



# Torah U'Tefilah

*A Collection of Inspiring Insights*

בס"ד

ל' כסליו  
30 Kislev

## ❧ Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

Rav Naftoli of Rapshitz, *zt"l*, once explained the *Pasuk* in *Bereishis* (43:34), *וּתְרַב מִשָּׂאת בְּנִימִן מִמִּשְׁאֵת כָּלֶם חֲמֵשׁ יְדוֹת*, and *Binyamin's* portion was greater than the portions of all of them fivefold. In the *Tefilah* of *Al HaNissim* that we say on *Chanukah*, we give thanks to *Hashem* for *חֲמֵשׁ יְדוֹת*, five hands: *מִסֵּר* גִּבּוּרִים בְּיַד חֲלָשִׁים, וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מַעֲטִים, וְטָמְאִים בְּיַד טְהוּרִים, וְרָשָׁאִים בְּיַד צַדִּיקִים *מִסֵּר* *You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous and the wanton into the hands of the diligent students of Your Torah.* This is all alluded to in the *Torah* in *Parshas Mikeitz*, which invariably falls out on *Shabbos Chanukah*!

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

It is of no coincidence that *Parshas Mikeitz* is almost always read on *Chanukah*. Rav Yisroel Belsky, *zt"l*, explains that Yosef saw an amazing lesson in Pharaoh's dreams. He understood the need to utilize the years of plenty so that there would be food during the years of hunger. Similarly, *Chazal* recognized that at the time that they were establishing the holiday of *Chanukah*, it was necessary to establish this holiday recognizing the miracles and wonders of *Hashem*, so that this could inspire us even in the darkest of years, when we would feel so distant from Him.

## ❧ Chanukah Treasures

A person living in this world is solely dependent on the loving-kindness of *Hashem*, and really has no control over his life. *A person is controlled and guided only by Hashem.* For example, regarding one's health, a person has no control over contracting an illness, nor does he have control over being cured. So too regarding *Parnasah*. *Hashem* establishes who will be poor and who will be wealthy. All aspects of one's life are guided by *Hashem*. All this can be learned from the *Dreidel*. The *Dreidel* has one leg and a handle on top. The *Dreidel* is not able to stand and spin on its own, unless a hand twirls it from above and spins it. This represents the *Yad Hashem*, the Hand of *Hashem*, that 'spins', controls, and guides us!

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

Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky, *zt"l*, once visited Cracow on *Chanukah*. When he arrived, Rav Chaim Ozer went searching for a tailor who could sew his suit that had been torn on the way. He eventually found one, and requested that he fix his suit. The tailor answered, "Forgive me, *Kavod HaRav*, but I have not yet lit the *Chanukah* candles. If you wish, you can wait until I light, and after a half an hour, I'll be happy to sew your suit for you." Rav Chaim Ozer agreed, and while he waited, he noticed how this simple tailor prepared himself for the *Mitzvah*. He removed his weekday clothing, and put on his *Shabbos* clothing. Then he washed his hands and joyously prepared to light the candles. Rav Chaim Ozer was astounded by the sincerity and wholeheartedness of this man and he said, "If this is what the simple tailors are like here, I now understand how the city of Cracow produces such *Gedolei Torah*!"

## פרשת מקץ תשפ"ו

Parashas Mikeitz 5786

*Shabbos Rosh Chodesh* • שבת חנוכה

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg  
Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 3:35

Candle Lighting: 4:13

Sh'kiah: 4:31 Tzeis: 5:18

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 8:59 Gra: 9:35

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:21

Chatzos: 11:54 Sh'kiah: 4:32

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 5:18

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 5:45  
(some say 6:01)

Next Week: Vayigash

Candle Lighting: 4:17

## ❧ Chanukah Gems

Rav Shlomo Farhi said that a principal of a girls school once walked into a classroom and asked the students if any of them knew how high the *Menorah* is supposed to be off of the floor. Nobody knew. They knew it needed to be less than 20 *Amos* in total height, but they didn't know how high off the floor it needed to be. Then, one girl, Sarah, raised her hand. She was known to be the troublemaker of the class. "Three *Tefachim*," she said. "That is the correct answer," commented the principal. "The *Shulchan Aruch* says that it should be higher than three *Tefachim*." The lesson continued until the girls were dismissed. After the rest of the students left the classroom, the principal called this student aside and asked her how she knew the answer. Timidly, she replied that it had been a couple of years ago when she was suspended from school during one *Chanukah*. She said, "As I went to my classroom to gather my things, the teacher pulled me aside, and said, 'Sarah, the *Halachah* is that we are supposed to light the *Menorah* at least three *Tefachim* off from the ground. Remember that there can be light even when you are low. There can be fire even when you don't feel like you are good enough.' Sarah said to the principal, 'I never forgot those words!'"

Rav Yisroel Majeski taught about the question of the *Bais Yosef*, as to why we celebrate the miracle of Chanukah for eight days, when in reality, the first day was not a miracle. There was enough oil that was found to burn for one day, and it burned for seven more days, so really, Chanukah should be celebrated for only seven days. This question is in fact answered by the *Bais Yosef* himself in three possible ways. Firstly, on the first day, after pouring oil out of the jar, the jar miraculously became refilled. Secondly, on each morning, the *Menorah* itself became miraculously refilled with oil. And lastly, they divided the oil into eight parts and used only one-eighth each night, but that small amount of oil burned for the entire night. There is a question on the third answer of the *Bais Yosef*. How could the Jews have relied on a miracle? On the first night, they should have lit the *Menorah* with the entire amount of oil they had. How could they have only filled it up an eighth or the way, and rely on a miracle? *Chazal* are clear in many places throughout the *Gemara* that we do not rely on miracles!

The *Gemara* in *Brachos* (20a) states that Rav Papa approached Abaye and asked why was it that the earlier generations experienced miracles, whereas their generation did not experience miracles? "It can't be," continued Rav Papa, "that they were greater in their *Torah* scholarship than we are, because we have greater *Torah* scholarship now than they had then." Abaye explained, "In the previous generations, the Jews were *Moser Nefesh*, they would give up their lives for the purpose of *Kiddush Hashem* through their observance of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*. However, in our generation, we are not *Moser Nefesh* for *Kiddush Hashem*. This is why they merited to see miracles."

Rabbi Majeski said, when do we experience miracles? When we give up on relying on ourselves. When we push to the limit. Then *Hashem* performs miracles for us. When *Klal Yisroel* returned from the war where they were *Moser Nefesh* with just a few people, they poured in a small amount of oil to the *Menorah*, and thereby relied on a miracle because they were certain there would be a miracle. Given their self-sacrifice, they knew what *Hashem* would do for them.

We all want miracles in our life, but how do we get them? Find an area in your life where you can push yourself, where you can go beyond your limits. Once you do so, *Hashem* says, "I'll take over from here and do the same for you."

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, *zt"l*, was such an example. Whatever minimal physical energy he had left, given his Parkinson's disease, he poured that into *Torah* learning and support of the *Mir Yeshivah*. He gave as much as he could, and he merited to raise millions of dollars for the *Yeshivah* and build a towering epicenter of *Torah* scholarship.

Someone once approached Rav Chaim Kamil, *zt"l*, the *Rebbe* of Rav Nosson Tzvi, and said that he must encourage Rav Nosson Tzvi to slow down for his health's sake and well-being. Rav Chaim Kamil replied, "If a multi-billionaire would give you a blank check, how much would you fill in for? It's limitless. Rav Nosson Tzvi is a blank check. He lives without limits, with unrelenting *Mesirus Nefesh*, and there's no stopping his willpower and dedication."

When we push ourselves, whether it be in *Tefilah*, *Chesed*, or anything else, even just over the days of Chanukah, *Hashem* takes note of it and performs miracles in our lives!

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

Rav Heschel of Krakow, *zt"l*, would say, "Over all the eight days of Chanukah, we light a total of 44 candles. We see this from the *Posuk* (*Tehilim* 126:7), '*HaPach Nishbar Va'anachnu Nimlatnu*' which means that the trap broke and we escaped. However, we can understand it a different way as well: The *Pach* could mean a flask of oil, which has a *Gematria*, numerical value, of 88, which is *Nishbar*, broken in half, and half of 88 is 44. And then, *Va'anachnu Nimlatnu*—we are saved!"

Rav Menachem Zeigelbaum shared a story (*Sippur Shel Chag*). As the Siberian winter went on, Chanukah came, and a group of young Jewish men, all prisoners of the Gulag, convened for a short meeting. The topic was how to obtain and light a secret *Menorah*. One promised to supply margarine that could be used as fuel. Some frayed threads from their prisoner clothing would be the wicks. Even small cups to hold the margarine were able to be procured from somewhere. Of course, all of this was against camp regulations, and they all understood the implication of their actions if they would be caught. Reb Mordechai Chanzin, the oldest in their group of eighteen men, was honored with lighting the first candle of Chanukah. In the dead of night, in a small garden shed, they crowded around their makeshift *Menorah* and listened to Reb Mordechai's emotional voice as he recited the first *Brachos*, with tears trickling down his cheeks. Reb Mordechai and his friends gazed silently at the small yellow light, each one remembering Chanukah in his parents' home. Suddenly, the loud crash of the door behind them shattered the silence. Camp guards rushed through the doorway and marched the group into a small holding cell. The first one to be brought to trial was the ringleader, Reb Mordechai. He understood that he stood no chance at making a defense, and he waited for his verdict. The prosecutor yelled, "This is an act of treason! By lighting the candles, you intended to signal to enemy forces. The penalty for this is death!" The judge regarded the young man standing in front of him. "Do you have anything to say for yourself?" Reb Mordechai, his heart pounding in his chest, approached the judge and said, "Is it just me, or is it the rest of the group too?" The judge said, "It is all of you." Whatever strength Rav Mordechai had until then, now vanished, when he realized that his brothers would be led to their deaths. He blamed himself, bursting into bitter tears, and sobbed uncontrollably. "Come close," said the judge. Reb Mordechai stepped forward to the judge's bench. Softly, the judge asked about his relatives, their means of livelihood and other personal details. Reb Mordechai answered the judge's questions. The judge pressed on, "What do you have to say for yourself?" Gathering an inner resolve that he did not feel, Reb Mordechai addressed the judge, "We are Jews, and we lit the candles to observe the holiday of Chanukah." The judge said, "You lit Chanukah candles?" The judge then ordered the guards present in the courtroom to stand outside. When the door clicked closed, the judge turned his attention to Reb Mordechai. "If you lit Chanukah candles, let me demonstrate the right way to light them." Reb Mordechai watched the judge light a small lamp. He then picked up the documents that described the charges against the boys, and with trembling hands, the judge held the first page to the fire. The paper caught fire and disappeared quickly in an orange blaze and a few wisps of smoke. The judge worked quickly through the pile, and said, "You see? This is how you light Chanukah candles." Soon there was nothing remaining of the pile. Once he finished, the judge scooped up the ashes, walked over to the window, and tossed them into the wind. Sitting down, the judge reached for the buzzer on his table and summoned the guards. He then barked, "Take this group of men and separate them, making sure that it would be impossible for them to see one another. There is no point in killing them. They are not worth even one bullet!" The guards marched the boys out, but the judge asked for one more minute to talk with Reb Mordechai. When they were alone, the judge, in a trembling voice, said, "I am also a Jew, and I beg you to make sure that the future generations of our people will know to light the Chanukah candles!"

Sponsored by: The Diamond Family

לע"נ: שינדל בת צבי הירשל ע"ה

These *Divre Torah* are available weekly by email and sponsorship opportunities are available. For information, please send an email to: [RabbiYehudaWinzelberg@gmail.com](mailto:RabbiYehudaWinzelberg@gmail.com)

