

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.

זאת תורת העולה

"This is the law of the elevation offering..." (6:2)

There are many *midrashim* on this verse. However, it seems to me that when the verse states "zot" it is referring to the Torah. As it says in *Devarim* (4:44), זאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני, בני ישראל – *This is the Torah that Moshe placed before the Children of Israel.* The last letters of "צו את משה לאמר" spell תורה. Moshe was commanding them to hurry and learn Torah.

(*Moshav Zekeinim M'Ba'alei Tosfot*)

Torah is something that ascends until the *Kisei HaKavod*. One who involves himself in learning the *Torat Ha'Olah* – it is as if he brought the *korbanot* directly to Hashem. (*Rokeach*)

The *Gemara* (*Yoma* 21b) states that even though a fire descends from the Heavens onto the *Mizbeach*, it is a *mitzvah* for a regular person to provide firewood. The *Zohar* explains that the constant fire on the *Mizbeach* refers to the special powers of learning Torah. While an *aveirah* can obliterate the merit of a *mitzvah*, the merit of *limud HaTorah* is eternal. The Torah is always within reach; the fire is always burning on the *Mizbeach*. However, like the *Mizbeach*, on which we must constantly provide wood for the fire, we must always direct our hearts and minds to *limud HaTorah*.

Perhaps we can now understand why the Torah repeats itself almost verbatim. The first verse describes the actual *Mizbeach* – there must always be a fire burning on it. Although there is a fire that comes down from *shamayim*, we must provide our own fire. The second verse is connected to the one that follows it, "Zot Torat Ha'Olah." There must be a fire of Torah burning within each and every one of us; we must provide continuous fuel. We need both fires to protect us from the *sitra acher* – the fire of *korbanot*, and the fire of the Torah.

With this in mind, we can have a profound understanding of *Shabbat HaGadol*. The *Mishneh Berurah* says that this week is called *Shabbat Hagadol* because of the great miracle that occurred: The Egyptians did not stop *Bnei Yisrael* from tying up their animals in preparation for slaughter. *Bnei Yisrael* elevated themselves by readying to slaughter the *korban Pesach*. We are required to learn the *Torat haPesach* – the laws of *Pesach* on *Shabbat HaGadol*. Through studying them, we also distance ourselves from the *sitra acher* and ascend the ladder of *kedushah*. (*Zohar*)

ביום קרבנו יאכל לא יניח ממנו עד בקר

“On the day of his sacrifice it must be eaten; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.” (7:15)

The Talmud (*Chullin* 83a) teaches that although the Jewish day begins at night with *korbanot* the day begins with morning. It is derived from this verse, which states that a sacrifice that is always brought in the daytime may be eaten that night until the next morning, yet this is referred to as eaten “on the day of his sacrifice.”

Rav Boruch HaLevi Epstein uses this law to clarify an unusual *halacha* about the blessing over Torah. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 47:12) rules that the morning *bracha* over Torah study remains in effect even for study that takes place late in the night. While there were commentators who wondered why this is so in view of the fact that we consider the night as a new day, there is no problem. The *Talmud* (*Ta’anit* 27b) teaches that since the destruction of the Temple, Torah study is the replacement of the sacrifices. Thus, we can understand that it has the same status as a *korban* with similar times parameters. (*Wellsprings of Torah*)

Rav Tzadok Shmuel Suchard shlit”a (B’darchei Meisharim/On Righteous Paths) would say:

We find that *Eliyahu Hanavi* visits the Jewish home at two prominent times: at the *brit milah* of every male and on the night of *Pesach*, at the *Seder* table. What is the correlation between these two particular instances of *Eliyahu’s* presence? It is to remind every father that at his son’s *brit*, the child was not asked for his opinion whether he wished to be circumcised or not, but it was the father’s responsibility to give his son a *brit* to continue the long line of his heritage. *Eliyahu* comes to the *Seder* with a similar message to the father. Be consistent with the child’s education and do not allow him to dictate his choices. He is a child and needs to be instructed and guided; he needs to feel the firm and experienced hands of his parents leading him. This night, when the *mesorah* of *Klal Yisrael* is given over from father to son, is the perfect night for the prophet to deliver his message.

SHABBAT SHALOM and CHAG SAMEACH!

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