

## 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, Vedebara 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.*

### 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)

**וְכָל קָרְבֵן מַנְחָתְךָ בְּמֵלֹחַ תִּמְלֹחַ וְלَا תָשִׁיבֵת מֵלֹחַ בְּרִית**  
**"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 like a covenant, denotes permanence, because it preserves what was, and inhibits change. Therefore, salt symbolizes Hashem's unchanging covenant. (R' Shimshon Raphael Hirsch)

### אשר נשיא יחטא

**"When the leader shall sin..."** (4:22)

The *Vilna Gaon* notes that the verse does not state if a leader sins, but rather, when a leader sins, which suggests that this is inevitable. He explains that leaders are usually unprepared to go through the repentance process because of their stature and pride. Thus, it is inevitable that they remain in a state of sin. (Parsha Anthology)

## **Maftir Parshat Zachor & Purim**

**זכור את אשר עשה עמלק**

**"Remember what Amalek did to you..." (Devarim 25:17)**

QUESTION: Why is the command of remembering the viciousness of *Amalek* written in singular and not "Zichru...lachem" etc., in plural?

ANSWER: *Amalek* attacked the Jews when they camped in *Refidim*. The word רפידים is related to the root word of "pirud" – פירוד – disunity and separation. When the Jewish people are disunified, it is possible for *Amalek* to creep in. Therefore, the Torah says in the singular "Zachor – remember what *Amalek* did *lecha* – to you – to stress that *Amalek* attacked when there was disunity and when everyone was concerned only about himself. By remembering this all will live in harmony and thus prevent a renewed attack by *Amalek*. (R' Simcha Bunim of P'Shischa)

*Parshat Zachor* is always read on the *Shabbat* before *Purim*. For *maftir*, we read additional *parsha* found in *Devarim* (25:17), where, as a nation, we are commanded to destroy *Amalek*. The nation of *Amalek* came into existence at the same time that *Klal Yisrael* did. *Eisav*'s son *Elifaz* had a son named *Amalek*. *Eisav* and *Elifaz*'s legacy to *Amalek* was an undying hatred toward *Bnei Yisrael*.

**Chacham Chaim Meshash tz"l of Mekans (*Nishmat Chaim*)** would say: "Why is the entire *parsha* of the *mitzvah* to eradicate the memory of *Amalek* written in singular form with the exception of the phrase, *b'derek b'tzeitchem m'mitzrayim* – 'On the way when you were leaving Egypt,' which is written in the plural form? The Torah stresses that when *Bnei Yisrael* arrived at *Har Sinai* to receive the Torah, immediately after the battle with *Amalek*, they encamped *as one person with one heart* (*Rashi, Shemot* 19:2). The implication is that prior to their encampment they were divided, not united. Therefore, this phrase is written in the plural, emphasizing that *Amalek* can successfully launch a campaign against us only when we are not together. *Esther*'s instructions to *Mordechai*, 'Go, gather all the Jews' is the guarantee for our victory over *Amalek*."

**Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson zt"l (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)** used to say: "Why was annihilation decreed upon the Jews of that generation? Because they enjoyed the feast of King *Achashveirosh* (*Megillah* 12a). The problem was not their participation in the feast; indeed, *Achashveirosh* supplied kosher food for his Jewish subjects. The problem was that they *enjoyed* the feast. With the royal kosher menu in hand, the exiled Jew felt he no longer needed Hashem for his survival. The decree of annihilation was not a punishment, but a consequence of this attitude. Putting his faith immortals, the Jew denied his supernatural status, the status of a nation whose very survival belies the laws of history. The Jew was now vulnerable to the decrees of a mortal *Achashveirosh*.

**SHABBAT SHALOM & PURIM SAMEACH!**

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