

INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholar's Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.

ולקח מדם הפר ומדם השעיר

“And he shall take the blood of the calf and the blood of the goat...” (16:18)

At a *siyum* marking the completion of the study of *Masechet Yoma*, Rav Meir Shapiro of Lublin made the following observation. The *Talmud* (*Yoma* 57b) rules that the blood of the two animals had to be mixed before being sprinkled on the *kapporet*. The stipulation teaches us a valuable lesson. The great (symbolized by the calf) are required to intermingle with the small (symbolized by the goat). They cannot stand by the side keeping their distance. Israel can only achieve atonement and forgiveness for her sins when all are joined together. (*Torah Anthology*)

את משפטי תעשו ואת חקתי תשמרו ללכת בהם אני ה' אלקיכם

“My ordinances you shall do, and My statutes you shall observe, to walk with them, I am the L-rd, your G-d.” (18:4)

The *Ksav Sofer* commented on the words, “to walk with them”, that a person needs to walk from one level to the next level. That is, a person should constantly strive to grow and elevate himself. It is not enough to remain on the same level that one was on the previous day. Rather, each day should be a climb higher than the day before. When difficult tests come your way, you might not always appreciate them. But the only way to ensure growth is to continually pass more and more of life’s difficult tests. View every difficulty as a means of elevating oneself by applying the appropriate Torah principles. At the end of each day, ask yourself, “What did I do today to elevate myself a little higher?” If no answer is readily evident, ask instead, “What can I plan to do tomorrow to elevate myself?” (*Growth Through Torah*)

ואמרת להם קדושים תהיו

“And you shall say to them: You shall be holy...” (19:2)

Chazal tell us that *malachim*, who do not have a *yetzer hara*, only need one *kedushah*. However, *Klal Yisrael*, who have a *yetzer hara*, need two *kedushot*. “*Kedoshim*” is in the plural form, implying that *Klal Yisrael* must acquire both *Kedushot*: *kedushah* gained from fulfilling the words of the *Torah Hakedoshah*, and *kedushah* gained through sanctifying ourselves through that which is permitted. We must create gates around ourselves for protection from the *yetzer hara* to ensure that we follow the commandments of the Torah. (*Devarim Achadim*)

איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתותי תשמרו אני ה' אלקיכם

“Every man, you shall revere your father and mother and you shall observe My Shabbat, I am Hashem, your G-d.” (19:3)

The respect for *Shabbat* is mentioned side by side with respect for parents, since these are the two specific characteristics of a Jew. As long as these pillars endure, our relations with Hashem are secure. If one falls, then it becomes evident that the other falls as well.

These two things: revering one’s parents and observing *Shabbat*, lead to one goal: *knowing that I am Hashem your G-d.* (Torah Gems)

The word תיראו is written in the plural, to stress that whoever fulfills the *mitzvah* of respecting and honoring one’s mother and father faithfully, serves as a hereditary example for his own children. If the roots of holiness lodge within the future parent, the offspring will inherit this trait as well. It is thus proper to say מצוה גוררת מצוה, *one good deed attracts another.*

(Ohr HaChaim)

לא תתן מכשל

“You shall not place a stumbling block...” (19:14)

The word מכשל is spelled defectively, without a ו. This indicates that even if one does not place an actual stumbling block in front of a person, but merely gives him improper advice, that too is forbidden. (Teachings of the Talmud)

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