



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

בס"ד

ט"ו אב
15 Av

Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

Guard (5:12) * שמור (ה:יב)

Why does the *Pasuk* say here 'שמור את יום השבת', 'Guard the Shabbos day', and in *Parshas Yisro* it states (20:8): 'זכור את יום השבת', 'Remember the Shabbos day'? Rebbe Yudan, in the name of Rebbe Ayvo said in the name of Rebbe Shimon ben Lakish, what is this compared to? It is compared to a king who sends his son to the store, and he gave him an *Issar* [a coin] and a flask [to be filled with wine]. The son broke the flask and lost the *Issar*. His father the king punished him, and then gave him another flask and another *Issar* to take to the store, and he told his son, "Be careful not to lose these like you lost the first ones!" The message is that since Israel lost the *Zachor* in the Wilderness, He gave them *Shamor* to guard it from getting lost like the first ones.

(Pesikta Rabasi, Chapter 23 115b)

Parshah Thoughts – Ideas and Reflections – Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

In this week's *Parshah* (6:4-9) we have the *Pasuk* of *Shema Yisroel*, as well as the first paragraph of *Shema*. We are commanded (6:5) to love *Hashem* our G-d. A question is raised. How can one be commanded to love? It is impossible to force someone to love! Love is an emotion that is felt and is not automatic. Rebbe Akiva Eiger, *zt"l*, gave a beautiful explanation. Loving *Hashem* is a natural feeling, since He loves us. It is only natural that we should love Him too! With this, he explains, that right before *Shema* we say, "Ha'bocher B'amo Yisroel B'ahavah," *Who chooses His nation with love*. Only after we acknowledge this do we say in *Shema* about the commandment to love *Hashem*.

B'Kitzur – The Halachos of Kiddush Levanah

If the moon becomes visible at the time one is saying *Krias Shema* and its *Brachos* in *Maariv*, and the time is so limited that before he completes *Shemoneh Esrei*, the time for saying *Kiddush Levanah* will have passed, he may interrupt his *Davening*, even in the middle of the *Brachos* of *Krias Shema*, or in the middle of *Krias Shema*, in order to say *Kiddush Levanah*. However, if possible, he should complete the *Perek* he is saying, and say *Kiddush Levanah* between the *Perakim*.

(Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 97:14)

Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

Someone related a story that was shared in *Tiv HaHashgachah*: I had some *Ma'aser* money to give to *Tzedakah*, and I did not know who to give the money to. I was undecided about several recipients, and I asked *Hashem* to help me give the money to an appropriate individual who needed it the most. A good friend called me, and without any prompting, he told me about another friend who was in a desperate financial situation. They were about to shut off his electricity because he owed 1,233 *Shekel*, and he was calling several friends to try to raise the money for him. I excitedly told him that I would pay the entire sum, and I explained to him that I had money set aside for *Tzedakah*, and I did not know who to give it to. I had just asked for guidance from *Hashem*, the Creator of the World, and the amount of money that I had saved to give was exactly 1,233 *Shekel*! We both marveled over the incomparable *Hashgachah* of *Hashem*!

פרשת ואתחנן תשפ"ה

Parshas Va'es'chanan 5785 Pirkei Avos 4

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg
Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 6:36

Candle Lighting: 7:45

Sh'kiah: 8:03 Tzeis: 8:48

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 8:55 Gra: 9:31

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:41

Chatzos: 1:01 Sh'kiah: 8:01

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 8:47

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 9:14
(some say 9:35)

Next Week: Eikev

Candle Lighting: 7:35

The Siddur Speaks

Rav A. Leib Scheinbaum writes that the *Pasuk* in *Parshas Beshalach* (14:10) says that by the *Yam Suf*, the *Bnei Yisroel* cried out to *Hashem*. *Rashi* comments, "They adopted the craft of their forefathers, namely *Tefilah*." Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov all *Davened* to *Hashem*. And now, when *Klal Yisroel* were surrounded on three sides, they understood that only *Hashem* could help them. This was not a novel approach. It was part of their "family craft." What is the relationship between the craft of *Tefilah* and the Jewish People? Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, *zt"l*, writes that he remembered when part of the city of Mir was threatened by a fire, and firemen from all the surrounding communities came running to extinguish it, but they did not succeed. The fire was too powerful and out of control. During the ensuing devastation, one of the secular Jews who had regrettably alienated himself from the religion of his parents called out, "If *Hashem* would only send His firemen, rain from *Shamayim*, the fire would be extinguished very quickly! What can these people hope to achieve at this point?" Rav Yeruchem commented his incredulous reaction to this man. Many years had gone by since he had given up on any religious belief and observance. Yet, when it came down to it, when he saw how meaningless and powerless people were in combating the fire, he turned to *Hashem*, the One he knew was able to put an end to the devastation. This is the meaning of "the craft of our fathers." *Tefilah* is part of a Jew's DNA. Just as the secular Jew cannot dismiss *Hashem* from his life, because being a Jew means that one is connected to the One above, likewise, a Jew understands that *Tefilah* is an integral part of his life. Rav Yeruchem explained, "A tailor takes his sewing basket, a carpenter takes his tool chest, a shoemaker takes his special tools, and a *Yid* takes his 'prayer,' which is the tool of his trade. It all is transmitted to us through our ancestors." In fact, the *Bnei Yissaschar* writes that the word "*Daven*," to pray, is derived from the word, "*DeAvunon*," which means, "that of our fathers," which is a reference to the *Avos*. This is how our ancestors approached *Hashem*, and so do we!

Working on our Middos

The *Dubner Maggid*, *zt"l*, in *Sefer Mishlei Yaakov*, offers a *Mashal*. There once were three friends who decided to travel to a far-away land to study new forms of wisdom. They agreed that each one of them would go to a different place to see what they could learn there, and after a year or two, they would meet and share what they learned. At their reunion, the first friend said, "I learned how to make binoculars that can see for miles into the distance." The second friend said, "I learned how to make a wagon that can travel long distances in a short amount of time." The third friend said, "I studied medicine and learned how to make remedies for all types of diseases." The first man took out a pair of his binoculars to show them how they worked. They were able to see all the way to the king's palace, where they saw that the princess had fallen ill, and no doctors were able to heal her. The second man immediately prepared a wagon to get their very quickly, and the third man provided her with the cure she needed. Their plan succeeded, and the princess was cured. Of course, the king was overjoyed. He said to them that he would like to repay them. He said, "All of my riches would not suffice to express my gratitude. Therefore, I am prepared to give my daughter as a bride to one of you. It is up to you to decide who should marry her." The three men began to argue with each other. The first one said that he should marry the princess because he was the one who saw the problem first. The second one argued that he was the one who got them to the palace so fast, while the third one said that he had made the medicine that healed her. When the princess heard the argument, she said, "You all did your part to help me and I would not have been saved without each of your contributions. However, I will not need binoculars or fast wagons in the future, but it is very possible that I will get sick again, and I will then need medicine. Therefore, the man who provided the cure is the one I will marry." The *Dubner Maggid* said that the *Nimshol* is as *Chazal* say in *Kiddushin* (30b) that there are three partners in a person: *Hashem*, the person's father, and his mother. One may wonder who deserves the most honor. If one were to look to the past, they all seem equal, as the baby could not be created without the contributions of each partner. But if one were to look towards the future, it becomes obvious that *Hashem* deserves the most honor, as the person constantly needs *Hashem* to grant him every second of life. Therefore, *Rashi* says that one must honor *Hashem* more than his own parents!

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz told a story. There was a *Talmid Chacham* who lived in Tel Aviv. Every morning, he would get up early and travel to his *Kollel* in Bnei Brak. He would *Daven Shacharis* and remain the whole day to learn until evening. One morning he had to take care of something, and he left to Bnei Brak after he had *Davened* in Tel Aviv. Because of this, he missed his usual ride, and he was forced, to his dismay, to take the bus filled with young college students travelling from Tel Aviv to Bar Ilan University, which was on the way to Bnei Brak. Those secular boys were noisy and joking around the entire time, but he paid no attention to them. He sat to the side and learned the *Sefer Mishnah Brurah*, which he always learned when he traveled. One boy from the group who was sitting near him was taken by how the young man was concentrating on his studies, and how he was not interrupted by the noise and commotion that was going on around him. He wanted to know what this young man was so involved in, to the extent that he was unaware of anything that was going on around him, and he was not at all distracted. He wanted to start a conversation with the young man, so he asked, "Excuse me, please. What is that book you are holding? I see that you are so absorbed in it!" Since the boy asked his question respectfully, the young man decided to reply and explain about the *Sefer* he was learning. He described in detail about the amazing *Sefer*, the *Mishnah Brurah*, that was known all over the Jewish world, and he explained about the author, the *Chofetz Chaim*. But the boy was not satisfied. He became more and more interested, specifically about the text at the top of the page, which is the *Shulchan Aruch*, and the two sections that are below it, the *Be'er Heiteiv* and the *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, and the two sections below that, the *Mishnah Brurah* and the *Biur Halachah*, and the section that is below them, the *Sha'ar HaTzion*, and also about the above side column, the *Be'er HaGolah*. The young man patiently explained every detail, the order of the generations of the various commentators, how each section was added one after the other, how every author saw the authors before him and only then added his own commentary to it. He showed him the layout that was set up by the *Rama*, which was printed using *Rashi's* script, on the *Shulchan Aruch*, which was arranged by the *Mechaber*. He then explained all the letters added in the *Shulchan Aruch* to direct the reader to the correct commentary on the bottom, each commentary using a different form of the alphabet. They sat and discussed these things until the bus arrived at the stop before Bnei Brak, where the boy got off the bus together with the rest of his friends going to Bar Ilan. Afterwards, the young man thought about the conversation he had with this college boy, and his heart filled with regret. He said, "Why did I waste my precious time on this whole long trip? If the conversation was in words of *Torah*, or at least in words of *Chizuk* or *Mussar*, then that would be fine, but all we talked about was history and the layout of the text on the page! It was just a college student who likes to investigate dry topics like the history, the authors, and the different formats on the page of the book, but he had no interest in the *Sefer* itself. I wasted all my time!" This young man had a pre-arranged appointment with the *Steipler Gaon*, *zt"l*. Since he was still disturbed by his conversation with the college student, he decided to ask the *Rav* about it to settle his mind. The *Steipler* told him that in his opinion, he did the right thing and the time was well spent, as it is not possible to know what effect his words would have, or when they might affect the boy. Who knows what was implanted in the heart of this college boy. As it says about the great *Tanna* Rebbe Akiva in *Avos D'Rebbe Nassan* (6), about the origin of Rebbe Akiva. He was forty years old, and he had not yet learned anything. Once, he was walking by a rock and he saw that over time, dripping water had made an indentation in the rock. He said to himself that if something soft like water can damage something hard like a rock, then words of *Torah* can penetrate even into his own heart! He immediately went to learn *Torah*. The *Steipler* explained that even a small conversation like this one, about the author and his book, can make an impression, and it is not possible to know what the results will be in the future. He said, "Perhaps in a few years this boy will come upon a *Mishnah Brurah*, and then since the *Sefer* is already close to his heart because there is some familiarity already due to the conversation that you had with him, he will be interested to look into it. Perhaps this conversation was only the first drop of many that the *Hashem* wanted to come about, in order to save a Jewish *Neshamah* and bring it closer to the truth, and return it to its rightful place." The young man was indeed calmed from the insightful words of the *Steipler Gaon*!

לעילוי נשמות: אלעזר בן יחיאל אלימלך ואסתר פרידה בת יהודה ז"ל

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