

## 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.*

### ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום

**“See I present before you today...” (11:26)**

The verse states “*notein* – to give” in the present tense, rather than “*natati* – gave” in the past tense. Had the verse used a past tense, one may have thought that *Bnei Yisrael* only had one chance to choose between the good path and the evil path. Once the choice is made it cannot be changed. The verse uses the present tense to tell us that it is never too late to change. Every day of our lives we have the choice to choose the righteous path. (Vilna Gaon)

### לשכנו תדרשו ובאת שמה

**“You shall seek out His resting place and come there...” (12:5)**

This verse is the key in how to attain the ultimate *geulah*. In order for Hashem to redeem us from this *galut* and rebuild the *Beit HaMikdash*, we must yearn for it and anticipate it eagerly. Only if you seek out His *Shechinah*, will you “come there” with the final *geulah*. (Tiferet Shlomo)

### עשר תעשר

**“You shall separate tithes...” (14:22)**

The Talmud (*Ta’anit* 9a) expounds repetitious wording and explains homiletically, עשר – *tithe* – בשביל שתתעשר – *so that you will become wealthy*. The Talmud explains that G-d tells Israel: “I permit you to test Me in this matter.” One can challenge G-d, as it were, to see if He indeed keeps His promise to financially reward those who separate tithes.

The *Chasam Sofer* points out that only here does the Torah permit us to test G-d. Regarding tithes the Torah also allows us to fulfill a *mitzvah* for the express purpose of achieving wealth, rather than as a sign of loyalty to G-d. The latter point, however, is not so unique, for we are promised reward for the performance of other *mitzvot*, too. Regarding learning Torah, for example, the verse states “*Long life is on its right, its left brings wealth and honor (Mishlei 3:16)*.”

*Aznaim L'Torah* observes that in *Malachi* we read that “*I shall grant you blessing until you say enough.*” The wealth that is the reward for having tithed one’s produce will be true wealth – the form of wealth that *Chazal* taught us “*Who is wealthy? He who is satisfied with his lot.*” Most rich people are never satisfied and always seek to amass more - even if they have no need for it. In this case, however, the prophet promises that G-d will give you wealth in a form that will say enough and truly be satisfied. (Parsha Anthology)

**כי יהיה כר אביון מאחד אחיך ולא תקפץ את ידך מאחיר האביון**

**“If there be among you a needy man, one of your brothers...you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your needy brother...” (15:7)**

When there will come to you a needy man who is an honorable person and of a good family, I, Hashem, am sure you *will not harden your heart*, but rather gladly give him what he needs. Just as the fingers of your hand are not all equal, neither are the portions of *tzedakah* that are allotted to others. A person must use wisdom to differentiate between individual needs, since they are not all equal. (Otzar Chaim)

**נתן תתן...פתח תפתח**

**“You must surely give to him...you shall surely open your hand.” (15:10-11)**

Picking up on the double language, *Rashi* comments, “even a hundred times.” We find a similar idea in the *Rambam’s* commentary on the *Mishna* in *Avot* “all is according to the abundance of the deeds” (3:19). The *Rambam* explains that desirable traits are not acquired by a person through the greatness of the individual deed, but rather through greatness of the number of his deeds.

From here we see that if a person wants to give one hundred *dinarim* to the poor, he should give one hundred poor people one *dinar* each, rather than give the full sum to just one person. The giver thus struggles with his *yetzer hara* one hundred times, and becomes accustomed to the struggle, so he will find it much easier to defeat his *yetzer hara* in the future and continue to give generously. Furthermore, giving *tzedakah* becomes second nature to him, for he has accustomed himself to the *mitzvah* by performing the act of giving so many times. (Vedebarta Bam)

The Torah represents Divine Providence, which incorporates a kind of “double vision.” G-d looks upon us and we look upon Him. The Torah uses a double language to describe the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* because *tzedakah* breaks one’s avarice, which allows for the acceptance of Divine Providence.

Many verses in the Torah contain repeated phrases, as we find in this passage. This teaches us the value of strengthening ourselves, again and again. By opening your hand and giving to others, you draw a spirit of life that brings vitality into your own life.

The *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* is comparable to fulfilling the entire Torah, because it creates an atmosphere of love and peace. *Tzedakah* leads to unity, as it nullifies all the differences between people and points the way to truth, which is one. Furthermore, the giving of *tzedakah* invokes forgiveness for all sins. (Likutei Sichot)

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