

## 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.*

**INSIGHTS from the SEDRA for the year 5783 is being dedicated by  
Ruvane & Stephanie Vilinsky in memory of Tzvi Ben Yakov & Shimon Ben Pinchus z"l**

### שפטים ושטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך

**"Appoint for yourselves judges and police in all your gates..." (16:18)**

This command is intended for the officials and communal leaders who are entrusted with the task of engaging rabbis. They must not believe that because they are the ones who appointed the rabbi, they are exempt from giving him the respect and obedience due him. For the rabbi is appointed not only for the congregation or the community but "for thyself," for every individual, and you must heed your instructions, because only if you will give him the respect due him will he be able to *judge the people with righteous judgment*, only then will the people obey the rabbi and abide by his judgment. (Klei Chemdah)

### צדק צדק תרדף

**"Justice, justice, you shall pursue..." (16:20)**

This means that you must pursue justice with justice. The means by which you seek to attain justice must be righteous also. You must not allow yourself to be guided by the godless principle that the ends justify the means. (Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Przysucha)

### תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך

**"Be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d." (18:13)**

We do not find any *mitzvah* or good quality in the Torah or *Nevi'im* where it must be fulfilled with Hashem, except for the virtues of wholeheartedness and modesty. In the virtues of humility and modesty, the prophet states, "*And modesty walks with Hashem.*" In regard to these two qualities can man very easily fool others. He can pretend to be innocent while his heart is filled with false humility where arrogance is wrapped in a shroud of humility and hidden from the naked eye. Thus, the Torah says: "*You must be wholehearted with Hashem; modesty walks with Hashem.*" Hashem, who sees within us all, can never be fooled and we must be wholehearted with Him.

(R' Pinchus of Kolitz)

**“Then the two men shall stand...” (19:17)**

On the basis of this phrase, the *Gemara* (*Ketubot* 30a) derives the rule that women are invalid witnesses in a courtroom proceeding. On the basis of this rule, some mistakenly conclude that *Chazal* considered women to be of lesser intelligence than men. However, this conclusion is entirely incorrect, for an anointed king of Israel is also an invalid witness. *Rashi* (*Mesechet Shavuot* 31a) explains the disqualification of a king as a witness based on the obligation to honor the king. Requiring the king to come to court and testify would be an indignity to the king, and one who is not required to testify is disqualified as a witness. Perhaps the disqualification of women as witnesses can be explained similarly as an indignity to require women to testify in court, due to the notion that “*All glorious is the king’s daughter within the palace*” (*Tehillim* 45:14).

(*Nefesh Harav*, pg. 318)

ידינו לא שפכה את הדם הזה

**“Our hands have not spilled this blood...” (21:7)**

The *Mishna* in *Sotah* (9:6) raises the question: *Could it have come into our mind that the elders of the court were shedders of blood? What the Torah means is: We did not send this wayfarer away without food, nor did we see him journeying and allow him to leave unaccompanied.*

It is almost frightening how demanding the Torah is concerning the leadership that goes hand in hand with power. It is a responsibility that encompasses not only direct action but indirect – in fact, very removed – action. Of course, the leader is responsible for all his actions. His judgment must be right, he must not accept his bribes; he must act in accordance with the principles of justice and charity. However, he is also charged with responsibility for things and events that are, *prima facie*, far removed from his concerns and interests. The people wielding power are the ones responsible for and guilty of the crime.

(*Vision and Leadership*, pg. 48)

**SHABBAT SHALOM!**

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