



# Torah U'Tefilah

*A Collection of Inspiring Insights*

בס"ד

כ"ה סיוון  
25 Sivan

פרשת שלח תשפ"ה

Parshas Sh'lach 5785 Pirkei Avos 3

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

Rosh Chodesh Tamuz is on Thursday &amp; Friday • שבת מברכים

## Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 6:57

Candle Lighting: 8:12

Sh'kiah: 8:30 Tzeis: 9:22

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 8:36 Gra: 9:12

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:27

Chatzos: 12:58 Sh'kiah: 8:30

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 9:22

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 9:43  
(some say 10:20)

Next Week: Korach

Candle Lighting: 8:13

## Working on our Middos

Rav Naftali Amsterdam was a Talmid of Rav Yisroel Salanter. He once came to his teacher and said, "Rebbi, if I had the head of the Shaagas Aryeh, and if I had the Neshamah of the author of the Yesod V'Shores HaAvodah and if I had your good Middos, then I could truly be a Servant of Hashem." Rav Yisroel Salanter responded to him, "Naftali, with your head, and with your heart, and with your good Middos, you can be Naftali Amsterdam! That is all you have to be. You do not need to be the Shaagas Aryeh or Rav Yisroel Salanter or anybody else. Just be YOU, and that is how you will serve Hashem!"

## B'Kitzur-

### The Halachos of Kiddush Levanah

Kiddush Levanah is not said after a fast day, until some food has been eaten. However, after Yom Kippur, since we leave Shul in a state of Simchah because our Aveiros have been forgiven, we may say Kiddush Levanah immediately, even before eating anything.

(Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 97:11)

## Besamei HaTorah...Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ומה הארץ אשר הוא יושב בה הטובה הוא אם רעה... השמנה הוא אם רזה (יג'יט-כ)  
And how is the land in which it dwells, is it good or is it bad...  
is it fertile or is it lean? (13:19-20)

Why did Moshe point out 'is it good or is it bad', and 'is it fertile or is it lean', and he did not just use the positive, 'is it good, is it fertile'? The Kotzker Rebbe answers that Moshe Rabeinu was making a point to the spies: "You should know that the land is good. And even if in your eyes it seems bad, only speak good about it. You should always say 'it is good', even if in your eyes it is 'bad', always say 'it is fertile', even if it seems 'lean'." (Umatok HaOhr)

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

In this week's Parshah, we learn that the Meraglim, the spies, seemingly did do their job of inspecting the land and gave an accurate report. If so, then what was their sin? Before one goes into any situation, he instinctively has an automatic outlook. This is human nature. It defines one's feelings regarding the situation. The Meraglim went into this mission with a negative outlook from the start, and for that they were punished.

## The Siddur Speaks

Rav Zechariah Wallerstein, zt"l, related an episode that occurred with him: I was in Shul one morning, and there he stood. A man, talking away on his phone. Standing nearby was an elderly man, a Holocaust survivor, who turned to him and urged him to quiet down. But nothing came of it. No response. It was now between Baruch She'amar and Yishtabach, a point in Davening where talking is strictly prohibited, but the man just kept on going. Now, looking at what was going on, I was getting a bit heated myself. "Nu! Nu!" stammered the old man. Nothing. The man on the phone didn't even look at him. At this point, all that went through my mind was, "Okay, it's hockey time..." I turned around and said, "Excuse me, you're aggravating this man and you're not allowed to talk in Shul. Please, just go outside, finish your call, and then come back." That's all I said. This man, in front of the packed Shul, walked up to the Bimah and gave it a loud, reverberating bang. Everybody froze and looked up. He yelled, "Everybody, stop Davening!" All eyes remained unblinking, shocked at this scene in the middle of Davening. "The great Rabbi Wallerstein has spoken!" Hearing this, I was mortified, I was being publicly humiliated. While instinctively, giving it to this fellow would have felt great, I caught myself and paused. I told myself, "Just relax. Don't do anything rash. Think for a second. He just embarrassed you in front of everyone, something for which he now won't be able to go to Olam Haba. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 107a) says that anyone who publicly embarrasses someone doesn't have a share in the World to Come. He's done. Secondly, if this is how he acted, he has no feelings for Hashem, no feelings for a Shul, and no feelings for Tefilah. It's a pity, and I feel bad for him. He doesn't have any connection to Hashem. And I should get angry with him? Maybe nobody ever taught him." In thinking through all this, I didn't say one word. Finally, he finished Davening and walked out. But before he did, I glanced at his Tefilin bag and took down his name. The old man sitting next to me was still shaking. He was so aggravated, he couldn't calm down. Walking up to him, I said, "You went through the Holocaust and you have numbers on your arm. You can Daven to Hashem more than I can. Don't be angry at this man. Just Daven for him. Here's his name. I'm going to forgive him, because I want him to have Olam Haba, and you Daven for him too." The old man looked at me, unsure of what to make of my strange request. He said, "You really think it'll help?" I said, "For sure it will help. He doesn't understand anything. If you Daven for him, I'm sure Hashem will help him. He will do Teshuvah, and he will change." The man calmed down, and he was a different person when he left. Rav Wallerstein said, "Instead of being angry at people, even when you're right, take a Siddur or a Sefer Tehilim and Daven for them. Daven that they should not be so nervous or uptight. If people embarrass you, feel for them. They lack empathy if they can humiliate you that way. If you do this, your whole life will change. You'll look at people differently. When you look at someone who doesn't observe Shabbos, who doesn't keep Kosher, who isn't Shomer Negiya, instead of getting angry, you'll say to yourself, 'Oh boy, I've got to Daven for this person. I have compassion for that person, and I want to help. Instead of being angry at the world, I want to change the world!'"

## 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)

**The Dangers of Envy**

Rav Yaakov Feitman writes about the dangers of *Kinah*, envy. The *Ramchal* warns us in *Mesilas Yesharim* (chapter 11) that envy can only cost one a loss, and never a gain, and the *Sfas Emes* (*Noach* 5656) reminds us that the downfall of the first murderer in world history, Kayin, is remembered forever by his jealousy of his brother. The *Sheim MiShmuel* (*Mishpatim* 5677) offers a suggestion to keep one far away from jealousy by asserting, "All of *Klal Yisroel* is actually one giant person, and therefore, one can be no more jealous of a brother than one hand can be jealous of the other." However, although *Chazal* teach us that envy is generally a destructive and evil trait, sometimes it can be useful and positive. For instance, the *Gemara* in *Bava Basra* (21a) states, *Kinas Sofrim Tarbeh Chochmah*, being envious of *Talmidei Chachamim* stimulates more learning. Indeed, even though the *Alter of Kelm* (*Chochmah U'Mussar* 1:130) points to *Rochel Imeinu's* "good *Kinah*" (*Bereishis* 30:1), nevertheless, he notes that in general, envy can only cause profound harm and destruction.

How do we avoid this terrible trait of jealousy, and yet, emulate those who are loftier than us as we try to grow in our *Ruchmuyus*? Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, *zt"l*, (*Michtav M'Eliyahu* 1:135, 4:4) quotes the words of the *Ibn Ezra* on the last of the *Aseres HaDibros* (*Shemos* 20:14). He asks, "How can one control a forbidden emotion such as envy? This is a feeling and a reaction that occurs naturally. The *Ibn Ezra* answers that one must consider himself to be like a peasant, who knows that the king's daughter is looking for a prince to marry. He doesn't even think of himself for a moment as a candidate to marry her, because he lives in a completely different world than the princess does. He knows that it's entirely out of the question for him to even be considered as an option to be the one to marry her. Therefore, he is not jealous. This is how we must think of anything that belongs to someone else. We must work on ourselves to realize that it should not even be considered by us, let alone make us jealous or angry. Rav Dessler adds that just as someone else's glasses have a different prescription than his own, and they are not appropriate for his eyes, so too must anything that belongs to someone else be considered unfit for us as well. If we would limit our comparisons and competition to matters of *Ruchniyus*, and pay no attention to other people's material possessions, we would be much happier, and the world itself would be a much more peaceful place!

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Rav Yaakov Feitman shared an incredible story. Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *zt"l*, came home from *Shul* one *Shabbos* morning, and uncharacteristically, told a tale that had just occurred. The head of the *Chevra Kadishah* related that just before *Shabbos*, he had arranged for the body of a Jewish woman to be exhumed from a Christian cemetery, and reburied in a Jewish grave. She had died five years before, but her body was perfectly preserved, with no signs whatsoever of decay or deterioration. Even her skin appeared as fresh as if she had just expired. What was her extraordinary history? Ninety-five years prior, her family had traveled to the United States from Russia. Her sister passed away in childhood and she herself sustained a horrible blow to the brain, rendering her entirely incapacitated, *R"L*. She remained in a medical facility for seventy-three years, until she died at the age of ninety, five years ago. Rav Chaim explained to the *Chevra Kadishah* head why the woman's bones had not decomposed. "The *Gemara* in *Shabbos* (152b) derives from the *Pasuk* in *Mishlei* (14:30), that 'envy brings rotting of the bones.' The *Gemara* concludes that only those who have the bad *Middah* of envy experience rotting of their bones in death." Rav Chaim went on to analyze the situation. "This woman," he declared, "had no one of whom to be jealous of in the United States ninety years ago. She certainly was not envious of the gentiles, with whom she had little interaction, and Jews were rare in those days. After she received her injury at age seventeen, she clearly had no feelings of jealousy, and so, she passed away never having had a moment of envy in her life. Therefore, her body experienced no decomposition at all. In fact, we can learn from her story that for people who have never had any jealousy at all, even their flesh does not spoil." Rav Chaim added an anecdote he had heard from his grandfather, Rav Aryeh Levin, *zt"l*, the *Tzadik* of Yerushalayim. "In Kovna," Rav Chaim said, "when the entire cemetery had to be exhumed due to an edict from the government, only two graves contained people who were unaffected by time and the elements. One was a great *Tzadik* named Rav Leib Kovner, *zt"l*, and the other was an ordinary soldier. His personal story was extremely uplifting. He had been drafted into the Russian army, where all the soldiers were forced to eat non-kosher food. However, this soldier refused to eat it. The Russians therefore force-fed him the food, and this soldier choked to death," Rav Chaim concluded with tears in his eyes. He said that his father, the *Steipler Gaon*, *zt"l*, had told him that in Morocco, when the graves in the Jewish cemetery were also being transferred to a new location, the bodies of the *Tashbeitz* and the *Rivash* were totally intact. That *Shabbos*, Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, *zt"l*, was the *Sandek* at a *Bris* in Bnei Brak, and this entire story was related to him. He listened intently, but he was bothered by a problem. He inquired, "Why was this lady's body untouched, when we often see that even the bodies of very young children decompose?" Rav Chaim answered that children who are incapable of envy because they are too young, do not have the *Zechus* of avoiding *Kinah*. However, that girl, who was already seventeen before her accident, had such amazing *Middos* that she had never been jealous of anyone, and therefore, she merited that her bones and flesh did not rot!

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