

## 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.*

### בהעלתך את הנרות אל מול פני המנורה

**“When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah...” (8:2)**

The *Midrash* quoted by *Rashi* derives from the word “*beha'alotcha*” that the *Kohen* stood on steps when he lit the *Menorah*. Why was this necessary? The *Menorah* was three *amot* high (*Menachot* 28b); and according to the *Gemara* (*Yoma* 31a), the height of an average person is three *amot*! It should not have been a problem for *Aharon* to light the *Menorah* without standing on steps.

The *Mishnah* states that a *Kohen Gadol* is prohibited to raise his hand above the *tzitz* which he wore on his forehead (*Sotah* 38a). In keeping with this law, *Aharon*, who was the *Kohen Gadol*, could not have lit the *Menorah* while standing on the ground; he would have had to reach above his head. Thus, the use of a step. (*Panim Yafos*)

### ולא יהיה בבני ישראל נגף בגשת בני ישראל אל הקדש

**“So that there will be no plague among the Children of Israel when they approach the sanctuary.” (8:19)**

If, *chas v'shalom*, misfortune, sickness, or distress strike, people “approach the sanctuary” in prayer, open their hearts to give to the poor, and mend their ways. However, plague or misfortune must not be the only motivation for prayer. A Jew must be able to pray to Hashem and give *tzedakah* also in happiness, abundance and good health. (*Rabbi Meir of Premishlan*)

### עשה לך שתי חצוצרת כסף...והיו לך למקרא העדה

**“Make for yourself two silver trumpets...and they shall be yours for the summoning of the assembly.” (10:2)**

The verse repeats the word *lecha*, *for yourself*, to teach that these trumpets could be used only during *Moshe's* lifetime; after he died, nobody was allowed to use them.

(*Teachings of the Talmud, Menachot 28b*)

There are four times that Hashem told a person, “*Make for yourself.*” He told *Noach*, regarding the ark to be made of gopher wood. He tells *Moshe* here in reference to the silver trumpets. Hashem tells *Moshe* again regarding the fiery serpent and tells *Yehoshua* regarding the razors of stone.

In three of the cases, Hashem specified what material the item should be made of, but when He told *Moshe* to make the fiery serpent, he did not tell him what material to use.

*(Teachings of the Talmud, Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah 3:9)*

**והאיש משה ענו מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה**

**“Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth.”**  
(12:3)

The question may be asked: If a person is neither humble nor haughty, should he be faulted for not attaining the attribute of humbleness? Or is it sufficient not to be haughty; that if achieved, humbleness is a sign of greatness, but it is not a necessary trait? The answer is to be found in the Hebrew word ענו, *a humble person*. Its letters also spell עון, *sin*. A person is faced with a choice: humbleness or sin. There is no middle ground.

The same lesson can be found in the *Talmud (Sotah 5a)*. The Sages teach that ideally a person should possess 1/64 of the trait of haughtiness, which is necessary for self-esteem and confidence. What happens if a person increases the amount to 1/63? The letters that enumerate 63 are 'ג and 'ס, which spell סג, *haughtiness*. There is a fine line between humility and haughtiness with no room to spare – you are either one or the other. *(Something to Say)*

The *Gemara (Nedarim 38a)* in the name of *Rabbi Yochanan* states that Hashem rests His *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, only on a person who is strong, wealthy and humble. *Moshe* is the primary example of a man who possessed these three qualities and was thus worthy that Hashem's Presence rested on him. The verse that attests to his trait of humility is the present one: “*And the man Moshe was very humble.*”

We can easily understand humility to be a prerequisite for the favor of the *Shechinah*, as it is written “*Hashem dwells with he who has a contrite and humble spirit*” (*Yeshayahu 57:15*). But why are strength and wealth necessary prerequisites for the favor of the *Shechinah*?

Strength and wealth are not intrinsic requirements for attaining *nevuah*, the level of prophecy. Indeed, only humility is the *sine qua non* for reaching this lofty stage. But strength and wealth are preconditions for humility. The meekness of a person who is weak and poor has little meaning. But a strong and wealthy person can easily tend to be arrogant and overbearing. If such a person, his awe-inspiring qualities notwithstanding, is humble, then his meekness is truly a mark of a spiritual greatness. Such was the humility of *Moshe Rabbeinu*. *(Torah Temimah)*

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