

## 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.*

### אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם ראשיכם שבטיכם זקניכם ושטריכם כל איש ישראל

**"Today all of you are standing before G-d your L-rd: your leaders, your tribes, your elders, your officers, every man of Israel."** (29:9)

*Parshat Nitzavim* is always read on the *Shabbat* before *Rosh Hashana*. Since it takes a unity of people joining together with love to mitigate the decrees of the Day of Judgment, *Moshe* advises us to "stand" together. On a symbolic level, "you" refers to the person, "standing" refers to the place, and "today" refers to time. By joining together, we connect the concepts of person, space and time and bring them before G-d. (Likutei Sichot)

The Torah lists ten types of people: your leaders, your tribal heads, your elders, your officers, every man of Israel, your children, your women, your converts, those who cut lumber, and those who draw water. This teaches us the importance of unity, for all Jews, from the greatest to the smallest, must join together so their prayers can ascend on high. (Likutei Sichot)

### ושבת עד ה' אלקיך

**"You will return to G-d your L-rd..."** (30:2)

The word *ושבת* – "and you shall return" has the same root as *שבת*, indicating that *Shabbat* and *teshuvah* are complimentary concepts. Through the illumination from *Shabbat*, a world is roused to repentance motivated by love – a love that stems from the delight of *Shabbat*.

(Likutei Moharan)

### לא בשמים היא לאמר מי יעלה לנו השמימה ויקחה לנו וישמעינו אתה ונעשנה

**"It is not in Heaven in which case you must say, 'Who will go up to Heaven for us and take it, so that we can hear it and carry it out?'"** (30:12)

*Rashi* writes on this verse, "If it were in Heaven, you would have to go up there and study it." In reality, there are no limits to how high a person can strive to attain spirituality. But G-d does not demand superhuman efforts. G-d knows that man is earthly in nature and cannot sustain a totally spiritual life. Therefore, G-d brought the holy Torah down to a worldly level – "in your mouth and your heart" – so that everyone, at his level, can do his best to fulfill it. (Likutei Halachot)

**כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיר ובלבבך לעשתו**

**“The matter is very close to you, in your mouth and your heart, to do it...” (30:14)**

The primary way to draw Godliness is through “your mouth and your heart.” That is, your mouth and heart should be close to one another: what is in your mouth should be bound tightly to your heart. Whatever feelings you harbor in your heart, learn to articulate them. (*Likutei Halachot*)

**ויקרא משה ליהושע ויאמר אליו כל ישראל חזק ואמץ**

**“Moshe called to Yehoshua and said to him in the sight of all of Israel, ‘Be strong and courageous...” (31:7)**

*Rabbi Shlomo Kluger* questioned the importance of emphasizing that this message was given to *Yehoshua* in “*the sight of all Israel*.” He concluded that it might be better to understand that phrase as part of *Moshe’s* words. He told *Yehoshua* that while modesty and humility are most important traits (and *Moshe* certainly had them), nevertheless, “*in sight of all Israel be strong and courageous*.” In this context, humility and timidity are negative traits. When you address the people, whether you command them in the name of Hashem, or admonish them for any shortcomings, speak up with authority, conviction and power. (*Imrei Shefer – Rabbi Kluger*)

**ועתה כתבו לכם את השירה הזאת**

**“And now write this song for yourselves...” (31:19)**

The *Chafetz Chaim* notes that the *mitzvah* of writing a Torah scroll is the last *mitzvah* in the Torah. The Torah writes this obligation immediately after referring to times when G-d will hide His face due to the sins of the people. This juxtaposition teaches us that even at a time when Divine Providence is hidden, the Torah itself serves as a source of salvation from trial and travail.

(*Torah Anthology*)

**ולמדה את בני ישראל שימה בפיהם**

**“And teach it to the children of Israel, place it in their mouth.” (31:19)**

Our verse gives us direction on how to teach and learn Torah properly. *And teach it to the children of Israel* tells us that one must repeat each lesson to his students until they know it, even if he must repeat it numerous times. *Place it in their mouth* tells us that one must review the lesson until it is fluent in the mouth of the students.

The word שימה – *place it*, is similar to the word סימנה – which means *its symbol*. This tells us that in order for one to memorize his learning, he must make “symbols,” such as abbreviations and other hints for each lesson. (*Teachings of the Talmud, Eruvin 54b*)

*For future sponsorship opportunities or to receive this publication, please call Steve Zuckerman at 516 652 5266 or email [zkster@aol.com](mailto:zkster@aol.com) or Rabbi Lichter at [ilichter@gns.org](mailto:ilichter@gns.org). Sponsorships in memory of or in honor of someone are \$50.00 per issue.*