

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.

אנכי ה' אלקיך

"I am hashem, your G-d..." (5:6)

The *Aseret Hadibrot* begin with the words "I am Hashem, your G-d," - alluding to fear of Heaven and *mitzvot* pertain to man and Hashem - and conclude with the words "or anything that is your neighbor's" – alluding to the *mitzvot* pertaining to man and his fellow man. The Torah teaches us that performing *mitzvot* in only one category and not the other is not sufficient. The *mitzvot* between man and G-d and between man and his fellow man supplement each other.

The *Aseret Hadibrot* are divided equally: five commandments pertaining to Hashem and man and five commandments pertaining to man and his fellow man. The two pillars of Yiddishkeit originate with the two verses: "You shall love Hashem, your G-d (6:5) and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (*Vayikra* 19:18).

Our Sages point out that the *Aseret Hadibrot* are said from the beginning to end in singular vernacular. The Torah enlightens us that each and every one of *Bnei Yisrael* must say: "The *Aseret Hadibrot* were given for me and me alone and I am obligated to fulfill all that is written in them."

(*Parparot L'Torah*)

היו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך

"And these words that I command you today shall be upon your heart." (6:6)

Rashi comments on the word "hayom" – today. He states, "let the words of the Torah not be in your eyes as an old royal edict, to which people do not attach much importance, but rather let them be like a new royal edict, which everyone runs to hear."

Rav Chaim explained *Rashi's* comment as follows: A person's position and responsibilities in life change from time to time. Today's mission is not necessarily the same as it was yesterday or what it will be tomorrow. Too often a person becomes entrenched in a particular routine and frame of mind that was appropriate at one time in his life but has since become irrelevant or even harmful. What this verse is telling us is that a person should always reflect upon his way of life and be sure that he is doing the will of G-d as it expresses itself at the present time, "today."

(*Toras Chaim*)

וכתבתם על מזוזת ביתך ובשעריך

“And you should inscribe them on the doorposts of your houses and your gates...” (6:9)

The word ביתך – “your house” can also be read ביאתך – “your entry.” This teaches us that the *mezuzah* should be placed on the doorpost “the way that you enter.” When a person enters a house, he puts his right foot forward first; we therefore attach the *mezuzah* on the right side that is on the right when one enters the house. (Teachings of the Talmud – Menachos 34a)

נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר אלקיכם

“Comfort, comfort My people, says your G-d...” (Haftorah, Yeshayahu 40:1)

Why does the verse say “*Nachamu*” twice? The answer is usually given based on the fact the verse in *Eicha* (1:8) states: חטא חטאה ירושלים – “*Jerusalem sinned greatly*” – emphasizing the sin by repeating the language of “*cheit*.” But what follows is why is there a double language of “*cheit*” in this verse in *Eicha*?

The *Mishna* in *Avot* (4:11) teaches, לקיימא בעושר סופה לעיימא בעושר – “*One who fulfills the Torah when he is poor, will ultimately fulfill it when he is wealthy.*” The Gemara (*Nedarim* 41a) explains that “*ani – poor*” refers to a lack of knowledge. “*One who fulfills the Torah when he is poor*” refers to a person who fulfills the Torah when he has *emunah* in Hashem without knowledge. He knows that he cannot accomplish anything by himself and everything comes from Hashem. This is considered a lower level of *Emunah*. Then there is a higher level, where one attaches himself to Hashem with love, with *chesed* and *ahavah*, which is referred to as “*osher – great wealth.*” The *Mishna* is telling us that one who fulfills the Torah with *yirah* – proper fear of Heaven - “*me’oni*” will ultimately merit fulfilling the Torah with *ahavah* “*me’osher*” – with riches.

When *Klal Yisrael* sinned, they separated themselves from Hashem; they lacked *yirat Hashem* and *ahavat Hashem*. Thus, said Hashem, “*Nachamu, nachamu Ami*” – “*be comforted Yisrael; you can do teshuvah and attain both yirat Hashem and even the highest level of ahavat Hashem.*” (Pri Ha’aretz)

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