

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.

ואתה תדבר אל כל חכמי לב אשר מלאתינו רוח חכמה

“And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom...” (28:3)

The verse introduces for the first time the term **לב חכם** - “wise of heart,” after which it is found several times. What does it mean, and how is it attained? *Rav Chaim Shmulevitz*, legendary *mashgiach* of the *Mirrer Yeshiva*, discusses this subject in his *Sichas Mussar*.

We find later (*Shemot* 31:6) G-d's assertion: “in the heart of every **chacham lev** I conferred wisdom.” This indicates that one must ready himself with a wise heart in order to be granted wisdom. How is this done? We must examine one case that will enlighten us. King *Shlomo* was asked by G-d to choose one gift, and rather than wealth or long life, he chose wisdom. G-d was pleased to give it to him and complimented him for his choice. Thus, we learn that one attains wisdom by a great yearning for it. *Shlomo* understood that wealth or long life are valueless without wisdom. (*Something to Say*)

Hashem commanded *Moshe* to tell the craftsmen that He invested them with a spirit of wisdom. Once informed of their innate potential, these wise craftsmen were surely able to create *Aharon's* vestments. As the classic ethical work *Chovos HaLevavos* notes, “Every human has hidden potential and talent. In the same manner that seeds must be sown, plowed and harvested, so too someone else must nurture the potential latent in his peer.” (*Chasam Sofer*)

והטור השני ויהלם

“The second row...yahalom.” (28:18)

The stone of *Zevulun* was a *yahalom*. The people of *Zevulun* were the businessmen who supported the Torah study of *Yissachar*. What led them to this destiny?

The people of *Zevulun* transported merchandise on the sea. The Sages teach us that most sailors are pious (*Yerushalmi Kiddushin* 4:11), because their profession constantly puts them at great risk. As the saying goes, there are no atheists in a foxhole. The great piety of *Zevulun's* people led them to the realization that there would be no better way for them to serve Hashem than by using their resources to support the Torah learning of *Yissachar*. The letters of **יהלם** can also spell **להים**, *to the sea*, for it was because they were seafarers that they gained their spiritual strength.

(*Kol Dodi*)

Purim Torah

QUESTION: The *Rambam* in *Hilchot Megillah* (2:17) writes: "It is better to increase in gifts to the poor than in sending portions to one another." If so, why in the verse is sending portions to one another mentioned *before* gifts to the poor?

ANSWER: When giving *tzedakah* to the poor, it is very important that one should be extremely careful not to embarrass the recipient. When *Mordechai* instituted *Purim* as a day of giving gifts to the poor, he was greatly concerned lest it become known as the poor man's day to receive handouts. Therefore, he also instituted the exchanging of portions among friends so that an observer would be unable to distinguish gifts to the poor from gifts to friends. To conceal the gifts to the poor, the *Megillah* preceded it with sending portions to one another. (Vedebarta Bam)

Purim was established as a day of feasting and happiness, while the days of *Chanukah* are not days of *mishteh v'simcha* but rather only *l'hodot u'l'hallel*. *Haman's* decree of mass extermination jeopardized our physical existence; therefore, we celebrate with *simchah* and *mishteh* for the *guf*, in addition to *hallel v'hoda'ah*. At the time of *Chanukah*, *Antiochus* attempted to uproot all spirituality from *Klal Yisrael* and assimilate them with his people; therefore, we celebrate with *hallel v'hoda'ah* for the *nefesh* (*Levush, Orach Chaim* 670).

When *Klal Yisrael's* existence was threatened in time of *Haman*, they merited salvation through fasting and *tefillah*. *Mordechai* had urged the people to *daven* and repent, as the only way the salvation would come would be through *tefillah*. In the days of *Mattityahu*, the Jews did not stand a chance to win the battle against the mighty and many Greeks, yet they engaged in battle anyway. They certainly *davened* as well, but they did not depend exclusively on *tefillah*.

(Kovetz Ma'amarim)

It says in the *Zohar HaKadosh* that *Purim* is similar to *Yom Kippur*. *Yom Kippur* is a day of fasting and *teshuvah*. Although one may not want to do *teshuvah*, he does so because Hashem decreed *Yom Kippur* as a day of atonement. Similarly, even if one does not want to be happy or does not feel happy on *Purim*, it is a day of *simchah* and one must force himself to allow *simchah* into his heart. (This thought was written by the author while undergoing the horrors of the Nazi death camps). The *Talmud* teaches that even if one did not do a complete *teshuvah* on *Yom Kippur*, he still receives a *kapparah* (*Yoma* 85b). Similarly, even if one is not completely *b'simcha* on *Purim*, he is credited as if he were. (Eish Kodesh)

These Divrei Torah are dedicated in memory Mr. Howard Zuckerman, R' Tzvi Yaakov ben Pesach Yehuda z"l, on his 5th yahrtzeit, by his wife Roslyn Zuckerman and family. For future sponsorship opportunities or to receive this publication, please call Steve Zuckerman at 516 652 5266 or email zkster@aol.com or Rabbi Lichter at ilichter@gns.org. Sponsorships in memory of or in honor of someone are \$50.00 per issue.