me for this service." The wealthy man was tempted to tell this guest that he changed his mind, and he wouldn't give him the honor. He was outraged. First this stranger begs for the *Amud*, and now he is asking to be paid for it as well?! What *Chutzpah*! However, the wealthy man controlled his emotions and his anger, and as politely as he could, he asked, "How much do you charge for this service?" The man asked for a large sum of two hundred pounds. The wealthy man contained his anger once again, and agreed. This conversation occurred on Friday morning. Later that day, the wealthy man checked his stocks and discovered that his stocks had somehow tripled their value! He attributed this gain to his ability to control his anger, and for holding back from saying anything mean. He reflected on a teaching he once heard that just as embarrassing a fellow man is a very severe *Aveirah*, refraining from doing so reaps great reward!

Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

Each moment was precious to Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*. On days where we read the *Torah* at *Davening*, Rav Moshe would learn *Mishnayos* until someone was called to the *Torah* and said the *Brachos*. When *Laining* would begin, he would follow along in a *Chumash*, and as soon as the reading ended until the next reading began, he would learn *Mishnayos* again. To Rav Moshe, each moment was an opportunity!

A man once had a strong urge to see Eliyahu *HaNavi*, and he went to his *Rav* to discuss this with him. The *Rav* said, "Next week will be Rosh Hashanah. Travel to a certain city and stay by a certain widow, and there you will see Eliyahu *HaNavi*. However, make sure you bring along a lot of provisions, since this woman is very poor and she is not able to put up guests." The man was very pleased. He loaded a wagon with food and drink and went on his way with his wife to that city. When he arrived, he asked the townsfolk for directions to the house of that certain widow. They told him that there were two widows with the same name in that city, one lived alone and the other one had four children. The man thought to himself, certainly, the *Rav* meant the widow with four orphans since he told me to bring a lot of provisions. The man went to the house of the widow and asked to stay with her for Rosh Hashanah. "How can I host you?!" replied the widow nervously, "I am having difficulty feeding my children, how can I feed you?" the man replied, "Do not worry. I have brought enough food for all of us." She said, "And where will you sleep? I do not have a bed for you." He answered, "Don't worry. My wife and I will sleep on mattresses on the floor." The widow agreed and for the first time in their lives the children celebrated the holiday with much splendor and the joy was immense. This is how they spent Rosh Hashanah. After *Yom Tov*, the man went home, went back to his *Rav*, and said, "I did as you instructed, now how can I be able to see Eliyahu *HaNavi*?" The *Rav* was amazed and said, "What?! The entire time you were there you did not see Eliyahu *HaNavi*? If this is so, Yom Kippur is approaching. Pack your things and go back to her, then on Yom Kippur you will certainly merit to see Eliyahu *HaNavi*!" So once again, the man loaded his wagon with much food and drink and went to the house of the widow. When he arrived at the house, he overheard the four orphans asking their mother, "How will we be able to fast on Yom Kippur? We are hungry, and it has already been a week since we ate." Their mother replied, "My dear children, On Rosh Hashanah, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* sent us Eliyahu *HaNavi*, and he brought much food with him. Perhaps for Yom Kippur as well we will be worthy, and Eliyahu *HaNavi* will come back and bring us food for the *Seudah Ha'mafsekes*." Just at that moment the man opened the door and went in. He then understood an amazing thing, you do not have to go far to look for Eliyahu *HaNavi*. The secret is that Eliyahu *HaNavi* is hidden within every person and can be seen with how one interacts with his fellow man. The *Pasuk* (*Devarim* 30:14) mentions three things, mouth, heart, and deed. Eliyahu *HaNavi* can be a part of us in all of these ways. By saying the right thing at the right time, one can make someone feel better. By thinking of another at the right time, he can be considerate of another. By doing something for others he can help another person. This is how the *Torah* and Eliyahu *HaNavi* can be a part of us in speech, thought, and deed! (*B'Nifleosecha Asicha*)

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