

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.

מועדי ה' אשר תקראו אותם מקראי קדש אלה הם מועדי

“Hashem’s appointed festivals that you are to designate as holy convocations – these are My appointed festivals...” (23:2)

This entire chapter deals with the festivals opening with the words: *The appointed season of Hashem which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My appointed seasons*, and in the next verse it states, *Six days shall work be done but on the seventh day is a Shabbat of solemn rest, a holy convocation; any manner of work you shall not do it is a Shabbat for Hashem in all your dwellings.*

Chazal ask why does the Torah, when speaking of the *Yomim Tovim*, suddenly shift to the issue of *Shabbat*? Their explanation is: “To teach that all who violate the festivals, are considered as if they have violated the *Shabbat*; and all those who observe the festivals are considered as having observed the *Shabbat* as well (*Rashi*).

The *Vilna Gaon* explains as follows: *Bnei Yisrael* were given seven festivals: *Rosh Hashana*, *Yom Kippur*, the first day of *Sukkot*, *Shmini Atzeret*, the first day of *Pesach*, the last day of *Pesach* and *Shavuot*. The Torah refers to these days by saying: *Six days you shall work and on the seventh day it shall be a Shabbat of solemn rest...for on the six days of Yom Tov, one is allowed to cook, bake, etc. (Beitzah 5:2)*, however, on the *seventh day* which is *Yom Kippur*, it is a *Shabbat of solemn rest, a holy convocation, any manner of work you shall not do*, even preparing food is forbidden on this day. (Torah Treasures)

בחדש השביעי באחד לחדש יהיה לכם שבתון

“In the seventh month, on the first of the month, there shall be a rest day for you.” (23:24)

In this chapter (23), the Torah reveals for the very first time, the holy day of *Rosh Hashana*, which the Torah appointed to be in the seventh month on the first day of the month. We are also presented for the first time with the bringing and counting of the *Omer* (9-16). For the first time too, and the only time in the entire Torah, the two central *mitzvot* of *Sukkot* are mentioned: the *mitzvah* of sitting in the *Sukkah* and the *mitzvah* of *arba minim*. (Torah Gems)

כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל

“That I caused the Jewish people to dwell in booths...” (23:43)

The 480 years from the time that *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt until the building of the *Beit HaMikdash* were a period during which the nation's status in the land was, in a sense, temporary. They could not be considered permanent residents until the Divine presence would have a permanent dwelling place among the people, something that would not happen until *Shlomo HaMelech* built the *Beit HaMikdash*. For this reason, Hashem says that, upon taking *Bnei Yisrael* out of Egypt, He caused them to live in *booths*, symbolizing a temporary status, for 480 years – the numerical value of סכת.

(Rabbi Dovid Feinstein z"l)

ויקב בן האשה הישראלית את השם ויקלל

“The son of the Israelite woman pronounced the Name and blasphemed...” (24:11)

When Hashem showed *Moshe* each generation and its leaders, its judges, and its supporters, He also showed him the sinners and the thieves. Why did Hashem have to show the sinners and thieves of every generation to *Moshe*?

The sins change in every generation, what in the previous generation was called robbery, murder and crime is referred to in a different generation as patriotism, war of survival etc. What in a previous generation was referred to as lies, corruption and distortion, is referred to in a different time as ideological warfare, party loyalty civil rights etc. Thus, the generation could be evaluated according to the types of “crimes” that were committed.

(HaDerush V'Ha'Iyun)

הוצא את המקלל...ואיש כי יכה

“Take the man who cursed out... and if a man shall injure...” (24:14-17)

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains why the account of the incident of the man who cursed G-d adjoins the laws of personal injury. When a man fails to give proper respect to G-d, he will inevitably degenerate to the point where he no longer pays proper respect to his fellow man. Once he reaches this point, it is a short road until he justifies causing bodily harm to others. Thus, we find that *Avraham* says (*Breishit* 20:11): *Because there is no fear of G-d in this place, they will kill me.*

(Torah Anthology)

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