

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.

ונצעק אל ה' אלקי אבותינו וישמע ה' את קלנו

"We cried out to Hashem, G-d of our forefathers, and Hashem heard our voice..." (26:7)

The verse does not say "Hashem heard our *prayer*," but rather, "Hashem heard our *voice*." This teaches us that in times of trouble, we must cry out to Hashem in a loud voice, for thereby He will answer our pleas immediately. Although sometimes He answers us only after a few days, and sometimes – as it states in the *Midrash* – we might wait for years, it certainly helps if we cry out in a loud voice.

Ideally, it is best to make requests of Hashem on behalf of the entire community or nation, and right after we perform a *mitzvah* as we do after reciting *Birkat HaMazon*. Immediately afterwards, we proceed to make a series of requests for the entire Jewish people. beseeching Hashem: *Harachaman...O Merciful One.* (Chafetz Chaim on the Torah)

ארור אשר לא יקים את דברי התורה הזאת לעשות אותם

"Cursed is he who shall not uphold the words of the Torah to fulfill them..." (27:7)

The last phrase of the verse seems to be superfluous. The *Ksav Sofer* explains that the Torah is alluding to those who maintain that what G-d really desires is that we uphold the *spirit* of the Torah, while observance of the *mitzvot* is of secondary importance. To belie this notion, the verse says first that we must uphold, and then it adds that the goal is to *fulfill*. The only means through which the Torah will be upheld is through strict adherence to its *mitzvot*.

Ha'Kesav V'Hakkabalah comments that there are those whose commitment to the *mitzvot* is only a vehicle to attain standing within the community. They pretend to be staunch defenders of the faith, but it is only because they seek public office and honor. The Torah therefore stresses that our commitment to *mitzvot* must be to *fulfill them* and not for ulterior motives. (*Parsha Anthology*)

אלה יעמדו לברך את העם על הר גריזים

"These shall stand to bless the people on Mount Grizim..." (27:12)

Why were the Jewish people divided during the blessings and curses, being on two separate mountains, with the tribe of *Levi* in the middle valley?

The *shevatim* stood atop the mountains, and *shevet Levi* stood in the valley in between. This shows that although it's the *talmidei chachamim* that are usually on the bottom of the ladder of financial success and community popularity, it is through *their* merits that Hashem blesses the world. It is therefore incumbent that the wealthy people support the Torah scholars to provide them with financial stability, and they should not be unappreciated. (Ta'am V'daas)

ובאו אליך כל הברכות האלו והשיגור
“And all of these blessings shall come to you and catch up to you...” (28:2)

Rabbeinu Bachya observes that the Torah teaches us that man need not attempt to attain these blessings. The blessings themselves will pursue him and reach him even without his efforts.

The *Kli Yakar* compares our verse to the teachings of the *Talmud* (*Eruvin* 13b) that one who flees from honor will find that honor chases him. (Parsha Anthology)

בבקר תאמר מי יתן ערב ובערב תאמר מי יתן בקר
“In the morning you will say ‘who can give back last night’ and in the evening you will say, ‘who can give back this morning!’” (28:67)

The commandment to sanctify the Sabbath by reciting the *Kiddush* is observed by women also, despite the fact that the fulfillment of this commandment is dependent on a set time. Although, as a rule, women are exempt from a commandment of this type, they are duty-bound to fulfill this one precept, either by reciting the blessing themselves or by hearing another person recite it. This is so because the remembrance of the Sabbath day by verbal expression is closely bound up with the actual observance of the day of rest by abstaining from work. We were bidden to “keep” and to “remember” the Sabbath in a single command, so that everyone who is bidden to observe the Sabbath is thereby duty-bound also to remember it by reciting the *Kiddush*.

The Hebrew text “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy” contains five words. This implies that he who observes the Sabbath is as if he had observed the commandment of all the five books of the Torah. (Wellsprings of Torah)

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