



# Torah U'Tefilah

*A Collection of Inspiring Insights*

בס"ד

כ"ו אלול  
26 Elul

## ❧ Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם

ראשיכם שבטיכם וזקניכם כל איש ישראל (כט:ט)

*You are all standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d, your leaders, your tribes, your elders, and your officers – all the men of Israel. (29:9)*

Why does the *Torah* repeat 'all the men of Israel' once it has stated your leaders, your tribes, etc.? Moshe is saying, "Even though I appointed for you leaders and judges, elders and officers, they are all equal before me, as it says, 'all the men of Israel'." (*Mechilta D'Rebbe Yishmael*)

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

We are given the choice between good and life, or evil and death, but Moshe recommends that we choose life (30:15). Rav Yaakov Galinsky, *zt"l*, notes that since these concepts are contrasted, clearly the choice is not simple, and the pros and cons of each side must be closely considered. He emphasized this with a metaphor. There is no challenge for a soccer player to score a goal when there are no opponents. His real ability is defined based on his performance when he plays against a challenging adversary. So too, our choice of good and life will be the greatest when we have challenges, and our choice is not very clear. Therefore, we must ask *Hashem* for direction to have the clarity to choose life!

## ❧ Working on our Middos

Once, the *Baal Shem Tov* was sitting with his students and he told them that one has to learn *Mussar* from everything in the world, and that it is even possible to learn good character and *Mussar* from a *goy*. The students were amazed and thought, 'How is it possible that lessons of holiness can come from a *goy*, and teach *Mussar* to *Bnei Yisroel*?' Not even a few moments passed when they heard a knock coming from outside below the window. When they looked out the window, a *goy* was standing there and he asked if there was anything that might need to be fixed. This was common in those days, that handymen went around and people would give them their items to be repaired. When they told him there was nothing that day that needed his service, he told them, "Surely you have many items that need to be repaired. The truth is though, that you don't want them fixed. Therefore, you should not say that you don't have anything to be fixed, rather, you should say that you do not want to fix them." Immediately, the *Baal Shem Tov* explained to his students why this had just occurred. It was to teach them that *Hashem* wanted to awaken them through the words of the *goy*, and *Hashem* had sent him at that very moment to teach them that there is much within *ourselves* that needs repair. The *Baal Shem Tov* said, "This should be *Mussar* for us! Even a holy lesson can be presented in the form of a *goy*, to teach us to correct our ways and 'utensils' while we are still in this world. If we don't work on improving ourselves, we should at least be honest and not say that we don't need the improvement, but rather that we don't want to improve!" The *Baal Shem Tov* taught that nothing occurs in this world by chance, not even the tiniest movement. Anything that we see occur was arranged with amazing Providence from *Hashem*, and it is for the purpose to awaken us to recognize *Hashem*, even if the lesson comes from a *goy*!

## פרשת נצבים תשפ"ה

*Parshas Nitzavim* 5785 Pirkei Avos 5-6

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg  
*Staten Island Z'manim*

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 5:42

Candle Lighting: 6:40

Sh'kiah: 6:58 Tzeis: 7:39

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 9:10 Gra: 9:46

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:47

Chatzos: 12:49 Sh'kiah: 6:56

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 7:38

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 8:09

(some say 8:19)

Next Week: Vayeilech

Candle Lighting: 6:28

## ❧ The Siddur Speaks

Rav Meilech 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!

## Exciting News!

Baruch Hashem, the *Orchos Chaim L'HaRosh* section that appeared on this sheet for many years is now in print in a *Sefer*! Please see the new releases at the Judaica Press website.

Also available in Seforim stores.

הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו!!



### *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!

### Working on our Middos

Once, a young man was traveling home from out of town, trying to arrive in time for *Shabbos*. He passed through Radin on *Erev Shabbos* and realized that he would not make it home in time for *Shabbos*. He decided to stay in Radin for *Shabbos*, and merited to stay at the house of a relative of his, the *Chofetz Chaim*. The young man was exhausted from his travels and decided to take a quick nap before *Shabbos* started. When he woke up, he saw that it was already very dark outside. The *Chofetz Chaim* noticed that he was up and greeted him with a warm '*Gut Shabbos!*' He told him to *Daven Kabalas Shabbos* and *Ma'ariv*, and then they would have the *Seudah*. After he finished *Davening*, the *Chofetz Chaim* said *Kiddush* and they washed and had the meal. The young man wondered where the rest of the family was, but thought it was impolite to ask. After *Bentching*, the *Chofetz Chaim* wished him a *Gut Shabbos* again, and left to go to sleep. The young man was not tired, so he walked around the house a little. He was shocked when he saw the clock in the kitchen read 4:00 in the morning! He thought to himself that the clock must be wrong, it can't be that late! He went to his room and went to sleep. In the morning, he asked the *Rebbitzen* if the clock in the kitchen was accurate, and she said it was. He asked her what happened when *Shabbos* started and she told him, "You were sleeping so soundly when *Shabbos* began that the *Chofetz Chaim* didn't want to wake you. He also refused to start the *Seudah* without you, so I made *Kiddush* for the rest of the family. We ate and then we went to sleep. The *Chofetz Chaim* stayed up and learned while he waited for you to get up and have the *Shabbos Seudah* together with you!"

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

The *Rama* (581:1) writes that we require at least four days of *Selichos* before Rosh Hashanah. The reason for this requirement is that since a *Korban* in the *Bais HaMikdash* required four days of examinations to ensure it was blemish-free and acceptable for the *Mizbei'ach*, so too each Jew should consider themselves as a *Korban Olah* on Rosh Hashanah and be ready to sacrifice themselves in atonement before *Hashem*. Therefore, we utilize a minimum of four days to examine our deeds and do *Teshuvah* for our *Aveiros* and blemishes so that we can be pure when we approach *Hashem* on Rosh Hashanah. (*Mishnah Brurah* 581:6)

During World War I, many borders between neighboring countries were closed. Soldiers would patrol these borders in order to stop anyone who tried to cross. At one of the borders, there was a cruel and heartless guard, named Ivan. If he ever caught anyone trying to cross the border, he would kill him without mercy. He was so cruel that people shuddered at the mere mention of his name. A Jew from the Town of Novardok once had to cross the border in order to deliver an important message. He knew that his mission was extremely dangerous, but the message was so urgent that he had no choice. Late at night, he stealthily crept towards the border, trying to hide in the darkness. As he was almost at the border, he suddenly heard a shout, "Halt! Who goes there?!" Ivan had seen him. There was no way to flee as he would surely be caught. He turned around to see a fierce looking guard pointing his rifle toward him. "Where is your pass!" thundered Ivan. "No one has ever escaped my clutches. Do you know who I am?!" The Jew thought for a moment, and then shook his head no. The cruel guard said, "I am Ivan!" expecting his prisoner to tremble and become white with fear. To Ivan's surprise, the young Jew calmly answered him, "If *Hashem* wants, I will return home alive." Ivan became furious. "What do you mean? I am going to shoot you! You have just a few more seconds to live!" The Jew spoke again, "If *Hashem* wants me to live, then you are powerless." Ivan got so angry that he was ready to explode. His face turned red as he aimed his gun to shoot. He said, "All I need to do is pull the trigger!" The Jew replied, "What you want does not matter. All that counts is what *Hashem* wants." Ivan snapped, "We will see about that," as he pointed the gun to the prisoner's forehead and was about to pull the trigger. The young man stood there as calmly as before and said, "I am not afraid of you. If *Hashem* wants, I will leave here alive." When he heard that, Ivan lost all control. "You are crazy!" he screamed. "You are mad! Get out of here now before I shoot! Run quickly or I will pull the trigger!!" The Jew ran away and was saved. He later related that he was saved only because he completely relied on *Hashem*. He said, "Every day we say '*Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*', where we declare that *Hashem* is our G-d, *Hashem* is One. If we say these words with feeling every day and live by them, *Hashem* will always protect us and save us from harm!"

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