



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

בס"ד

י"ג אלול
13 Elul

❧ Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה ולא ילבש גבר שמלת אשה

כי תועבת ה' אלקיך כל עשה אלה (כב:ה)

A man's item should not be on a woman, nor shall a man wear a woman's garment, for anyone who does so is an abomination of Hashem, your G-d. (22:5)

What is the *Torah* teaching and what is the prohibition in this *Pasuk*? If it is to teach a man should not wear a woman's garment and a woman should not wear a man's garment, it already tells us at the end of the *Pasuk*, 'for anyone who does so is an abomination of Hashem'. Rather, a man should not wear a woman's garment and sit among the women, and a woman should not wear a man's garment and sit among the men. (see *Rashi* who quotes *Sifri*)

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

Our *Parshah* closes with the issue of dealing with Amaleik when they attack the *Bnei Yisroel* (25:17). This is preceded with the *Mitzvah* of being honest in business through keeping accurate scales, weights, and measures (25:13). *Rabbeinu Bachya* notes that the juxtaposition of these two concepts is that one directly causes the other. If the *Bnei Yisroel* do not deal with their businesses properly, then we will be under attack from their enemies. By acting ethically in business, we can limit the attacks and persecutions that we are subjected to.

❧ Working on our Middos

Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, *zt"l*, would share this story: The *Yismach Moshe* had a son that was very sick, *R"l*, and he sent a *Shliach* to the *Kever* of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, *zt"l*, to *Daven* for his son. The *Yismach Moshe* told the *Shliach*, "When you get there, I'm not sure that at that specific time Rav Elimelech will be at the *Kever*, so I want you to do the following when you get there. Take out a *Prutah*, a penny, from your pocket, and say, 'I am giving this *Prutah L'Iluy Nishmas*, for the sake of the *Neshamah* that will be the first one to rush to Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, wherever he is, and tell him that there is a *Shliach* from the *Yismach Moshe* at his *Kever*.'" The *Yismach Moshe* said that when you will do that, thousands, and tens of thousands of *Neshamos* that passed away hundreds and hundreds of years ago will start racing to see who will be the first one to find and tell Rav Elimelech that the *Yismach Moshe's Shliach* is there, because they are desperate for another *Mitzvah*, they are desperate for another *Zechus*, and that will bring Rav Elimelech to the *Kever*. Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman said, "We don't value what it means to give a penny to *Tzedakah*, or what so-called simple *Mitzvos* really mean. But those *Neshamos* that are in the *Olam HaEmes* appreciate what giving one penny to *Tzedakah* really means. They'll do anything to get the *Zechus* of one more *Mitzvah*." Rav Aharon Leib used this story to inspire people to do *Mitzvos*, because if doing an easy *Mitzvah* like giving a penny to *Tzedakah*, which thousands of *Neshamos* are desperate for, how much more so is it true when it comes to a *Mitzvah* that is challenging to do, and how much more it is worth. It says in *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson* (3:6) that it is so much greater to do a *Mitzvah* with *Tza'ar* and difficulty, than doing a *Mitzvah* a hundred times without difficulty. The same is true about doing something as a *Zechus* for someone who passed away. Even the smallest *Mitzvah* is a tremendous *Zechus*, and we can only imagine how great the *Zechus* is when the *Mitzvah* we do comes with a great challenge!

פרשת כי תצא תשפ"ה

Parshas Ki Seitzei 5785 Pirkei Avos 1-2

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg
Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 6:02

Candle Lighting: 7:03

Sh'kiah: 7:24 Tzeis: 8:04

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 9:05 Gra: 9:41

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:45

Chatzos: 12:54 Sh'kiah: 7:20

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 8:02

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 8:33

(some say 8:44)

Next Week: Ki Savo

Candle Lighting: 6:52

❧ The Siddur Speaks

Rav A. L. Scheinbaum wrote a story. Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, *zt"l*, was a revered *Mashgiach* of Yeshivas Ponovezh. Rav Yechezkel served Hashem with great awe throughout his life. In fact, his *Yiras Shamayim* was so great that he was rarely seen smiling. One day, a *Talmid* noticed that Rav Yechezkel was in a cheerful mood. Surprised, he asked his *Rebbi* why he was in such good spirits. Rav Yechezkel explained, "Before the Second World War, I served as *Mashgiach* in the Mirrer Yeshivah. I received a very small salary that was nowhere near enough to feed my family. Every day, I pleaded with Hashem to spare my family from hunger. *Baruch Hashem*, my prayers were always answered. I felt like the *Yidden* in the *Midbar* who had no choice but to place their faith completely in Hashem to send them *Mann* from *Shamayim* every day. When the war broke out, I escaped to Shanghai along with the entire *Yeshivah*. Money was tight there as well, but I managed the same way I had in Lithuania. I trusted in Hashem and He supported me. After the war, I began serving as the *Mashgiach* of the Ponovezher Yeshivah. For the first time in my life, I was paid a comfortable salary. Without realizing it, my feeling of dependence on Hashem diminished. Suddenly, I had money in my pocket. I no longer felt quite so keenly that I could not possibly survive a single day without Hashem's *Chesed* in seeing to my needs and those of my family. Now the *Yeshivah* is experiencing financial difficulties," Rav Yechezkel concluded. "I haven't been paid in months. I suddenly find myself pleading with Hashem to sustain my family with the same fervor I used to *Daven* with every day. The realization that I had regained a precious treasure fills me with joy!"

✪ Sterling Character

Chazal have taught us (*Avos* 4:28) that jealousy, lustful desires, and seeking honor, will remove one from the world, and one must distance himself from these bad traits. (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 29:6)

Removed From the World

Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi writes that these three directives of jealousy, lust, and honor will remove one from the world, can be taken at face value. Jealousy causes one to die, as we see from the *Pasuk* in *Mishlei* (14:30), that jealousy is rot to the bones. Lust refers to desiring to have a lot of money, as the *Pasuk* in *Kohes* (5:9) says, one who loves money will never be satiated with money, meaning that he will never have enough, and because of this lack, he will die. This can also be explained as one who lusts after certain *Aveiros*, and this causes death to those who are drawn after them. And one who chases after honor, see *Yoma* (86b), where *Rashi* explains that authority buries the one who owns it. We see from here that these three *Aveiros* will literally cause one to leave this world.

Additionally, Rav Mutzafi quotes *Medrash Shmuel*, who says that if one pursues these three *Aveiros*, he will never be satisfied from them until the day he dies. If one is jealous, he can have jealousy until his day of death. If one is a *Baal Taavah*, and has a lot of desires, he will eventually pass away and not even have half of what he desired in his hands. And with one who chases after honor, his life is not a life, because he will constantly think that others aren't honoring him enough. Furthermore, he will be unable to verbalize his claim for more honor, because there is nothing more disgraceful than this. Therefore, all his thoughts will cause him distress and pain all his days. As Rav Mutzafi writes, "What fool would want a life like this?"

There is a device of reason used in many instances by *Chazal*, which states that from the negative, we can learn the positive, meaning that when we learn what not to do, we can also know that we are supposed to do the opposite. We can apply this principle here as well. When we are instructed to not lust after the *Aveiros* of jealousy, desire, and honor, because this will remove one from the world, perhaps we can say that if one pursues the opposite of these, it will cause one to have more life and keep one longer in this world. Instead of being jealous of others, we could focus on being happy for them. Instead of giving in to our desires, we could work on controlling our *Taavos*. And instead of looking for honor, we could look for ways to avoid the spotlight. Doing this will enhance the quality of one's life, and actually increase one's time here!

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Rav Meilich Biderman shared a story that Rebbe Meir of Premishlan, *zt"l*, would say over. Reb Shimshon Wertheimer, *zt"l*, was a great scholar, very wealthy, and a close confidant to the emperor of Austria. Once, the emperor asked him why the *Yidden* are persecuted more than all other nations of the world. Reb Shimshon replied, "They are being punished because of their hatred toward their fellow man and jealousy of one another." The emperor refused to accept that explanation. He told Reb Shimshon, "I'll give you three days to think this over. If you don't give me a satisfying answer, I will banish every Jew from Vienna." That night, Reb Shimshon made a *Shaylas Chalom*, a special procedure where he asked *Shamayim* to send him an answer to a question in a dream, and in his dream, he was told, "Don't retract your words because you answered correctly. *Yidden* suffer in *Galus* because of hatred and jealousy. Soon, the emperor will recognize that you spoke the truth." It was the beginning of winter, and it was a good time for hunting. The emperor went with a group of officials to the forest to hunt. After a few hours, some officers went home, and the emperor and the rest of the crew remained in the forest. Some more time passed, and it was almost dark when the officials decided it was time to return home. They called for the emperor, and when there was no response, they figured that the emperor must have left earlier with the first group of officials, so they also left the forest. However, the emperor still remained in the forest. He was so deeply involved in his hunting that he didn't hear them call him. When it began turning dark, the emperor called for his officials. When no one replied, he understood what had happened, that he was left alone in the forest. He couldn't find his way around in the darkness, so he wandered around the woods until he came to a river. He saw some lights on the other side of the river, and the emperor realized that there was a village over there. Having no choice, the emperor removed his royal clothing, left his horse behind, and swam across the river. The emperor arrived in the village dripping wet, and there was nothing about him that indicated that he was the king. He knocked on doors asking for some help, but no one took him in. Some residents just shouted at him and locked their doors. Cold and exhausted, the emperor decided to look for a house with a *Mezuzah* on it. He reasoned that the Jews are a compassionate nation and surely they will open their doors for him. He knocked at the first door where there was a *Mezuzah* attached to it, and he was immediately invited in. The Jewish couple gave him a warm meal and a coat to wear so that he could warm up. He didn't tell them that he was the king of Austria because he knew they wouldn't believe him. The wife suspected that their guest was a thief, and she told her husband, "Send this man out of the house before he steals everything we own, including the fur coat you lent him." The husband replied that he didn't suspect his guest, but just in case, he would remain awake all night and make sure the guest didn't steal anything. In the morning, the emperor asked his host, "How far is Vienna from here, and how much does it cost to get there?" The host replied, "I can take you there for a small fee, if you like," and the emperor agreed. He also requested to wear the fur coat during the trip, and the host allowed him to do that. However, his wife wasn't happy with these arrangements at all. She whispered to her husband, "I'm certain that he won't pay you. He will kill you somewhere in the middle of the journey and steal your coat! Why do you trust him?" But this *Yid* wasn't at all concerned, and he set off to take the emperor to Vienna. He asked the emperor, "Where would you like me to take you?" The emperor said he wanted to be let off at the royal palace. The *Yid* replied, "We may not go there without permission from the emperor. We can get arrested." The passenger replied, "Don't worry. I'm allowed to go there." The *Yid* stopped his wagon in front of the palace, and the emperor quickly jumped out of the wagon and slipped inside the palace. The *Yid* was shocked. "My wife was right! He didn't pay me for the trip, and he ran off with my fur coat!" Disappointed, he turned the wagon around and started to leave. It was dangerous to be on these grounds without permission. But just then, an armed soldier blocked the way. He said, "The emperor has summoned you." The *Yid* feared the worst as the officer led him into the palace and brought him to the emperor's chamber. The emperor said to him, "Do you recognize me?" The king, dressed in his royal clothing, looked very different. "No. I never had the privilege to meet the emperor before," he stammered. The emperor said, "But I know who you are. I even know what your home looks like." And the emperor described the *Yid*'s house to him. The *Yid* was shocked. He said, "Who can compare to the emperor's wisdom!" The emperor replied, "It isn't wisdom. I'm the person you saved last night. I didn't tell you that I am the king of Austria because I knew you wouldn't believe me, but that is the truth. I want to reward you because you invited me into your home when no one else wanted to, and you served me a warm meal and lent me a coat to wear. Ask for whatever you want, and I will give it to you." The *Yid* stood before the emperor in silence. The emperor figured the *Yid* didn't understand the offer, so he said, "If you ask for a forest, I will give it to you. If you ask for an entire city, I will give it to you. Just ask what you desire, and it will be yours." The *Yid* was quiet. The emperor said, "If you don't tell me what you want, I will just pay you the small amount we agreed on for the ride in your wagon, and that will be all. Is there nothing in the world that you desire?" The *Yid* replied, "Actually, there is something that I want. I'm a traveling merchant. I go from town to town selling my wares. Recently, someone began coming to the towns that I go to, and he sells the same items that I sell. He is taking away my *Parnasah*. I request that the king issue an executive order forbidding this man to sell his wares in the towns that I go to." The king said, "Your request is granted, but you must know that your request is foolish. You lost a golden opportunity. You could have asked for so much more, but because of jealousy, all you care about is that your competition shouldn't make money." The emperor summoned Reb Shimshon Wertheimer and said, "Now I know that you are correct. The Jewish people are punished because of their jealousy and hatred." Rebbe Meir of Premishlan would tell this story every year before *Krias HaTorah* on Shavuot morning. This is because in order to receive the *Torah*, we need to have love and unity. Jealousy and hatred are contrary to the basic tenets of the *Torah* and it will drive us from the world!

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