



# Torah U'Tefilah

*A Collection of Inspiring Insights*

בס"ד

ב' אלול  
2 Elul

## ❧ Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

שפטים ושטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך... ושפטו את העם משפט צדק. (טז:יח)

Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities

...and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. (16:18)

Rebbe Shlomo Kluger, *zt"l*, links the first part of the *Pasuk* with the second part of the *Pasuk*. If you will appoint many judges in many different locales, then they will be able to judge properly and judge the people with *משפט צדק* – righteous judgment. However, if you only appoint a few judges and they will be overloaded and overwhelmed with many cases, then they will be too rushed to judge each case righteously, and then possibly will not be able to judge with *משפט צדק*.

(*Parperaos LaTorah*)

## ❧ Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

*Hashem* instructed the *Bnei Yisroel* to sustain the *Kohanim* and *Leviim*, as they will not have any of their own property (18:1). Rav Yaakov Galinsky, *zt"l*, explains that the reason that the most elite group of the *Bnei Yisroel* had to rely on others was to ensure their constant connection with *Hashem*. They would have to always ask *Hashem* for their needs in order to get them and they could not just assume that it was coming. We learn from this that even if one may have most of his needs, he should still remember to request his needs from *Hashem* and remember that *Hashem* is our Provider.

## ❧ Working on our Middos

Rav Yechiel Michel of Gustinin, *zt"l*, wanted to learn how to play chess when he was young. However, he lost interest very quickly and stopped learning how to play. He explained his reason: "In chess, one of the rules is that once a move is made, it is not permitted to take it back. As Jews, this is against everything we believe. No act is absolutely final. It is never too late for a person to do *Teshuvah*, and come back to the ways of *Hashem* in complete *Teshuvah*." The *Gemara* (*Menachos* 29b) says that this world was created with the letter *Hei* (ה), and the letter *Hei* looks like a pavilion, as it is open on the bottom and one can leave it easily. So it is with this world too. Man is given free will, and one who wishes to exit it by indulging in sinful behavior may do so. However, the left leg of the letter *Hei* is suspended and has an opening at the top to teach that if one returns in *Teshuvah*, he can come back through that opening. The *Maharsha* comments that a sinner should always know that if he wishes to return in *Teshuvah*, the opportunity is always there for him!

## Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

Every year when the month of Elul arrived, the *Rav* of Yerushalayim, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, *zt"l*, used to relate a childhood memory from when he was still living in the city of Kovno. Rav Yisroel Salanter, *zt"l*, was also a resident of Kovno, and Rav Tzvi Pesach retained a vivid memory from when he was eight years old about Rav Yisroel one Elul. A sign had been posted in the main *Shul* of Kovno that Rav Yisroel Salanter would be giving a *Drashah* in the afternoon of *Shabbos Mevorchim Elul*. "I went to *Shul* at the designated time," said Rav Tzvi Pesach, "and I couldn't find a place to sit. With the innocence of a child, I decided to sit on the steps leading up to the *Aron HaKodesh*. A few minutes later, Rav Yisroel entered the *Shul* and walked past the *Aron HaKodesh* to speak. He called out, 'Rabbosai, we have already Bentshed Chodesh Elul!' At the moment that Rav Yisroel cried out the word "Elul", he actually fell and fainted from the fear of judgement, and lay in a faint next to me. Everybody in the *Shul* stood up in shock, and brought water to revive Rav Yisroel from his faint." Rav Tzvi Pesach added, "I was only a boy of eight years old when this happened, but the sight of Rav Yisroel's fear of judgement—to the point of fainting—a full month before Rosh Hashanah, left a deep impression on me and changed my life forever. Until this very day, this memory still affects my *Yiras Shamayim*!"

## פרשת שופטים תשפ"ו

*Parshas Shoftim* 5786 *Pirkei Avos* 6

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*Staten Island Z'manim*

Erev Shabbos:

*Plag HaMinchah*: 6:30

Candle Lighting: 7:37

*Sh'kiah*: 7:55

*Tzeis*: 8:40

*Rabbeinu Tam*: 9:08

*Shabbos Kodesh*:

*Sof Z'man Krias Shema*:

*Mogen Avraham*: 8:58 *Gra*: 9:34

*Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis)*: 10:42

*Chatzos*: 1:00 *Sh'kiah*: 7:54

*Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim*: 8:39

*Rabbeinu Tam* (72 minutes): 9:07

Next Week: *Ki Seitzei*

Candle Lighting: 7:27

## ❧ The Siddur Speaks

Rav Shimshon Pincus, *zt"l*, gives a *Mashal*. There was once a doctor who was told that for a one night shift in the hospital, he would have to cover the entire floor all by himself. With many patients to tend to and no support, this was not going to be an easy task, and he reluctantly had to accept it. However, he was told that if things became too much for him, he has a phone line which he could use to call the nurses, and they would come and help him out. When his shift started, the evening started out fine. One patient requested food and the doctor responded, then another patient asked for something, and the doctor was up to the task. However, as midnight approached, many patients started asking for things at the same time, and the doctor was running around the floor like a lunatic trying to help them all. The doctor did his best, but it was just not humanly possible for him to get to every patient and provide the assistance and treatments that they needed. By the end of the night, two patients were in serious condition due to lack of treatment, and one other was on the verge of death. The doctor was called into a tribunal and charges were pressed against him for endangering the patients' lives. The doctor protested the charges and said, "What more could I have done? I was put in there all alone!" The judge responded, "You had a phone, and you should have used it to call for help." Rav Pincus explains that it is the same way with us in our everyday lives. "Sometimes challenges can seem too hard, and *Mitzvos* can appear to be too difficult to do, and retaining that higher level of Jewish commitment seems to be at constant war with the messages of the world around us. But the key is to 'pick up the phone and call for help'—to *Daven* to *Hashem* and ask for assistance, that things should be made easier, so that we can get the support that we so vitally need!"

✧ **Middos**

Rav Shimon Sofer, *zt"l*, was the *Rav* in a town in Hungary. Once, the Hungarian emperor planned a visit to the town, and Rav Sofer wanted to see him so that he could say the *Brachah* on seeing a king. In order to prepare himself, he wrote the *Brachah* on a piece of paper so he would be able to say it properly, which is the *Halachah*, since it is a *Brachah* that is not said often and many are not familiar with it. When the time came and the emperor had arrived, Rav Sofer approached him and took out his paper with the *Brachah* on it, and he began to say the *Brachah*. However, he was so nervous that he dropped the paper, and he said the *Brachah* by heart instead of reading it. That night in *Shul* by *Maariv*, Rav Sofer began to cry. People approached him to see if he was okay and asked why he was crying. Rav Sofer said, "I am crying because at *Maariv* tonight, I didn't drop my *Siddur*!" He explained, "When I was standing before a human king, I was so nervous that I dropped the paper I was holding. Why didn't I drop my *Siddur* when I was standing and speaking to *Hashem*, the King of kings? Why wasn't I so nervous and scared before the *Ribono Shel Olam* that I was able to hold on to my *Siddur* without it slipping from my hands? Shouldn't I tremble before *Hashem* the way I tremble before a person? How could I not cry?!"

**Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages**

The *Mishnah* in *Avos* (6:6) teaches that there are 48 ways in which one can acquire *Torah* knowledge, and one of those ways is to be *Samei'ach B'Chelko*, being happy with one's lot. *Tiferes Yisroel* (*Yachin*, 92) notes that if one's heart is always happy, he will be able to learn better, remember his learning better, and end up knowing more. Happiness enables one to be more diligent in learning *Torah*. Nothing is more damaging to one's motivation, memory and diligence, than worry and depression. *Machzor Vitri* teaches that one should lovingly accept everything that *Hashem* gives him, and not question after *Hashem's* ways. To the degree that a person clears his heart and mind from worry and distractions, to that extent will his learning be established for him!

✧ **Middos**

A *Talmid* of the *Yeshivah* of *Slutzk* once recounted a story. "In 1917, I was twelve years old and I was allowed to enter the *Yeshivah*. Due to my young age, my father asked Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer to hire one of the best students of the *Yeshivah* to learn with me, so that I could keep up with the rest of the *Yeshivah*. The *Rosh Yeshivah* suggested one of the best young scholars, R' Elazar Shach. My father agreed and I started learning with him. After a period of time my father came to pay him, but to his surprise, the young man refused to accept the money. He said, 'It is true that I agreed to learn with your son to help him achieve a higher level of learning, but there was a mistake in the arrangement. Your son does not need me or any other person to learn with him. He is advancing to higher levels on his own, and therefore, there is no reason to pay me.' My father didn't know what to do. He consulted with Rav Isser Zalman, who was also at a loss as to how to persuade his student to accept the money. He went to Rav Aharon Kotler, who was then teaching in the *Yeshivah*, and asked for his advice. Rav Aharon had a brilliant idea. He told R' Elazar, 'If the boy is really gifted and does not need you to help him advance in his learning, then let us test him. We will ask him to prepare a *Tosafos* on a particularly difficult piece, and if he is able to learn it properly, then you are right. But if he has difficulty with it, that means that he needs your assistance and you deserve payment.' R' Elazar agreed, and I was asked to study the tough *Tosafos* on my own. At the time, I didn't fully grasp Rav Aharon's intentions, and I took the challenge very seriously. I put tremendous effort into learning it well, and when the *Rosh Yeshivah* tested me, I was very prepared and knew the material. R' Elazar's face beamed when he heard me at my test. He was delighted to be proven right, and he refused to take money from my father, despite his poverty and how desperately he could have used it!"

Rabbi Dovid Ashear once related: "A man I know, who lives and breathes *Emunah*, told me he had a customer who agreed to buy a very rare watch, which was valued in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The customer told this man to call him back after the weekend and they would finalize the deal. The man called on Monday morning, but the customer did not answer his phone. The man repeatedly attempted to get in contact with this customer that day but failed every time. He tried him the rest of the week but there was still no response. He thought that maybe something unexpected had come up with the customer that week, so he tried again the following week. After another entire week of calling and failing, he tried again during the next week as well. During that third week, it happened that he was listening to a *Shiur* by Rabbi Yisroel Brog who was talking about concepts of having *Bitachon*, trust in *Hashem*. Rabbi Brog told a story about himself when he went to *Yeshivah* in *Eretz Yisroel* and was looking for an apartment to rent. He was having a very difficult time finding one, and the people around him were not encouraging. The young Rabbi Brog not only wanted an apartment in a certain area that was very hard to find one in, he also wanted an apartment close to his *Rebbi*. After having no success, he went to his *Rebbi* for advice. The *Rav* told him, 'You did everything you could possibly do to find an apartment here. Now, you need to stop trying. You need to give the job over to *Hashem*. You need to work on yourself and realize that apartments only come from *Hashem*. And when you honestly believe that and hand everything over to *Hashem*, you'll find what you're looking for!' The young Rabbi Brog took the advice, and he felt so happy, as if a heavy load was lifted off his shoulders. He honestly handed it over to *Hashem*, and within just a few hours, someone approached him and asked if he was still looking for an apartment! He explained that something new just came on the market. Rabbi Brog went to see it and he could not believe what he saw. It was a brand new apartment, which was a very rare find in that neighborhood, and it was right near his *Rebbe*! The help from *Hashem* came instantly! When the man listening to this *Shiur* heard this story, he became very inspired from that message. He said to himself, 'I also did everything in my power to try to close this deal with that customer. I'm finished with him now', and he said, '*Hashem*, I'm handing it over to You!' Immediately, he felt a sense of calm with his decision. The very next day, someone from his office suggested that he contact a customer that he knew of regarding a sale from a few months before. He took the advice and called that customer to see if he would be interested in the watch. Not only did the customer want the watch, but by the next day, he had all the money sent into the man's account and the deal was finalized!" Rabbi Ashear said, "The man told me, 'No matter how much *Emunah* and *Bitachon* I have, I always need *Chizuk*, strength and encouragement in it.' To be strong in *Emunah* requires constant work. This man already knew all the principles of *Emunah* and *Bitachon*, but that little reminder from the *Shiur* he was listening to made all the difference. We can take a lesson from this that we must first do what is necessary, as that is following *Hashem's* instructions. After we have made a normal effort, then we have completed our job, and we should say, '*Hashem*, I'm handing the job over to You now!' And when we say that and we honestly believe it, we too will feel calm and at peace. *Hashem* will then take over and do His part!"

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