



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

בס"ד

ג' אייר
3 Iyar

Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

איש אמו ואביו תיראו (יט:ג)

Every man, his mother and his father he shall revere (19:3)

The *Pasuk* begins in the singular tense (איש) and ends in the plural (תיראו). The *Ohr HaChaim Ha'kadosh* explains that when a man reveres and honors his father, he causes his son to also honor him. Whether because of the positive influence of the father, or because of the inadvertent training. That is, if the son would see his father denigrate his father (the grandfather), then any semblance of reverence or honor that he had for his father would dissipate. The opposite is also true, that if a son sees how dear and honored his father treats the grandfather then the son will learn from this and he will honor his own father. This then causes increased honor from the son to the father, and this is why the *Pasuk* begins in the singular and ends in the plural.

Parshah Thoughts – Ideas and Reflections – Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

We are taught the prohibition of putting a stumbling block in front of a blind person (19:14). *Rashi* explains this to mean that one should not give wrong or bad advice to one who is blind, to the concept in which he is asking help with. The *Brisker Rav* expounds on *Rashi's* words. *Rashi* is teaching us that the obligation is to give this person the best advice. That is, to give advice that best benefits him. Even if another response may be true and correct, if it isn't the best for the questioner, it is a stumbling block.

B'Kitzur–

The Halachos of one who is Sick, the Doctor, and the Remedies

Rav Yitzchok the son of Rav Yehudah said (*Shabbos* 32a), “One should always *Daven* for mercy that he should not get sick, because if one gets sick, he is told, ‘Show your *Zechus*, your merit, and you will get relief from this illness.’” Mar Ukva says this is based on a *Pasuk* (*Devarim* 22:8), and one who has become ill must produce evidence based on his actions as a *Zechus* for himself to recover.

(Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 192:1)

Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

Rav Yisroel Hersch Steif would recall how Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, *zt"l*, the Manchester *Rosh Yeshivah*, had no conflict between his learning and the urgent phone calls he would receive. For Rav Yehuda Zev, there was no such thing as an interruption. Rav Yisroel Hersch said, “He would give advice or help for half an hour, then, with the phone still in his hand, he would continue learning with the exact word he had left off with. And this happened all the time!”

פרשת קדושים תשפ"ד

Parashas Kedoshim 5784 Pirkei Avos 2

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg
Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 6:33

Candle Lighting: 7:44

Sh'kiah: 8:02 Tzeis: 8:49

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 8:42 Gra: 9:18

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:29

Chatzos: 12:53 Sh'kiah: 8:03

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 8:50

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 9:16

(some say 9:41)

Next Week: Emor

Candle Lighting: 7:51

The Siddur Speaks

R' Yoni Schwartz related a story. Some time ago in Eretz Yisroel, Rav Elya Lopian, *zt"l*, was traveling with his *Talmidim* on a train. Due to security threats, police were stationed in every booth of train. In the middle of the ride, Rav Elya excused himself from his *Talmidim* and went to use the restroom. The Rav loved to bless *Hashem*, so when he came back, he told the police man next to him in the booth, with great excitement, that he was about to say the *Brachah* of *Asher Yatzar*. He explained that this *Brachah* praises *Hashem* for the health He gives us, and for all of His wondrous deeds. He also asked the guard to respond with “*Amein*” after he said the *Brachah*. The secular guard liked this idea, and he called all the other guards over to answer “*Amein*” together with him. Rav Elya began to say the *Brachah* with the greatest *Kavanah* and enthusiasm, and when he finished, all the guards screamed “*Amein*” in unison so loudly, that it could be heard on the other side of the train. This loud sound startled the conductor so much, that when he heard it, it caused him to pull the breaks on the train. The train stopped on its tracks, and the conductor came out asking if everything was okay. He was told that everybody was fine, and they were just saying “*Amein*” to the Rabbi's *Brachah*. When the conductor got back in front to start driving the train again, he looked at the tracks just in front of him, and his face turned white. Right in front of where the train had stopped, a bomb was placed on the tracks, and it was big enough to blow up the entire train. If it were not for the *Brachah* of Rav Elya and the *Amein* of the guards, many people would have been harmed. Indeed, as the *Brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* concludes, *Hashem* is “*Ma'fli La'asos*,” the One who acts wondrously!

Rav Yaakov Bender relates a great story: "I was once delivering a *Shmuess* to junior high school boys, and I noticed some activity in the back of the room. It was unusual, and even though I waited for silence, the slight commotion persisted throughout the *Shmuess*. I tried to ignore it and focus on the message, but it was surprising. As soon as the *Shmuess* was over, the two *Bachurim* who had been busy with each other during the *Shmuess* came up to me. Shmuli Seltzer was a sweet boy and a hard worker. He was also hearing impaired, and the only way he followed the weekly *Shmuess* was by sitting in the front and reading my lips. But this week he had come late, and he could not get to the front. He had been alone in the back, resigned to the fact that he would not be able to follow the *Shmuess*, when his friend, Moshe Blinder, came over. Moshe, in an act of perfect friendship, had taught himself sign language in order to communicate with Shmuli, and as I spoke, Moshe 'repeated' each sentence to Shmuli using sign language. That had been the movement I noticed in the back of the room! I was deeply moved by the story, and I was inspired by the purity and goodness of the *Talmidim*. It was a reminder that welcoming handicapped *Bachurim* or boys with other struggles to our *Yeshivah* only enhances the *Middos* of those around them and brings out the best in everyone. I was determined to pay these boys back, and at Moshe's *Bar Mitzvah* I had my chance. I rose to speak, but instead of delivering a *Drashah*, I shared the story with the audience, and told them of Moshe's selflessness and sense of *Achrayus*, responsibility. Then I called up a special guest to say *Mazel Tov*. Shmuli Seltzer came up, his face beaming with pride and pleasure, and communicated, via sign language, his wishes to his good friend, Moshe Blinder. That was the speech. It was a short, powerful *Drashah* about true hearing, even from one who cannot hear. If there is a real true desire to grow, then the doors of inspiration never close!"



All from Hashem

One aspect of remaining silent in the face of challenge or difficulty is the knowledge that *Hashem* is controlling all the events, and He is working things from behind the scenes. The *Chovos HaLevavos* explains in *Sha'ar HaBitachon* that when one realizes that there is no one who can possibly help him or hurt him without *Hashem* allowing it, he will turn his heart away from others and trust only in *Hashem*. Additionally, one who places his trust in *Hashem* does not fear any person, as Dovid *Ha'melech* teaches in *Tehilim* (56:5).

There is a story of Dovid *Ha'melech* and Shimi Ben Geira (*Shmuel II* 16:5-13). Dovid was fleeing from his son Avshalom's rebellion, who had tried to seize the throne from Dovid. During this period, Dovid had an encounter with Shimi ben Geira, a relative of Shaul *Ha'melech*, who approached Dovid. In public, Shimi terribly mistreated Dovid, and hurled a torrent of curses and disrespect at him. Dovid *Ha'melech's* entourage was outraged at Shimi's actions and one of the officers, Avishai, said, "Why should this dead dog be allowed to curse you? I will confront him and remove his head!" But Dovid did not allow his officers to harm Shimi. He said, "It has been decreed from *Hashem* that I should be cursed. Let Shimi live. He is merely carrying out the will of *Hashem*!" Dovid refused to punish Shimi at this time, saying that *Hashem* had sent him, and he was simply fulfilling the will of *Hashem*. Dovid recognized that everything that happens is sent as a message from *Hashem*, and therefore, there is no benefit in getting angry with anyone, because they are merely the messenger from *Hashem*.

The *Rambam* in *Moreh Nevuchim* (3:52) similarly explains based on *Koheles* (5:1-6) that people in general should limit their words because *Hashem* is above and sees the entire picture of the events He is controlling, while we are limited on this earth to see reality clearly. Because of this, we must understand that our perception is limited, and we should think carefully before we speak or act. When we recognize that *Hashem* sees and knows much more than us, it will inspire us to speak cautiously and humbly.

At the end of *Shemoneh Esrei*, when we are speaking directly with *Hashem*, in the *Tefilah* of *Elokai Nitzor*, we say, "*V'Limkalelei Nafshi Sidom*", "And to those who curse me, let me remain silent." We ask *Hashem* to help us remain silent to those who insult or verbally attack us, and this is because we realize that *Hashem* is in charge, and everyone we encounter is a messenger from *Hashem*.

There is story that took place a long time ago in the city of Vilna. There was a poor shoemaker named Zelig. He was a simple person who was always happy with the little he had, even though at times it was very difficult for him. He never complained. One day, Zelig inherited a small fortune from a distant uncle, and overnight, he was able to start living more comfortably. Zelig became a tremendous *Baal Tzedakah*, and shared his new wealth with those who were less fortunate than he was. Within a short time, he became a leader in the community. Zelig's son was an excellent young *Talmid Chacham*, and now, due to his family's wealth, he had many new opportunities in the area of *Shidduchim*, and the *Rav* of the town was honored to take Zelig's son as a husband for his daughter. To be chosen by the *Rav* of the community to be his son-in-law was a great honor, both for Zelig's son and for Zelig. Both families greatly anticipated the big day of the *Chasunah*, and when the day arrived, and the entire community showed up for the event. It was a beautiful and impressive *Simchah*. It was a very emotional moment when, following the *Chupah*, the guests lined up to wish a *Mazel Tov* to the parents of the *Chosson* and *Kallah*. There was one person who had terrible *Middos*, and he could not find it in him to be happy for Zelig and his new wealth. He remembered not so long ago when he would bring his torn shoes to Zelig to have them repaired. This unpleasant, sad person walked up to Zelig, and in front of everyone, held up a torn shoe. He asked, "Tell me, Zelig, is it worth fixing this shoe? And how much will the repair cost me?" Everyone stood there in shock. No one said a word. Suddenly, Zelig turned white, and he passed out. Doctors were called and emergency resuscitation was started, but it was too late. Zelig had passed away. The beautiful *Simchah* was turned into tremendous grief and mourning. When Rav Yisroel Salanter, *zt"l*, heard about this terrible story, he was very disturbed. He did not calm down until he established a *Bais HaMussar*, a *Bais Medrash* specifically for the study of *Middos*, where one can work on and refine his character traits. Rav Yisroel said that unless one studies and focuses on perfecting his *Middos*, he could fall so low that he could commit murder, *R"l*, as they saw by what had happened in Vilna. The *Sefer Chaim She'yeish Bahem* quotes Rav Nota Tzeinivrt, *zt"l*, who wondered what actually caused the creation of the *Bais HaMussar*. It certainly couldn't be because of the wicked individual who had insulted a fellow Jew, and hurt him so dreadfully that he died as a result of the embarrassment. This is a rare level of evil that was found in this person, and without a doubt, the vast majority of people would not behave in this manner. It can't be that Rav Yisroel opened the *Bais HaMussar* for this type of uniquely cruel individual. There must have been another reason. Rav Nota therefore suggests that the *Bais HaMussar* was not because of the attacker, but rather, it was because of Zelig, the man who died as a result of the insult. It bothered Rav Yisroel Salanter so much that a person can die from being humiliated. Why was Zelig so disturbed by the embarrassment that he suffered? He was a wealthy and successful leader of the community. His son had just married the daughter of the *Rav*. His life was beautiful! Why did he care so much about what people might think, or because of the outrageous way someone acted towards him? Why faint because an evil person acted outrageously? Why was he so bothered and fragile about being embarrassed to the point of death? Many people endure difficulties in their lives. Yet, they live full and happy lives, choosing to experience their suffering quietly, without seeking attention. If a person can become so affected by an insult that he is unable to see past it and look at all the positive things that are currently going on in his life, then there is a crucial need for a *Bais HaMussar*, where people can learn that events occur and things happen because *Hashem* runs the world. Overreacting to occurrences in life is a sign of a lack of *Emanah*!

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