

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 5784 is being dedicated by
Ruvane & Stephanie Vilinsky in memory of Tzvi Ben Yakov & Shimon Ben Pinchus z"l**

וישלח ישראל את ימינו וישת על ראש אפרים והוא הצעיר...ישמך אלקים כאפרים וכמנשה
"Yisrael stretched out his right hand and placed it on Ephraim's head, and he was the younger...May Hashem make you like Ephraim and Menashe..." (48:14,20)

Why did Ephraim merit to be blessed before Menashe? The Torah answers by saying, "*v'hu hatza'ir – and he was the younger.*" That is, Ephraim made himself small. Not only was he not haughty; he was just the opposite. Menashe "*will also become great,*" said Yisrael, "*ulam achiva hakaton yigdal mimenu – but his brother, who made himself small will be greater than him.*" This teaches us just how much Hashem hates the trait of haughtiness, and how much He loves humility.
(Ma'asai L'Melech)

ברך ישראל לאמר ישמך אלקים כאפרים ומנשה
"By you shall Israel bless saying, 'My G-d make you like Ephraim and Menashe...' (48:20)

Why should Yaakov have wanted all of his descendants to bless their children with the example of Ephraim and Menashe rather than with that of some other two of the tribes of Israel?

Because the two young sons of Yosef had conducted themselves in accordance with the fundamental law of the Torah; namely, that one should neither consider oneself greater than another nor envy another. Even though Yaakov had set Ephraim, the younger son, before Menashe, the first-born, Ephraim did not become arrogant, and Menashe did not become jealous. Seeing this, Yaakov expressed the hope that all the Children of Israel would be like Ephraim and Menashe, free of arrogance and envy.
(Igra DeKallah)

ואני נתתי לך שכם אחד על אתיך אשר לקחתי מיד האמרי בחרבי ובקשתי
"I have given you Shechem, one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." (48:22)

Targum translates "*my sword and my bow*" as my prayer and my will. Why is the bow likened to prayer? Because just as the more one tautens the bow the further the arrow will fly, so too, the more one applies his mind to his prayer with true devotion, the further and higher will it soar into the heavens.
(Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

הקבצו ושמעו בני יעקב ושמעו אל ישראל אביכם

“Gather around and listen, sons of Jacob; Listen to the words of your father Yisrael.” (49:2)

Why is the word “listen,” repeated twice in the verse? It should have said simply, “Gather around and listen, sons of *Yaakov*, to the words of your father *Yisrael*.”

Rashi (*Devarim* 1:3) tells us that *Moshe* made sure to speak words of rebuke to the people before his death. “And from whom did he learn to do this? From *Yaakov*, who also reprimanded his sons just before he died.” These words of rebuke are not explicitly recorded in the Torah, for what follows this verse is the twelve *blessings* given to each son. Hence, we may explain that when *Yaakov* called over his sons and told them to “listen” the first time, he was telling them to hear his words of admonition to them before his death. Then he told them to “listen” again – this time to the blessings. (*Brisker Rav*)

ויעש לאביו אבל שבעת ימים

“And he made for his father a mourning for seven days...” (50:10)

Basing their opinions on this verse, many *Rishonim* and early *Geonim* maintain that all seven days of mourning (*shiva*) are Biblical in origin. *Maimonides*, on the other hand, maintains that only the first day of mourning is *de’orisa*, while the remaining days of *shiva* are rabbinically mandated. In that case, however, how could mourning be observed here for seven days if the rabbinical mandate did not take effect for millennia?

Maimonides states that *Moshe* took the initiative to reinstitute seven days of *shiva* after the death of a family member, in order to maintain the *gavra* aspect of mourning, or the status of a mourner.

SHABBAT SHALOM

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