



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

Shabbat Table Sparks

Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table

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Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“The Sages taught: How did the Jewish people write the Torah? Rabbi Yehuda says: They wrote it on stones, as it is stated: “And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law” (Dt. 27:8). And afterward, they plastered them over with plaster... how did the nations of the world study Torah? He said to him: The Holy One, Blessed be He, granted them an extra degree of understanding, and they sent their scribes [noteirin], and they peeled off the plaster and copied it down. And on account of this matter, their decree to be sent to the pit of destruction was sealed, as once the Torah was in their possession they should have studied it, and they did not study.” **Sotah 35b**

Parasha Beha'alotcha Num. 8:1-12:16

N *When you kindle the lamps...* Num. 8:2 The Kehot Chumash says: “Spiritually, lighting the lamps of the menorah means igniting our own souls and the souls of others, as King Solomon says, “The lamp of G-d is the soul of man.” (Proverbs 20:27) The flame of a candle constantly flickers upwards, as if yearning to leave the wick behind and ascend to the heavens. The soul shares this nature, constantly striving to break out of the boundaries imposed on it by the body and the physical world and reconnect with its spiritual source.”
What do you do to kindle the spiritual flame in your life?

ר Chassidic Insights: “Just as Aaron lit all seven lamps of the menorah, so was he known for his ability to relate to all types of people, even those whose only redeeming feature was the fact that they were G-d's creations. Although the priests are the ones who usually light the menorah, laymen are allowed to light it, as well. (Yoma 24b) This teaches us that it is not only the "Aarons"—the religious professionals—that must light the human menorahs of our world. Every person has the responsibility to seek out people whose souls are not yet aflame with the light of holiness and to ignite them.” **Selah**

Psalm of The Parashah

Psalm 68

For the music director, a psalm of David, a song. Let G-d arise! Let His enemies be scattered! Let those who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is blown away, may You blow them away. As wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before G-d. But let the righteous be glad. Let them exult before G-d. Let them rejoice with gladness. Sing to G-d, sing praises to His Name. Prepare the road for Him who rides through the deserts, whose Name is *HASHEM*—and rejoice before Him. A father of orphans, defender of widows, is G-d in His holy dwelling. G-d settles the lonely in a home. He leads prisoners out to prosperity. But the rebellious live in a parched land. O G-d, when You went out before Your people, when You marched through the desert—Selah—the earth shook, the heavens rained at the presence of G-d—the One of Sinai—at the presence of G-d, G-d of Israel. You poured down abundant rain, O G-d. You sustained Your weary inheritance. Your community settled in it. In Your goodness, O G-d, You provided for the poor. The Lord gives the word—a great company of women proclaims the good news. “Kings of armies, flee, flee!” She who stays at home divides the spoil. When you lie among the campfires, wings of a dove were covered with silver and her feathers with shimmering gold. When Shaddai scattered kings there, it was snowing on Zalmon. Mount Bashan is a mountain of G-d. Mount Bashan is a mountain of peaks. Why do you gaze with envy, you mountain peaks, at the mountain G-d desired for His dwelling? Yes, *HASHEM* will dwell there forever! The chariots of G-d are thousands and thousands—my Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness. You went up on high. You led captivity captive. You received gifts from humanity, even from the rebellious—so that G-d might dwell there. Blessed be my Lord! Day by day He bears our burdens—the G-d of our salvation! Selah G-d is for us—a G-d of deliverance. *HASHEM* my Lord has escapes from death. Surely G-d crushes the head of His foes, the hairy scalp of one walking in his guilt. My Lord said “I will bring them back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea. So your foot may wade in blood, and your dogs’ tongue may have their share of your enemies’ blood.” They have seen Your processions, O G-d—the processions of my G-d, my King, into the Sanctuary: The singers go before, the musicians last, between maidens beating tambourines. “Bless G-d in the congregations—*HASHEM*, from the fountain of Israel.” There Benjamin, the youngest, is leading them, there the throng of Judah’s princes, there the princes of Zebulun, there the princes of Naphtali. Your G-d commanded your strength. Strengthen, O G-d, You who have acted for us. From Your Temple above Jerusalem, kings bring You tribute. Rebuke the beast of the reeds, the herd of bulls with the calves, peoples trampling down pieces of silver. He has scattered the peoples who delight in war! Nobles come from Egypt. Cush runs to stretch her hands to G-d. Sing to G-d, kingdoms of the earth, sing praises to the Lord—Selah—to Him who rides upon the ancient heavens of heavens. Look, He utters His voice, a mighty voice! Ascribe strength to G-d—His majesty is over Israel and His strength is in the skies. O G-d, You are awesome from Your holy places. The G-d of Israel gives strength and power to the people. Blessed be G-d!



שבת שולחן ניצוצות **Shabbat Table Sparks** *Continued*

א *You shall bring the Levites...Num. 8:10* Rabbi Munk writes: “Rashi comments that the Levites were symbolically offered up as an atonement sacrifice for the sins of the Children of Israel. Thus, the people had to come and stand by their sacrifice and lay their hands upon them. Apparently, although the Levites were originally offered to redeem the firstborn only, the people of Israel came to consider them as an atonement sacrifice for the nation as a whole.” **How could you use this insight to explain the concept of Messiah Yeshua being a sacrifice for us?**

ת *And to atone for the Children of Israel...Num. 8:19* Talmud Yerushalmi Pesachim 4:1 and Arachin 11a both state that the Levites provided atonement through their songs. Rabbi Munk, quoting from Yerushalmi Pesachim 4:5, comments to Numbers 4:22 that “the singing of hymns to accompany the sacrifices [was a part of the Levitical avodah (service)]...Singing is not considered an independent type of service but it is considered an essential part of the communal sacrifices, which lose their ability to atone for the sins of the people if not accompanied by song.” It would seem that music is critical to the atonement service. **Why do you think that music plays such an instrumental role (no pun intended) in this service?**

ה *The people did not travel until Miraim had returned...Num. 12:15* The Kehot Chumash says: “This verse contains a message for all of Jewish history. Without “Miriam,” without the Jewish woman, the Jewish people cannot travel on their journey toward their destiny. All the Moseses and Aarons in the world cannot replace Miriam. Women must therefore take an active role in all aspects of Jewish life, especially the education of the next generation, the means by which the Jewish people proceed further toward their destined goal. Without Miriam, neither the Jewish nation, the ark, nor the Clouds of Glory can proceed.” **Selah**



A Mikvah Moment

“Taharat HaMishpachah should bring us happiness, satisfaction, and inner peace. However, by no means should the comfort and relaxation we feel in its observance give way to casualness or carelessness. A woman who constantly seeks stringencies, overzealously clinging to her conception of the laws, and one who keeps the laws carelessly, ignoring basic elements of their performance, share the same fundamental error: neither is committed to following the mitzvah as it is.” **The Secret of Jewish Femininity, Abromov**

An Inspirational Story

Men Can Meet

In the course of a journey, Rabbi Yehudah Zevi of Stretyn learned that Rabbi Shimon of Yaroslav was traveling the same road from the opposite direction. He got out of his carriage and went to meet him. Now Rabbi Shimon had heard of Rabbi Yehudah Zevi’s coming, got out of his carriage, and went toward him. They greeted each other like brothers. Then Rabbi Yehudah Zevi said: “Now I understand the meaning of the popular saying: ‘Men can meet, but mountains never.’ When one man considers himself just a human being, pure and simple, and the other does so too, they can meet. But if the one considers himself a lofty mountain, and the other thinks the same, then they cannot meet.”

The Drug

A learned but ungenerous man said to Rabbi Abraham of Stretyn: “They say that you give people mysterious drugs and that your drugs are effective. Give me one that I may attain the fear of G-d.” “I don’t know of any drug for the fear of G-d,” said Rabbi Abraham. “But if you like I can give you one for the love of G-d.”

“That’s even better!” Cried the man. “Just you give it to me.”

“It is the love of one’s fellow men,” answered the tzaddik.

A Spark Of Mussar

“In order to understand *fear* of heaven, one must seek it out as he would *silver* and search for it as he would hidden *treasure*”

~ R’ Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, Contributed by Batyah Gage