



Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה' (לה:ב)

But the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem (35:2)

אין מניחים תפילין אלא בשבת (מדרש פליאה)

We do not put on Tefilin except on Shabbos (Medrash P'liah)

We find two novelties in the words of the Medrash:

- 1 – We place the Tefilin in a cabinet – and not on the arm – only on Shabbos, that is, on Shabbos we do not put on Tefilin [this is hinted at in the word "שבת" which are the beginning letters of the phrase שבת במקום תפילין – Shabbos in the place of Tefilin].
- 2 – Every day of the week we say "היום יום פלוני בשבת", "this is such-and-such a day in Shabbos", and on Shabbos we say "היום יום שבת קדש" "today is the Holy day of Shabbos". When do we put on Tefilin? Only when we say 'בשבת', and not on Shabbos. (U'Matuk HaOhr)

Parshah Thoughts – Ideas and Reflections – Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

The Parshah begins (35:1) with Moshe gathering the people together. Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, zt"l, observes that this occurred after the sin of the Golden Calf, which was an Aveirah that made a separation amongst the Jewish people. Moshe's actions are significant because gathering everyone together stresses the need for Achdus, unity.

Working on our Middos

Rav Nachman Seltzer once shared a story. Back in the days when the world was a little more calm, a Chareidi Jew from Bnei Brak named Yehuda was driving on the Tel Aviv–Yerushalayim highway, when he suddenly noticed a car sitting on the side of the road with its hazard lights blinking. Inside the car were two parents, a child, and a dog. He pulled up behind the car and got out to ask what the problem was. The father said, "We ran out of gas. We've been waiting here for half an hour, and you're the first person that stopped to help us." Yehuda reassured them and said, "Don't worry about a thing. I'll drive over to the nearest gas station, and bring you back enough gas so you can get back on the road." Yehuda gave them his phone number and they gave him theirs, and he promised to return as quickly as possible. He came back shortly afterward with some gas, and gave it to them. They then offered to pay him for his help, but he refused. He said, "It's on the house." They were confused and the father said, "What do you mean? You drove to the gas station, you went out of your way, and you spent money on me. What do you mean, 'It's on the house?'" Yehuda replied, "Thank you for wanting to pay, but I did a Mitzvah, and I don't want payment for it." The man was shocked and said, "I don't believe this." Yehuda replied, "What's so hard to believe?" The man said, "Come here a second. I want to show you something." The father led Yehuda around to the back of the car. On the trunk was a bumper sticker. "Do you see that sticker?" the man asked him. Yehuda looked. The sticker said, "Dros Kol Dos," which roughly translates to mean, "Run over every religious person." The man said, "This is the first time in my life that I'm meeting a religious person," he confessed, "and suddenly I find myself incredibly ashamed of the sticker on my car. I'm going to remove it now that I see the truth about religious people for myself!"

B'Kitzur— The Halachos of Rosh Chodesh and Kiddush Levanah

It is permissible to do work on Rosh Chodesh, but women have the custom to refrain from doing work on this day. This is a proper custom and one should not be lenient in this regard for them.

(Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 97:3)

בזכות לרפואה שלמה: אסתר פרידה בת דינה בתוך שאר חולי ישראל

פרשת ויקהל תשפ"ה

Parashas Vayakhel 5785 Parshas Parah

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg
Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 5:54

Candle Lighting: 6:52

Sh'kiah: 7:10 Tzeis: 7:51

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 9:23 Gra: 9:59

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 11:01

Chatzos: 1:03 Sh'kiah: 7:11

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 7:52

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 8:24

(some say 8:33)

Next Week: Pekudei

Candle Lighting: 6:59

The Siddur Speaks

After waiting for three long years to have children, Rav Avi Bensoussan asked his brother, Rav Ari, to ask Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l, what he should do. Many times Rav Chaim would suggest different ideas to be fixed to merit the Yeshuah. Before they finished talking, Rav Avi told his brother, "I'm not sending you to Rav Chaim merely for a 'Brachah V'Hatzlachah', although, that is also very special. We need something more." When Rav Ari went to Rav Chaim's house, there was a wealthy individual before him who supported many institutions and organizations, and the Gabbai was praising him greatly to Rav Chaim. After he finished this Hespel-like speech, Rav Chaim gave him his famous, "Brachah V'Hatzlachah!" and that was it. Rav Ari figured that he too would get the same. When it was his turn, Rav Ari gave Rav Chaim his brother's name, his name, and the names of two other siblings who were also waiting for children. Rav Chaim read the paper from beginning to end and said, "Brachah V'Hatzlachah!" Rav Ari built up the courage to ask Rav Chaim what else can be done to help guarantee them a Yeshuah? When Rav Chaim heard the question, he started laughing. "Daven!" he said. Seeing Rav Chaim laugh, Rav Ari in return started laughing, and the Gabbi followed along. He understood what Rav Chaim was telling him, and he left the room. This was not uncommon for Rav Chaim, to tell whoever was asking, "So Daven!" He called back his brother to tell him the news, that Rav Chaim had said to Daven, and within a short time of renewed Tefilos, Rav Avi, Rav Ari, and the two other siblings who were awaiting children, Baruch Hashem, had a baby, and some even had twins! Rav Chaim knew that all the thousands of people he told this to knew already to Daven, so what was he telling them that was so special? Rav Chaim was saying that the power of being answered lies within us. It's not something to seek out from others, but rather it is within reach. All we have to do is trust in its power, and remember that we have what it takes to get the salvation!

✡ **Sterling Character**

Be occupied with learning *Torah*. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 29:6)

The Frustration of Forgetting

Rav Sholom Smith writes from the teachings of his *Rebbe*, Rav Avraham Pam, *zt"l*, on *Pirkei Avos* (2:21, see also *Atarah L'Melech*, pg. 196), that unfortunately, something that is common with those who learn *Torah*, is that they forget what they have learned, and this causes them to feel discouraged. There are times of despair when one cries out, "What is the purpose of spending so much time, energy, and effort on learning *Torah*, if I quickly forget everything I learn?" However, this is not a new problem. This feeling of frustration was experienced even by Moshe *Rabbeinu*. The *Gemara* in *Nedarim* (38a) says that when Moshe went up to *Shamayim* the day after we received the *Torah*, he stayed there for forty days while *Hashem* taught him the entire *Torah*. Yet, as great as Moshe *Rabbeinu* was, he would learn *Torah*, and forget it, learn it, and forget it. Moshe was very frustrated by this, until *Hashem* gave him the *Torah* knowledge as a gift, as we see from the *Pasuk* in *Shemos* (31:18). The *Alshich* asks, if *Hashem* knew that it was impossible for Moshe to learn the whole *Torah*, why didn't He give it to him as a gift right away? Why did He make Moshe struggle and get frustrated? *Hashem* knew that Moshe would fail! The *Alshich* answers that in order for Moshe to become the *Rebbe* of *Torah* for all of *Klal Yisroel*, he had to go through this emotional anguish of learning *Torah* and forgetting it, since this is something that all Jews in the future generations would experience.

The *Medrash* in *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* (5:8) tells a story about two men. One was wise and the other was foolish, and they were hired to fill a wicker basket with water. The fool refused to accept the job. He said, "What is the point of even trying? If I pour water into the top of the basket, it will leak out from the sides and the bottom!" The wise man had a different response. He said, "I was hired to do this job, and the one who hired me realizes that the water will leak out through all the holes. Yet, he will pay me for my efforts." The *Medrash* explains that this is related to learning *Torah*. A fool refuses to learn *Torah*, because with his weak memory, he is afraid that he will quickly forget whatever he learns. However, the wise person realizes that *Hashem* will reward him in *Olam Haba* for his efforts. Additionally, he will be *Zocheh* in this world to all the *Brachos* that come to one who learns *Torah*.

Rav Pam taught that *Hashem* wants a person to try. He must use whatever intellectual capabilities he has been given in order to learn *Torah*. Even if he ultimately forgets much of what he learns, he should be encouraged by the words of the *Sefer Chasidim* (1164), which says that in *Olam Haba*, in the *Yeshivah shel Ma'alah*, one will be able to understand and remember the *Torah* that he struggled with in this world, and Rav Pam would say, "That is a comforting thought that is worth remembering!"

✡ **Working on our Middos**

Rav Yechiel Spero told a story. Every *Shabbos*, the young *Bachurim* from the *Yeshivah* in Pressburg would eat their meals at the homes of members of the community. After *Davening*, they would leave the *Shul* as a group and walk through the town to their respective hosts' homes. Every week, one of the young men would wander off by himself for a while, and then catch up with the group a few blocks away. This young man, Chaim, was well respected among his friends as a caring, generous individual, who was always ready to help a friend in need. Chaim's "disappearing act" intrigued his friends, and they decided to follow him one week to see where he went. The next *Shabbos* morning, the boys followed Chaim into a particularly poor part of town. Chaim walked to a basement apartment and knocked gently on the door. An old woman answered, and Chaim wished her a warm *Gut Shabbos*. Seeing the smile on her face, they assumed that this was his grandmother. They managed to get away before he could see them, but when he rejoined the group, they confessed that they had followed him. "So," they asked, "who is that woman? Your grandmother?" A bit embarrassed that he had been caught in the act, Chaim shyly responded that the woman was not even related to him. That piqued their curiosity even more. "Then Chaim, why do you go wish her a *Gut Shabbos* every week?" By this time a bigger crowd had gathered, with everyone eager to hear Chaim's story. Chaim responded, "This woman is a widow, and she has very little family around. So, I figured I would go to wish her a *Gut Shabbos*. She seems so happy when I come, and it is such an easy thing to do. How could I not?" The friends were stunned and awed by Chaim's act. Amazed that their young friend had the sensitivity to look after an old widow, they knew then that this boy would become something special. Rav Yitzchak Shloime Blau, the one who shared this story, remembers it fondly, because he was a little boy at the time this took place, and the old woman was his grandmother. He said, "Although I was only six or seven years old at the time, I remember waiting outside for him every *Shabbos*, and then running inside to tell my grandmother, 'The *Bachur* is coming! The *Bachur* is coming!'" Chaim's friends were correct in predicting that this young man was destined for greatness. Young Chaim grew up to become the great Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, *zt"l*, the *Rav* of Yerushalayim!

Rav Paysach Krohn (may he have a *Refuah Sheleimah!*) related a story. One *Shabbos* afternoon, shortly after a noted *Talmid Chacham* had been appointed as the *Rav* of Brisk, in Lithuania, a police official appeared at his home. He informed the *Rav* that one of the Jews being held in the local jail had been sentenced to death, and that as the new official clergyman for the Jews in Brisk, he was obligated to come and say confession with the man. He went on to explain that official rules dictated that every man, regardless of his religion, be given the opportunity to speak with a clergyman of his faith, one last time before his execution. The *Rav* told the officer that he was sorry, but he could neither comply nor go along with him. The officer was surprised by the refusal. The officer snapped, "What do you mean you won't come? Every clergyman always goes for the sake of the people of his faith. Why won't you go?" The *Rav* explained, "You say that the law states that a man cannot be executed until he meets with his clergyman. Therefore, as long as I don't go, he can't be put to death. I don't want to be a cause in his death, because once I go, I have, in essence, removed the last barrier to his execution." The officer was at first intrigued by the *Rav's* reasoning, but he soon became outraged. But the more he argued, the more he realized that the *Rav* would not budge from his position, so the officer went back to his headquarters. Word of the *Rav's* refusal quickly spread throughout the town, and soon, a crowd had gathered at his home. They wondered if he wasn't putting the Jews of the town in jeopardy, because his refusal to cooperate with the authorities would only antagonize them and add to the hatred they already had for the Jews. Some people even criticized him for a lack of compassion, noting that he was a young and inexperienced man himself. Later, a police lieutenant and a few of his subordinates arrived at the *Rav's* home. He got straight to the point. He ordered, "I demand that you come with me at once. We have business to take care of, and we can't be bothered with your nonsensical reasoning. You are to return with me immediately." Not impressed by the lieutenant's insisting, the *Rav* explained calmly once again, that according to his understanding, he could not go to say the confession, for he would not be even an indirect cause of a fellow Jew's death. The lieutenant threatened to drag the Rabbi to the jail and put him in the same cell with the prisoner, but the *Rav* stood his ground and would not go. Some people tried to send the *Shul* attendant to take the *Rav's* place, but the lieutenant would settle for nothing less than the *Rav*. When he came back to the headquarters, the lieutenant ordered that the death of the criminal be delayed until he received further instructions from higher authorities. That night, an envoy came from a higher court with an order stating that the Jewish "criminal" had been pardoned, and that he should not be executed! A man's life was saved only because the new *Brisker Rav* refused to have any part, no matter how slight or indirect, in bringing about the death of a fellow *Yid*!

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