

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**

השתחוית לפני ה' אלקיך

"And prostrate yourself before the L-rd, your G-d..." (26:10)

The *Vilna Gaon* emphasizes that the obligation to bow after having presented the *bikkurim* is not limited to *bikkurim* alone; bowing is required whenever one leaves the Temple courtyard. It is for this reason that we bow after the blessing of *Retzeh* in the *Amidah*. *Retzeh* constitutes a request that our prayers be accepted in place of the sacrifices. Once the blessing of *Retzeh* is completed, it is as if we are standing in the *Azarah* after offering our sacrifice, and we therefore bow immediately during the next blessing of *Modim*.
(*Divrei HaRav*, pp. 312-313)

השקיפה ממעון קדשך...וברך את עמך את ישראל

"Gaze down from Your holy abode...and bless Your people Israel..." (26:15)

The commandment to offer the first of one's fruits to Hashem applies not only to the fruits of the ground, but also to the fruit of one's own flesh – one's sons and daughters. The very first years of their childhood must be consecrated to Hashem, and this can be done only by rearing them in the spirit of the Law. The parent who does this will truly be "blessed" with sons and daughters. His children will be a blessing to him and will not become estranged from him when they grow up.
(*Avnei Ezel*)

וה' האמירך היום להיות לו לעם סגלה...ולשמר כל מצותיו

"And Hashem has distinguished you today to be for Him a treasured people...and to observe all of His commandments." (26:18)

Hashem has made you great and important by giving you the commandments to keep. This is the distinction which sets you apart from all other nations. He did not give these commandments to them, and, in fact, it is written that "any Gentile who keeps the Sabbath is liable to the death penalty."
(*HaKetav V'Hakkablah*)

ארור האיש אשר יעשה פסל ומסכה

“Accursed is the man who will make a graven or molten image...” (27:15)

Why did the Torah single out these specific sins as the ones that were to be mentioned at *Har Grizim* and *Har Eival*? The *Ibn Ezra* writes that the common thread between these curses is that they involve sins that one does in private. To underscore this characteristic, the Torah repeatedly uses the word “*baseter*,” *in secret*, in this section. Thus, the Torah stresses the unacceptability of *geneivat da’at*, the hypocrisy in regard to the law, to pretend to behave according to the law in public, but to violate it in private. (Divrei HaRav)

ברוך אתה בעיר

“Blessed shall you be in the city...” (28:3)

The *midrash* writes that “*in the city*” means one will be rewarded for the commandments which are performed publicly in the city. Some people observe their Judaism and perform its commandments within the walls of their own homes but are ashamed of their religion when they go out among people, fearing that they might be called “fanatical,” or “old-fashioned” and such. Therefore, the Torah states, “*Only if you will not be ashamed to observe the commandments even in the city, when you are among them, will you receive the blessings.*” In the same vein, we read in the opening paragraph of the *Shulchan Aruch*: “*And he shall not be ashamed in the presence of those who deride him.*” (Divrei Shaarei Hayyim)

He who is pious himself only without seeking to influence others to be pious is called a *tzaddik in peltz* (a pious man who envelops himself in his piety as in a cloak of fur). What is the meaning of this expression? *Rabbi Bunim*, of blessed memory, said: “There are some who, when they are cold, wrap themselves up in fur and get warm, while the others in the room continue to freeze. But there are others who, when they feel chilly, will light a fire to make sure that the others in the room will be warm as well. This is why one who is concerned only about his own piety, not caring whether or not those around him are “warmed” by the spirit of Judaism, is described in Yiddish as “a *tzaddik in peltz*.” (Vedibarta Bam)

SHABBAT SHALOM!

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