פ' אמור תשפ"ב
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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, Vedebarta 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 Dov Wasserman, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.

אלה הם מועדי ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי שבת שבתון מקרא קדש

"These are My Festivals. Six days you shall work on the seventh day it shall be Shabbat, a time that is declared sanctified..." (23:2-3)

Why does the verse begin by referring to the festivals and then immediately begin to speak about *Shabbat*, a day that is not a festival? The *Vilna Gaon* offers a homiletical explanation. The six days of work referred to in the verse alludes to the six festival days that Torah mandates – the first and last days of *Pesach*, the day of *Shavuot*, the day of *Rosh Hashana*, the first day of *Sukkot*, and *Shmini Atzeret* – when one is permitted to do some forms of work needed for cooking. Although there is an additional festival day – *Yom Kippur* – cooking is not permitted then and thus it is alluded to by the reference in this verse to *Shabbat*. According to his interpretation, the verse should be read in the following manner. On six of the festival days, one may do work connected with cooking, but the seventh festival day, *Yom Kippur*, is like *Shabbat*, when no work may be performed.

(*Parsha Anthology*)

שבע שבתות תמימות תהיינה

"Seven weeks, they shall be complete..." (23:15)

When are the weeks complete? When *Klal Yisrael* does the will of Hashem (*Vayikra Rabbah* 28:3). We count from *Pesach* until *Shavuot* to demonstrate that the two are connected. *Pesach* is the *geulat haguf*, our physical redemption, and *Shavuot* is the *geulat hanefesh*, our spiritual redemption. One is not completely free until he has a *geulat hanefesh*; until then, one is still a slave to his *yetzer hara*. By fulfilling the will of the *Ribono Shel Olam* during this period of *sefira*, one will merit "*temimot tih'yena*" – the fusion of what *Pesach* and *Shavuot* represent, to achieve a complete redemption.

(*Maharam Shick*)

לעני ולגר תעזב אתם

"For the poor and the proselyte shall you leave them." (23:22)

This verse comes just before the section on the Days of Awe, the days of judgment and mercy, to hint to us that when a person is merciful to others, Heaven is merciful to him. Through charity and kindness, it is possible to elicit a favorable verdict on the Days of Judgment.

(*Vedebarta Bam*)

בעשור לחדש

"On the tenth day..." (23:27)

Why was the day of Atonement set for this particular date? Our Sages in the *Midrash* answer that the reason is to be found in the festival of *Rosh Hashana* which precedes it. According to *R' Eliezer*, *Rosh Hashana* is the anniversary, the day on which *Adam* was created, the world having been created on the 25th of *Elul*. The natural day for atonement should have fallen on *Rosh Hashana* because on this day man returns to his origins.

The circumstance which favors man on the anniversary of his coming into the world is separated from the Day of Atonement by a period of ten days, the time needed to acquire the strength to repent and to translate the potential remorse into action. Man, then finds his Day of Atonement, the day on which *Moshe*, long ago, returned with the second Tablets of the law and proclaimed Divine forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf. (*Parsha Anthology*)

ולא תחללו את שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל

"And you shall not desecrate My name and I shall be sanctified among the children of Israel..." (22:32)

Ramban points out that the most serious crime that man can commit is to desecrate G-d's name. The only way that he can atone for this is by sanctifying G-d's name. This is the reason why the Torah links the two.

Rav Chaim Volozhin explains why desecrating G-d's name is referred to as a *chilul Hashem*. The Hebrew word *chilul* comes from the root חלל – a void. When man acts in a manner that causes G-d's name to be desecrated, his actions are tantamount to a declaration that there is a void in the world where G-d does not exist, as it were. This very declaration can easily degenerate and lead man to conclude that he no longer observes any of the *mitzvot*. Our Sages (*Chagigah* 16a) saw this clearly and taught: One who transgresses in secret – i.e., allows himself to believe that G-d is not watching – is considered to have ushed the *Shechinah* from this world. (*Torah Anthology*)

SHABBAT SHALOM!

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