

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.

ויאמר ה' אלי רב לך אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד בדבר הזה

"Hashem said to me, 'It is too much for you! Do not continue to speak to me further about this matter.'" (3:26)

The *Gemara* states that the angels "gave presents to *Moshe*" when he went up on *Har Sinai* (*Shabbat* 89a). Earlier sources explain that this refers to his being informed that if he would twice mention the word "please" – נא in his prayer then it would be answered.

When *Moshe* prayed for his sister *Miriam* (*Bamidbar* 12:13), he said "please" twice, and his prayer was answered. Here too, *Moshe* started praying "to please be allowed to go over the Jordan River." *Moshe* intended to continue this request with the inclusion of another "please." But Hashem cut him off and said, "do not speak to me further," i.e., do not say "please" again.

(*Chanukat HaTorah*)

אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים

"I am Hashem your G-d, who took you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (5:6)

The *Aseret HaDibrot* open with the words "I am Hashem your G-d," alluding to *yirat shamayim* and *mitzvot* that pertain to man and Hashem; and they conclude with the words "Or any thing that is your neighbor's," alluding to the *mitzvot* pertaining to man and his fellow man. The Torah teaches us that doing *mitzvot* only in one aspect and not the other is not sufficient. The *mitzvot* between man and Hashem and between man and his fellow man supplement each other.

The *Aseret HaDibrot* are divided equally: Five commands pertaining to Hashem and man and five commands pertaining to man and his fellow man. The two pillars of *Yiddishkeit* originate with the two verses: "You shall love Hashem your G-d" (6:5) and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (*Vayikra* 19:18). Our Sages point out that the *Aseret HaDibrot* are said from the beginning to the end in the singular vernacular. The Torah enlightens us that each and every one of *Bnei Yisrael* must say: "The *Aseret HaDibrot* was given for me and me alone and I am obligated to fulfill all that is written in them."

(*Torah Gems*)

שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד

"Hear O Israel our G-d, Hashem is One." (6:4)

When a Jew recites this verse with the purpose of proclaiming Hashem's reign over the four corners of the earth, he must not forget to allow Hashem to reign also over his own person.

The letters in these words allude to the number of people that are called up to the Torah during the week, on *Shabbat* and on *Yomim Tovim*.

“*Shemah*” – The word has three letters that allude to the three who go up to the Torah on Mondays and Thursdays during the week, fast days, *Chanukah* and *Purim* and *Mincha* on *Shabbat* and *Yom Kippur*.

“*Yisrael*” – This word has five letters that allude to the five people who called up to the Torah on *Rosh Hashana* and *Sholosh Regalim*.

“*Hashem*” – This word is the name of Hashem and cannot be spelled out, has four letters alluding to the four that are called to the Torah on *Yomim Tovim* such as *Rosh Chodesh* and *Chol HaMoed*.

“*Elokeinu*” – This word has six letters alluding to the six that are called to the Torah on *Yom Kippur* and as a clue to the six days of creation.

“*Hashem Echad*” – These two words that seal the verse have seven letters alluding to the seven people that are called up to the Torah on *Shabbat*. (Parparot La'Torah)

והיו הדברים האלה...על לבבך ושונתם לבניך

“**And these things...shall be in your heart. And you shall teach them to your children.**” (6:6-7)

The *Alshich* explains that the only means through which one can make the Torah into a legacy for his children is to first absorb the Torah himself. If he does not attach himself to the Torah – i.e., if these things are not *in your heart* – then you will never be able to *teach them to your children*.

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld points out that the *Talmud* (*Berachot* 14b) records that one who recites the *Shema* without *Tefillin* gives false testimony about himself, for the *parsha* of *Shema* contains the obligation to lay *Tefillin*. It follows that if one recites the *Shema* but fails to educate his children in Torah, he too offers false testimony about himself, for the *parsha* of *Shema* also contains the obligation to teach our children.

Sefer Charedim writes that one who recites the *Shema* without *kavannah* - proper intent - also offers false testimony about himself, for the *parsha* states that one should fulfill this *mitzvah* with his *whole heart*. The same would be true if one recites the *Shema* and thinks about his possessions, for the *parsha* obligates us to fulfill this *mitzvah* with *all that you have*. (*Tallelei Orot*)

SHABBAT SHALOM!

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