

## 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.*

### SHAVUOT INSIGHTS

QUESTION: In *Parshat Mishpatim*, the Torah states that *Bnei Yisrael* replied "Na'aseh V'nishmah" – "We will do and we will hear," and in *Yitro* it is written "And the people answered together, 'All that G-d has spoken, we will do'" (19:8).

- 1) Why is the word "nishma" – hear (study) not mentioned in *Parshat Yitro*?
- 2) Why in *Parshat Mishpatim* is there no mention that *Bnei Yisrael* answered "together"?

ANSWER: It is really impossible for every Jew on his own to fulfill all 613 *mitzvot*. Some *mitzvot* can only be fulfilled by a king, others only by a *kohen*. Nevertheless, there are ways for every Jew to receive credit for the fulfillment of all the 613 *mitzvot*:

- 1) Through a person's learning about the *mitzvot*, it is considered as though he performed them (*Menachot* 11a).
- 2) When the Jews are united, they are considered one entity. Thus, through unity, they fulfill all the *mitzvot* and share the rewards.

Therefore, in *Parshat Mishpatim*, since it says, "na'aseh" and "nishma" – which indicates that they will study and learn about the *mitzvot*, each Jew on his own, can fulfill "kol asher diber Hashem" – "everything which Hashem has spoken." However, in *Parshat Yitro*, where only "na'aseh" is mentioned but not "nishma," indicating hearing and learning, fulfilling everything G-d commands is only possible through "yachdav" – togetherness and unity. (Pardes Yosef)

### INSIGHT # 2

On the verse in *Parshat Bechukotai* that states, "If you do not listen to Me, and you will not perform all of these *mitzvot*," *Rashi* explains this to mean that if one will not toil in Torah, he will not perform the other *mitzvot* either. Hashem is telling *Klal Yisrael* "barati lachem yetzer hara, barati lo Torah tavlin" – Hashem created a *yetzer hara*, but He also created an antidote against the *yetzer hara*: the Torah. The only way for one to protect himself from the *yetzer hara* is with the Torah. If one does not learn Torah, the *yetzer hara* will gain complete control over him. If one truly experiences the sweetness and the beauty of the Torah, he will abandon even the greatest of *Olam Hazeih* in order for the opportunity to fulfill even one *mitzvah*. (Ohr HaChaim)

### **INSIGHT # 3**

*Rav Yehudah Zev Segal zt"l* (Manchester Rosh Yeshivah) would say: "Decorating the shul with flowers for *Shavuot* is a nice custom, but a person must 'decorate' himself as well. This can be done only by accepting the Torah and studying Torah.

### **INSIGHT # 4**

*Rav Yechiel Perr shlit"a* (*Rosh Yehsiva Derech Aysun*) would say: Why is *Chag HaShavuot* the holiday which commemorates the giving of the Torah, celebrated on the sixth day of *Sivan*, even though the *halacha* is in accordance with *Rav Yosi*, who contends that the Torah was actually given on *Har Sinai* on the seventh of *Sivan* (*Shabbat 86b*)? While it is true that the Written Torah was given on the seventh day, the Oral Torah was actually given on the sixth, when *Moshe Rabbeinu* issued a rabbinic ordinance delaying *Matan Torah* for one day. This ruling is in itself 'Oral Torah,' and thus we celebrate this event on the sixth day of *Sivan*.

### **INSIGHT # 5**

*Rav Shimon Schwab* would say: The phrase *Matan Torah* is related to the word *matanah* (gift), since the Torah wasn't merely 'presented' or 'given,' but was a special gift which created a profound and permanent impression upon the Jewish people and bound them to Hashem and His Torah forever. IN addition, the *Talmud* teaches that just as Hashem gave *Moshe* the 'gift' of Torah (for, despite *Moshe's* greatness, it would have otherwise been impossible for him to master the Torah in forty days and nights), He will ultimately, grant the gift of Torah to anyone who strives diligently to learn it.

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