

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**

Introduction

The *Sefer of Vayikra*, the third of the *Chamisha Chumshei Torah*, consists of ten *parshiyot*. Most of them deal with the *korbanot* and the *kohanim* who serve in the holy capacity of Priesthood, administering all the tasks relating to the sacrifices and the *Mishkan*. The purpose of the offerings was to bring one closer to Hashem and elevate one's level of spirituality. This *sefer* is thus referred to by *chazal* as *Torat Kohanim*.

Throughout the generations, it has been customary to begin teaching young children Torah with the *Chumash* of *Vayikra* because they, like the *korbanot* are pure. *R' Asi* says: "Let the pure come and deal with the pure," and let them learn the Torah of *korbanot*. The *Kli Yakar* states that this is one of the reasons why the "א" in the word ויקרא is written very small. This alludes to the little ones who begin here: Let these teachings be the beginning, like the letter *aleph*, which is the beginning of the *aleph-bet*. (Torah Gems)

וכל קרבן מנחתך במלח תמלח ולא תשבית מלח ברית
"And every offering of your meal offering, you shall season with salt; do not leave out the salt of the covenant..." (2:13)

The Torah speaks of this salt as being a covenant, a *brit*. Just as the worlds cannot endure without salt, so too, the world cannot endure without Torah. (Sifsei Kohen)

Salt is a stabilizing element, resulting from the interaction of fire and water. Salt is produced by the heat of the sun evaporating the sea water. Salt is designated, *the Covenant of Hashem*. The covenant, representing the alliance between the opposing elements of fire and water, is the guarantee of Hashem's covenant with man, and is a covenant founded on the harmonious union of two opposite principles: love and justice. (Kol HaTorah)

Salt is like a covenant, denotes permanence because it preserves what was, and inhibits change. Therefore, salt symbolizes Hashem's unchanging covenant. (R' Shimshon Raphael Hirsch)

“And they hung Haman on the gallows...” (Esther 7:10)

QUESTION: How long was *Haman* in power?

ANSWER: *Haman* was in power for a total of seventy days. It is interesting to note that from the verse “*After these days the King promoted Haman*” (3:1) till “*They hung Haman on the gallows*” (7:10) there are a total of seventy *psukim*. The word “*ha’eitz*” – the gallows – has the numerical value of 165, which alludes to the name *Haman*, numerical value of 95, plus the seventy days of his reign.

The Jew suffered from *Haman* for seventy days as punishment for attending *Achashveirosh’s* feast, at which they drank from the “royal wine which was in abundance” (1:7). The word “*yayin*” – wine – has the numerical value of seventy. *Esther* rectified this through inviting *Achashveirosh* and *Haman* to the *mishteh yayin* – wine feast (7:2) and thus one is obligated on *Purim* to achieve a joyful state through drinking wine (see *Megillah 7b, Rashi*). (Orah V’Simcha)

לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה ומשלח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות לאביונים
“They should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.” (Esther 9:22)

QUESTION: The *Rambam* in *Hilchot Megillah* (2:17) writes: “It is better to increase in gifts to the poor than in sending portions to one another.” If so, why in the verse is sending portions to one another mentioned *before* gifts to the poor?

ANSWER: When giving *tzedakah* to the poor, it is very important that one should be extremely careful not to embarrass the recipient.

When *Mordechai* instituted *Purim* as a day of giving gifts to the poor, he was greatly concerned lest it become known as the *poor’s* day to receive handouts. Therefore, he also instituted the exchanging of portions among friends so that an observer would be unable to distinguish gifts to the poor from gifts to friends. To conceal the gifts to the poor, the *Megillah* preceded it with the *mitzvah* of sending portions to one another. (Vedebarta Bam)

SHABBAT SHALOM & HAPPY PURIM

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