



Rabbi Micha Berger
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Rabbi Berger is the author of *Widen Your Tent*, a book that describes a philosophy of life that is based on the thought of Rav Shimon Shkop. He established the AishDas Society, an organization that for over twenty years has been helping synagogues and communities institute programming that promotes thoughtful and passionate relationship with their Creator, other people, and their souls.

Rabbi Micha Berger has spoken to audiences that varied in their backgrounds from non-Orthodox to Orthodox yeshiva graduates on subjects of Jewish Thought, *Mussar*, and the meaning of our *tefillos*. His work has been described in HaModia and Yated Neeman, as well as having earned mention in the Orthodox Union's Jewish Action and The Jerusalem Report.

Sample Topics:

- ❖ **The Role of Humanity:** Why would an Infinite Creator make people? What do various Orthodox movements conclude from this about the goals we should set ourselves for in life? And how do these answers impact our choices in life?
- ❖ **Giving and Receiving:** A perspective on the meaning and centrality of *chesed*, its role in defining sanctity, and why G-d created self-interest.
- ❖ **Torah and Ethics:** The relationship between Torah and our natural moral instincts.
- ❖ **Anatomy of a Soul:** An exploration of one rabbinic model for understanding the human condition and how this model sheds light on understanding various *mitzvos*.
- ❖ **The Four Sons Confront Tragedy:** What kind of reaction are we supposed to have to the experience of tragedy? A study structured around the four sons of the Passover *Seder*.
- ❖ **Creation and Science:** A survey of various opinions about the conflict between contemporary cosmogony and evolution and the Torah's description in *Bereishis*.
- ❖ **Jewish Time:** Time during the Six Days of Creation and today. Cyclic vs. linear time. Telephones, beepers and cell phones and their effect on how we relate to time.
- ❖ **Living a Life of Mussar:** What is Mussar, and how does it differ from "self-help" programs? A brief overview of the basic tools of Mussar and a practical guide to adopting and adapting them to our lives.
- ❖ **Paths in Mussar:** A comparison of the different schools of Mussar and their place in the spectrum of Jewish thought. Criteria for deciding how to take elements of each to utilize for our own growth as Jews.
- ❖ **Emunah and Philosophy:** The difference between knowing G-d and knowing about G-d, and the essential role of each.
- ❖ **Three models of Love:** The differences in how each of the forefathers expressed love – both in their family lives, and in their love of G-d – and how to emulate each.
- ❖ **Davening with Hispa'alus: Birchas Avos:** An analysis of the structure of the first *berachah* of the Amidah, and understanding the meaning and nuances of the words of the *berachah* from their places within that structure.

Publications:

- ❖ **Widen Your Tent: Thoughts on Life, Integrity & Joy:** Mosaica Press, 2019
- ❖ **Every Day Holy Day:** researched and assisted in the writing of a yearlong program of Mussar practice by Dr. Alan Morinis, Trumpeter Press, 2010
- ❖ **"Watering our Weeds"**, an essay in *Daas Torah: Child and Domestic Abuse vol. 1*, by Rabbi Dr. Daniel Eidensohn and Dr. Baruch Shulem, Daas Torah Publications, 2010

Bio:

Rabbi Micha Berger is a husband, father, grandfather, and son and sees in those roles much of the expression of his Judaism - and his *avodas Hashem* (divine service).

He was a student of Rav Dovid Lifshitz, the Suvalker Rav, at Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan (a Yeshiva University affiliate). From this contact, R.abbi Berger took away a dream to infuse his Jewish practice with the blend of love, *Mussar* and grounding in Jewish thought that marked Rav Dovid's Torah and life.

His latest work, *Widen Your Tent*, builds on this worldview by going back to the source, Rav Dovid's rebbe, Rav Shimon haKohein Shkop. Taking a close study of Rav Shimon's words in his introduction to *Shaarei Yosher*, Rabbi Berger develops a framework for a life of *avodas Hashem* (divine service), *kedushah* (holiness), joy, and growth, all founded on our ability to imitate Hashem's givingness through connecting to others.

To that end, Rabbi Micha Berger also established The AishDas Society. As he is a computer programmer by profession, AishDas can provide both in-person contact with people seeking similar goals, as well as electronic communication for people may otherwise feel alone in this dream. AishDas is a community of Orthodox Jews looking to create a synthesis of the "*aisht*", the fire of inspiration and faith, with the "*das*" of full halachic observance, to create a Judaism that both fully is and yet is greater than either of the parts.

Acclaim for Widen Your Tent:

Rabbi Micha Berger has prodded our consciences for decades, demanding that we examine our *avodah*, our service of G-d, more critically and intelligently. When Rav Yisrael Salanter did the same in launching the Mussar Movement that changed the course of Jewish history, he insisted on proving that his positions flowed from a close reading of the most important texts of Torah Judaism. Rabbi Berger follows that lead, showing us how to extract exquisite meaning from the brief words of a modern Torah giant – Rav Shimon Shkop. His core message – that the development of the Torah personality demands widening circles of embrace of more and more people – is exciting and liberating.

– Rabbi Yitzchak Adlerstein, noted author, editorialist, and speaker

Harav Micha Berger, an extremely erudite *talmid chacham*, has written an extraordinary work, called "Widen Your Tent". It is an elucidation of an almost unnoticed introduction, to ... *Shaarei Yoshor*, by Hagaon Harav Shimon Shkop zt"l.... [W]hich is a deep and inspiring work of mussar. Rabbi Berger takes each sentence, explains it, showing the depth and practical application of each point. Rabbi Berger also gives us great insight into the various approaches to the integration of the technicalities of the law with the soul of the Torah. This is a highly unusual and remarkable work. The reader will gain much insight and inspiration from this work. It will also open our eyes to the care and attention with which one ought to give to the words of great men!

– Rav Aharon Lopiansky, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva of Greater Washington

Rabbi Berger has translated, explained and expounded on the הקדמה and created an insightful and thought-provoking ספר מוסר. I found this ספר מוסר remarkable, and am sure it will prove illuminating and inspiring to those who study it.

– Rav Kalman Epstein, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Sha'ar HaTorah – Grodno, Queens, New York, and grandson of Rav Shimon Shkop