



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

Rebbe Shmuel Ehrenfeld, zt"l, writes in his Sefer 'Chasan Sofer', that there was an ancient custom in their Shul in Matersdorf, that on Shemini Atzeres after *Minchah* they would distribute walnuts (*Egoz*) and they would toss them in the courtyard of the Shul for *Simchas Yom Tov*. He explains that the reason that they specifically chose walnuts was because of the *Halachah* in *Shulchan Aruch* (583:2), that people are careful not to eat walnuts on Rosh Hashanah because the *Gematria*, the numerical value, is the same as the word *Cheit* – sin. Therefore, in order to publicize that they repented with love in these days, which are days of joy, and no sin is found amidst the Jews, they would specifically throw walnuts to hint that through *Teshuvah*, their intentional sins were converted to merits, and there was not even a hint of incidental *Aveirah* to be found!

(U'Matuk HaOhr, Shemini Atzeres)

Simchas Torah Thoughts – Ideas and Reflections

By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Many people are bothered by the idea of Simchas Torah following Succos, as it would seem to be more appropriate to be part of Shavuos. Rav Yaakov Galinsky, zt"l, explains that only after we have spent seven days living in temporary dwellings and separating ourselves from our attachment to worldly desires, can we properly celebrate the Torah. The *Lev Simchah*, zt"l, of Ger, explains that only after we have held the *Lulav* bundle, which represents all the different types of people joining together in unity, can we approach Simchas Torah. The Torah can only be properly celebrated when we are a cohesive unit, similar to the way it was at *Har Sinai* when the Torah was given. This unity can be witnessed when one opens a page of *Gemara*. The *Mishnah* was written in *Eretz Yisroel*, the *Gemara* in Bavel (Iraq), *Rashi* lived in France, the *Baalei Tosafos* were in France and Germany, *Ein Mishpat* was written by a Spaniard living in Italy, the *Bach* lived in Poland, the *Vilna Gaon* in Lithuania, and Rebbe Akiva Eiger lived in Prussia. On one page, we have such diversity amongst our Jewish history, and they are all united for one cause—the Torah. The way we will all be able to have the Torah and to celebrate it properly, is by being one cohesive unit!

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

Rav Yosef Leib Bloch, zt"l, would teach, "Chazal tell us that every day of Succos, we are commanded to bring numerous *Korbonos*, representing the many nations of the world.

However, on the *Yom Tov* of Shemini Atzeres, only one *Korbon* is sacrificed. This is because this unique holiday is made for the sole purpose of elevating *Klal Yisroel* above the other nations. Therefore, we bring one *Korbon* to emphasize that when a Jew elevates his spiritual level, he must focus on accomplishing one *Mitzvah* at a time. When a person tries to grab too much too quickly, he is bound to fail. A Jew must concentrate his efforts on one good deed at a time, and in this way, he will succeed in his spiritual pursuits!"

שמיני עצרת - שמחת תורה תשפ"ז

Shemini Atzeres - Simchas Torah 5787

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

Staten Island Z'manim

	Erev Yom Tov	First Day	Second Day
Sof Z'man Shema M"A		9:14	9:14
Sof Z'man Shema Gra		9:50	9:50
Sof Z'man Tefilah		10:48	10:48
Chatzos		12:45	12:44
Candle Lighting	6:18	After Tzeis	
Sh'kiah	6:36	6:35	6:33
Tzeis HaKochavim	7:18	7:16	7:15
Rabbeinu Tam (72 mins)	7:49	7:48	7:46

Simchas Torah Treasures

The *Chazon Ish*, zt"l, greatly encouraged the formation of *Yissachar-Zevulun* partnerships, where one person supports the Torah learning of another, and both would get *S'char*. He felt that arrangements like these were important, even for those with limited capabilities, as long as they were sincerely devoted to learning. Rav Avraham HaKohein Pam, zt"l, explains the words of Chazal, "A son earns merit for his father." It is the greatest privilege for parents to allow their children to grow in Torah, even if it requires much financial sacrifice to do so. No *Nachas* is greater than when parents see their son or son-in-law become a *Talmid Chacham*. The *Yissachar-Zevulun* partnership is a win-win situation. The 'Yissachar' does not forfeit any of his reward for Torah learning, for spiritual achievement cannot be "bought" like physical property is passed from one person to another. Since a 'Yissachar' loses nothing when he makes such an agreement, he is considered selfish if he refuses to do so, because he is depriving his friend of the great merit of supporting Torah. This is why the *Posuk* says (*Devarim* 33:18), "Rejoice Zevulun AND Yissachar", in this wonderful partnership that has eternal benefits for both of you!

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

It was the *Yom Tov* of Simchas Torah in the concentration camp. It happened to be a Sunday, and the German guards were nowhere to be seen. Someone began to sing the *Hakafah* song of *Mipi Keil* out loud: "There is none as powerful as Hashem, there is none as blessed as Amram's son [Moshe], there is no greatness like the Torah, and no one expounds it like Yisroel!" Suddenly, a Nazi officer appeared, and the singer stopped in mid-sentence. The officer turned to a man named Yosef and said, "What is going on here? Tell me! What is he singing?!" Yosef replied, "Well sir, today is a Jewish holiday and what you heard was what I would say is more of a prayer than singing." The officer snapped at him, "Tell me what the words mean!" and Yosef translated the Hebrew words into German. The officer was dumbstruck when he heard the meaning. He glared at Yosef and said, "Do you really believe those words?" Before Yosef could reply, a young man jumped to his feet and said, "Yes! I believe them!" The German shook his head and walked away, muttering out loud, "It is unbelievable! If they believe this strongly, then I am afraid that we will never succeed against these people!"

Simchas Torah Gems

In the first *Perek* of *Hallel* we praise the greatness of *Hashem*, and say, '*Rom Al Kol Goyim*', that *Hashem* is high above all the nations. Is this really such great praise? Also, what is the connection to the second half of the *Pasuk*, which says, '*Al HaShamayim Kevodo*', that *Hashem's* honor is on *Shamayim*? The *Toldos Aharon* answers that there is an opinion among the nations that while *Hashem* did in fact create the world, He does not watch over it. Rather, He leaves it to others as He is too exalted to deal with this lowly world and the needs of each creation. To dispel this notion, Dovid *Ha'melech* tells us '*Rom Al Kol Goyim Al HaShamayim Kevodo*', that which the *Goyim* say, that *Hashem* is too high and His place is above the Heavens and is not interested in the dealings of the world, is not true. The next *Pasuk* tells us, '*Mi KaHashem Elokeinu HaMagbihi Lashaves HaMashpili Lir'os BaShamayim U'VaAretz*', which means, 'Who is like *Hashem* that sits high above the world, yet lowers Himself to take care of the needs of every single one of the people He created, as well as the needs of every single creature from the smallest and most insignificant to the most important and vital?' *Hashem* watches over all of us. He knows every one of us by name, and He takes care of all our needs. That is the greatness of *Hashem*!

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

It is an accepted custom that after picking up a *Sefer* that has fallen to the floor, one honors it with a kiss. Rav Avraham *HaKohein* Pam, *zt"l*, would point out that there is an even better custom, and that is to learn from the *Sefer* for a minute or two, or say a *Pasuk* or two from inside it. This is surely a higher level of honor than giving it a mere kiss. Rav Pam would use this lesson as an analogy to explain how one should view *Simchas Torah*. First, we express our love for the *Torah* by dancing with it and kissing it. However, when the *Hakafos* have ended and the *Yom Tov* has gone by, we must take that expression of love that we showed the *Torah* and turn it towards a renewed dedication to learning *Torah*!

Simchas Torah Treasures

At this time of year, we start mentioning *Mashiv HaRuach U'Morid HaGeshem* in *Shemoneh Esrei*. By inserting this into our *Tefilos*, we are asking *Hashem* to help the crops grow by causing the winds to blow and the rains of *Brachah* to fall. We are acknowledging that *Hashem* is the Source for everything we have, and we ask for His *Brachos* to continue to provide for us. Rav Paysach Krohn once taught that the words of *Mashiv HaRuach U'Morid HaGeshem* can possibly be understood in a different way as well. *Mashiv HaRuach* — may the *Ruchniyus* be uplifted, *U'Morid HaGeshem* — and let the *Gashmiyus* be lowered. These words are a charge for us, as we enter the winter months ahead, to increase our *Ruchniyus*, our spiritual pursuits, and that our *Gashmiyus*, our physical pursuits be diminished. With this *Tefilah*, we are asking *Hashem* to allow us to have a year filled with the lofty quest for spiritual attainment, while at the same time, requesting to be spared from the snares of *Gashmiyus*!

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

A traveler once stopped at an inn to rest up from his journey. He went to the dining room and ordered a large and expensive meal, but when the innkeeper presented him with the bill, the traveler apologized, and said that he was unable to pay it because he did not have any money. The innkeeper threatened him, and said that if the bill is not paid, he is calling the police to have the man arrested. The guest told the innkeeper, "Calling the police will not get you paid, because I still will not have any money to give you. Instead, I will make a deal with you. I am a professional dancer. Allow me to put on a performance, and you will charge people to come and see me. That will more than cover the cost of my meal!" The *Kalever Rebbe* explained with this *Mashal* that we are just like this traveler. We come to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur asking *Hashem* for the best of everything, and we promised to do *Teshuvah* and correct our ways. However, as *Simchas Torah* approaches, the last day of *Yom Tov*, we find that we are unable to keep our promises, due to our shortcomings. Instead, we offer to dance for *Hashem* and rejoice with His *Torah*! The lively dancing actually inspires us to try and keep our promises to improve ourselves to do proper *Teshuvah*! By dancing with *Hashem's Torah*, we rededicate ourselves to carry out *Hashem's* will, and do only more and more *Mitzvos*!

At the *Siyum HaShas*, Rav Yissocher Frand told over the following insight. A number of years ago, there was once a Jewish boxer who was very far removed from Judaism. His son didn't have a *Bar Mitzvah*, but as the son grew up, he became interested in learning more about his Jewish roots, and soon enrolled in a local *Yeshivah*, where he studied with great diligence. When he would come home each night, he immersed himself in the review of that day's studies. His father, who was engrossed in mindless, mundane pursuits, couldn't fathom what was so stimulating and enjoyable about the study of the *Gemara*. Eventually, however, the father began getting curious about it, and he asked his son to learn with him and teach him some *Gemara*. The son dismissed him, thinking his father wanted to mock him, but when he saw that his father was serious and wanted to learn, he relented. It was a long, arduous project because the father didn't even know Hebrew, and certainly couldn't understand the difficult Aramaic text of the *Gemara*, but the father pressed his son to keep at it. His goal was to cover at least one *Daf* of the *Gemara*. Line by line they continued, reviewing and slowly moving forward until after a full year, they finally realized their goal and completed the study of an entire page of the *Gemara*. The father was very excited at their accomplishment and asked his son to make a *Siyum* to celebrate, but the son explained that in order to make a *Siyum*, one must complete an entire *Masechta*. The father still wanted to celebrate, and the son agreed to ask Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*. Rav Moshe not only ruled that under the circumstances it was permissible to make a *Siyum*, but insisted that he himself would attend! The night after the *Siyum* took place, this boxer passed away in his sleep. Eulogizing the man, Rav Moshe commented that just as the *Gemara* teaches (*Avodah Zara* 17a) that some people acquire their portion in *Olam Haba* through one deed, this man acquired *Olam Haba* through one *Daf* of *Gemara*! Rav Frand explains that the *Torah* belongs to every one of the Jewish people, to study on their own individual level. Every one of us has our own unique portion in the *Torah*. For some it may be completing the entire *Shas*, for others it may be finishing just one *Daf*, or it may be simply studying *Torah* on the phone one hour a week. Rav Frand's message was this: "Whatever we do, it's never too little, it's never too late, and it's never enough!" He illustrated this further with a second story involving Rav Moshe Feinstein and his nephew Rav Michel Feinstein. Rav Moshe once called Rav Michel over and said, "We need to make a *L'Chaim*! I'm making a *Siyum* on *Shas*!" Rav Michel jokingly said, "Uncle, if you make a *L'Chaim* every time you finish *Shas*, you'll be a *Shikur*!" Rav Moshe explained, "No, this is a special *Siyum*, it's the second time." Surprised, Rav Michel said, "Uncle, you've finished *Shas* many more than two times! What do you mean this is the second time?" Rav Moshe answered, "I mean this is the second time that I'm fulfilling Rebbe Meir's statement in the *Gemara*, that one who learns something one hundred times, is not comparable to one who learns it one hundred and one times." Reb Moshe was saying that he learned the entire *Shas* over two hundred and two times! Rav Frand reiterated, "It is never too late, it is never too little, and it is never enough!"

Sponsored as a Zechus for R' Yossel & Chaya Winzelberg, z"l

לעילוי נשמות: יוסף בן שמואל זנוויל וחיה הענא בת יהודה דוב ז"ל

These *Divrei Torah* are available weekly by email and sponsorship opportunities are available.

For information, please send an email to: RabbiYehudaWinzelberg@gmail.com

