



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

בס"ד

י"ב אייר
12 Iyar

❧ Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(י"ט:ג) איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתותי תשמרו אני ה' אלקיכם

Every man shall revere his mother and his father and you shall observe my Shabbosos, I am Hashem, your G-d (19:3)

What is the connection between the two topics of honoring one's mother and father and *Shabbos*? The *Mitzvah* of honoring parents is a *Mitzvah* that a person can understand on his own with common sense, and one would have fulfilled this without a command from the *Torah*. However, keeping *Shabbos*, a person does not understand why there is a need for this *Mitzvah*, and therefore, the *Torah* placed the two *Mitzvos* together. This teaches us that the fulfillment of *Mitzvos* is only because *Hashem* commanded it, and not because of our understanding or common sense. (*Siach Aharon*)

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

At the end of discussing the service of Yom Kippur, the *Torah* states, "To atone for the sins of *Bnei Yisroel*, once a year" (16:34). The reiteration of Yom Kippur occurring once a year seems superfluous. Rav Shimon Sofer suggests that this is a guarantee from *Hashem* that if we fulfill all of the *Mitzvos* of Yom Kippur with the proper intentions and focus, that atonement alone will cover for the entire year, and we will not need punishments or difficult times to complete the atonement for our sins!

❧ Working on our Middos

In a *Shiur*, Rav Meilech Biderman said that someone once asked the *Chazon Ish*, "How does someone know if he is doing too much *Hishtadlus*, and trying too hard to accomplish something?" The *Chazon Ish* replied, "It can be compared to someone who is knocking a nail into a wall. He bangs the nail on the head with a hammer again and again. But if the nail becomes crooked, he throws the nail away. Similarly, one does *Hishtadlus*, but when matters become crooked, it's time to stop." Rav Meilech said an example of "crooked *Hishtadlus*" is someone working so much that he doesn't have time for learning *Torah* and *Davening*. Many times, one may put a lot of *Hishtadlus* into something, but this doesn't mean that he will necessarily earn more money. The *Chofetz Chaim* compares it to someone who opens another spout on a wine barrel. The extra spout will not create more wine. It just lets more wine come out quicker. Similarly, extra efforts at *Hishtadlus* won't earn the person any more than the amount of money that was predestined for him. It is like someone who falls into quicksand. The best thing for him to do is to remain still and wait for someone to rescue him. Each movement he makes will only cause him to sink deeper. The same advice is given to someone who doesn't know how to swim, and he finds himself in deep water. If he moves about, he will drown, but if he relaxes, he will float. Rav Meilech said that these examples remind us that sometimes not doing anything is how to survive. At the same time, constant work can cause the opposite results. Rav Meilech taught that one should do what he has to do, but still make sure to devote time for learning and *Davening*. There will be more success this way! Rav Meilech quoted Rabbeinu Yedaya HaPnini who writes that even if people would run away from their *Parnasah* like they run away from death, their *Parnasah* would run after them, and quickly catch up. The *Alter of Novardok*, *zt"l*, would describe unnecessary *Hishtadlus* in the following way: "This world is like a five-star hotel. If one waits patiently, he will be served dinner in his room. If he is impatient and goes down to the kitchen to get dinner, he will have to fill his plate himself. He will get all the food he needs, but it will be with effort. The same is with *Parnasah*. If one waits patiently, doing just the amount of *Hishtadlus* that is required, he will get all that he needs. But if one tries too hard, he will also get *Parnasah*, but only after a lot of work and heartache." The *Alter of Novardok* also compared someone who works extra hard for *Parnasah* to someone riding a train, and he pushes the walls of the train with his hands to make the train go quicker. Obviously, this will not accomplish anything. Similarly, not every *Hishtadlus* creates results. When one overworks, it will not necessarily translate into having more *Parnasah*!

פרשת אחרי - קדושים תשפ"ה

Parshas Acharei - Kedoshim 5785

Pirkei Avos 3

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg
Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 6:32

Candle Lighting: 7:43

Sh'kiah: 8:01 Tzeis: 8:47

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 8:42 Gra: 9:18

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:30

Chatzos: 12:53 Sh'kiah: 8:02

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 8:49

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 9:15

(some say 9:39)

Next Week: Emor

Candle Lighting: 7:49

❧ The Siddur Speaks

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz said that in the time of the holy *Baal Shem Tov*, there was once a severe drought, and the community declared a public fast. Everyone gathered in the *Shul* and *Davened* from the depths of their hearts, but their *Tefilos* were not answered. One day, the *Baal Shem Tov* saw a simple farmer reciting *Krias Shema*. When he reached the words, "V'Atzar Es HaShamayim V'Lo Yihyeh Matar," which means that *Hashem* will shut the heavens so that there will be no rain, the farmer recited them with great *Kavanah* and with tears. With his *Ruach Ha'kodesh*, the *Baal Shem Tov* perceived that at that very moment, the decree of the drought was annulled. After the farmer finished *Davening*, the *Baal Shem Tov* asked him what his *Kavanah* was when he said these words. The man answered that he had meant the simple interpretation of the words: "Hashem will shut the heavens," that *Hashem* should press or squeeze the heavens, just as one presses grapes, until it would come to a point where "there will be no rain", because all the rain in *Shamayim* will have been released to the world, and there is none left over there. The *Baal Shem Tov* then understood that the pure and simple *Tefilah* of this man had saved everyone and annulled the harsh decree!

❧ B'Kitzur- The Halachos of Rosh Chodesh and Kiddush Levanah

Kiddush Levanah must only be said under the open sky, and not under a roof. If, however, there is no clean place outside, or because of another situation beyond one's control and he can't go outside, it may be said inside the house through the window.

(Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 97:8)

☞ Sterling Character

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

Love of Torah

Rav Dovid Koppelman told a story. At the beginning of World War II, Rav Elkanah Zoberman, *zt"l*, Rav of Yordanov, and a main *Talmid* of Rav Meir Arik, *zt"l*, was exiled to Siberia with his family. He suffered immensely, enduring extremely harsh weather and back-breaking labor. Despite the hardships, Rav Elkanah's love of *Torah* burned strong in his heart, and he continued to learn *Torah* constantly and *Daven* intensely, both before and after his work. Even on days when he and his family had nothing to eat, Rav Elkanah kept learning. A fellow prisoner, Shmuel, became aware that Rav Elkanah and his family had been fasting for two days. Shmuel risked his life to steal half a loaf of bread at midnight, then rushed to Rav Elkanah's tiny, cold room. He found Rav Elkanah standing on a chair, because the ground was frozen. His body was covered with torn rags, and he was holding a small, flickering candle next to a torn-out page from a *Gemara*. It was one of a few torn pages he had found in the area. Oblivious to the bitter cold and the hunger, Rav Elkanah's eyes were entirely focused on the *Gemara*, and he was completely engrossed in his learning. When Rav Elkanah raised his eyes and saw Shmuel, his face shone with happiness. Shmuel handed him the bread. Rav Elkanah thanked him profusely, and then woke up his family. He divided all the bread between his wife and his children, without taking even a small piece for himself. With renewed enthusiasm, he returned to his learning!

Rav Shimon Finkelman shared that in 1981, when Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, suffered a painful back condition, a *Bachur* who would often attend to Rav Moshe asked him something concerning the *Gemara* he was learning. When he realized that Rav Moshe was in agony, the boy felt terrible. He apologized and said, "Please forgive me. I will ask the *Rosh Yeshivah* another time." Rav Moshe exclaimed, "No! We can continue talking now. *Ki Heim Chayeinu V'Orech Yameinu!* The words of *Torah* are our life. This is what I live for!"

Rav Yechiel Spero related that Rav Ezra Attiah, *zt"l*, was the *Rosh Yeshivah* at Yeshivas Porat Yosef in Yerushalayim. One day, a young student named Ovadiah sadly informed the *Rosh Yeshivah* that he would not be returning to the *Yeshivah*. His father owned a grocery store, he explained, and he was needed to help stock the shelves. Times were hard and there simply was not enough money to hire a worker. Rav Ezra was very distraught at this news. Ovadiah was one of the *Yeshivah's* top students. He had a brilliant mind and was extremely diligent. Most importantly, he truly loved learning *Torah*. Rav Ezra went to visit Ovadiah's father and did his best to persuade him to change his mind. He explained the importance of learning *Torah* and he described Ovadiah's tremendous potential to grow in learning. Although Ovadiah's father was moved, he insisted that he needed his son's help in the grocery store. There was just no alternative at this time. Rav Ezra understood that he could not persuade the father, and wished him a good day and left. Early the following morning, when Ovadiah's father came to open his grocery store, he saw Rav Ezra standing near the door. Rav Ezra said to Ovadiah's father, "I have good news for you! I know someone who is willing to work for you for free, just so long as you allow your son to return to *Yeshivah*." Ovadiah's father couldn't believe what he was hearing. He asked incredulously, "Who would be willing to do such a thing?" Rav Ezra said, "I would." He took an apron that was hanging on a nail on the wall, and he put it on. As he tied the apron strings, he said, "Just show me what to do." Ovadiah's father was taken aback. Now he truly understood just how important it was to the *Rosh Yeshivah* that Ovadiah return to his learning. He promised Rav Ezra that he would find some way to allow his son to return to *Yeshivah*. Young Ovadiah went to learn, and he grew up to become the great *Talmud Chacham*, Rav Ovadiah Yosef!

☞ L'Maaseh

The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation shared a story. Gitta Levin opened an envelope that was attached to a beautiful bouquet of flowers that had just been delivered to her door. It was a thank-you note from Sara Green, a young woman she sometimes saw in *Shul*. Gitta thought, "This must be a mistake. Sara must have meant for these flowers to be delivered to a different Levin." She called Sara Green to let her know about the mix-up, but Sara let her know that there was no mix-up at all. She explained, "One Shabbos, a few weeks ago, you left *Shul* with me after *Davening*," Sara reminded her. "That day was my best friend's *Chasan's Aufruf*. She is my last single friend, and I was feeling very lost and alone. I decided, that's it, I'm not dating anymore. I'm almost 35, and if there's someone out there for me, I would have found him by now. Why keep going out and being disappointed? I'll make the best life I can as a single woman. But as we walked out together, you smiled at me and said, 'Sara, you look stunning in that suit! Where do you get your impeccable fashion sense? I'm sure your children will be the best-dressed kids on the block!' I was speechless. Not just at the warm compliment, but at the fact that you saw me having a family of my own one day. You awakened the hope in me that I could meet my *Bashert* and become a wife and a mother. I felt like a new person! That's what your compliment did. And it happened at just the right time, because I had recently gotten a *Shidduch* suggestion that I had decided not to accept. The *Chizuk* you gave me made me feel that maybe it was worth a try. So now, I want to give you something to show my appreciation, Mrs. Levin, because last night, I became a *Kallah*! Who knows what might have been if not for your thoughtful, positive words?!"

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לע"נ: שינע רחל בת משה חיים ז"ל

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