



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

Shabbat Table Sparks

Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table

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Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“The nations will say before G-d: Master of the Universe, did You give us the Torah and we did not accept it? Since we never received the Torah, why are we being judged for not fulfilling its mitzvot? The Gemara asks: And can one say that they were never offered the Torah? But isn't it written in the description of the giving of the Torah: “And he said: The

Lord came from Sinai, and rose from Seir unto them” (Deuteronomy 33:2), and it is written: “G-d comes from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran” (Habakkuk 3:3). And the Sages asked: What did G-d require in Seir and what did He require in Paran? The

Torah was not given in those locations. And Rabbi Yohanan says: This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, took the Torah around to every nation and those who speak every language, such as the Edomites in Seir and the Ishmaelites in Paran, but they did not accept it, until He came to the Jewish people and they accepted it. If the other nations all rejected the Torah, how can they excuse themselves by claiming that it was never offered to them? Rather, this is what they say: Did we accept the Torah and then not fulfill its mitzvot? The Gemara asks: But this itself serves as the refutation of their own claim, as

one can respond: Why didn't you accept it? Rather, this is what the nations of the world say before Him: Master of the Universe, did You overturn the mountain above us like a basin,

and we still did not accept the Torah, as You did for the Jewish people? The Gemara provides the background for this claim: As it is written: “And they stood at the nether part of the mount” (Exodus 19:17), and Rav Dimi bar Ama says: The verse teaches that the

Holy One, Blessed be He, overturned the mountain, i.e., Mount Sinai, above the Jews like a basin, and He said to them: If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there, under the mountain, will be your burial. The nations of the world will claim that they too could have been coerced to accept the Torah. The Gemara asks: And from where do we derive that

they did not fulfill them? As Rav Yosef teaches in explanation of the verse: “He stands, and shakes the earth; He sees, and makes the nations tremble [vayater]” (Habakkuk 3:6): What did G-d see? He saw the seven mitzvot that the descendants of Noah accepted upon themselves, and He saw that they did not fulfill them. Since they did not fulfill them, He

arose and nullified for them [vehitiran] the command to heed these mitzvot. The Gemara asks: Do they gain from not obeying, as they are now released from the obligation to fulfill

these mitzvot? If so, we find that a sinner profits from his transgression. Mar, son of Ravina, said: This serves to say that even if they fulfill the seven Noahide mitzvot they do not receive a reward for their fulfillment.” **Avodah Zarah 2b**

Parashah Behar - Bechukotai Leviticus 25:1-27:34

N Ibn Ezra comments to Deuteronomy 31:12 that the purpose of Shemittah is to enable the people to study Torah for an entire year out of every seven, in the same way that the Sabbath permits us to study Torah for an entire day in the week. **Why is it so important to avoid mundane thoughts and conversations on Shabbat?**

Psalm of The Parashah

Psalm 112

Halleluyah! Happy is the man who fears *HASHEM*, who delights greatly in His *mitzvot*. His offspring will be mighty in the land. The generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. Light shines in the darkness for the upright. Gracious, compassionate, and just is he. Good comes to a man who is gracious and lends. He will order his affairs with fairness. Surely, he will never be shaken. The righteous are remembered forever. He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in *HASHEM*. His heart is secure, he will not fear until he gazes on his foes. He gives freely to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. His horn is lifted high in honor. The wicked will see it and be indignant. He will gnash with his teeth and waste away. The desire of the wicked will perish.



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ב *You must not work him with backbreaking labor...Lev. 25:43* The Chassidic Insights comment to this verse: “As mentioned above, working without purpose is demoralizing and can even drive a person insane, whereas working with purpose—even if the task requires extraordinary effort—is richly rewarding. The satisfaction we gain from the sense of accomplishment is greater even than that which we derive from the wages we earn.” ***Why do you believe that work is so rewarding?***

ג *It shall be the Jubilee Year...Lev. 25:10* Rabbi Munk’s commentary states, “According to Rashi, the Jubilee [Yovel] Year draws its name from the sounding of the shofar, the Yovel-horn. R’ Akiva in Rosh HaShanah 26a tells of having heard the word Yovel used in Arabic-speaking lands to designate the ram, but R’ Levi in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachot 19:13) argues that Yovel refers to the horn of the chamois. Rambam is of the opinion that Yovel refers to *d’ror* (freedom). He sees this word as implying a transfer in the sense of restitution; the Yovel Year would then signify that property comes back into the possession of the original owner and his family. The Kabbalist relate this term to Jeremiah’s words: “and spreads its roots to the river” (Jeremiah 17:8). In this verse, Yovel is synonymous with a river or stream to which the roots of a tree planted at the water’s edge will grow. This gives it the sense of a return to roots, meaning thereby that all the fields return to their original owners and each generation goes back to its original status.” ***We often use the picture of “Jubilee” as a reference to the final redemption. How does this insight further shape that vision for you?***

ד *To annul My covenant...Lev. 26:15* Rabbi Munk writes: “Breaking G-d’s covenant is equivalent to denying Him and completes a cycle of seven sins, one naturally leading to another (Rashi). The seven successive sins are as follows: 1. Not studying the Torah; 2. Not doing the mitzvot; 3. Rejecting others who do mitzvot; 4. Hating Rabbinic leaders; 5. Preventing others from doing mitzvot; 6. Denying commandments; 7. Denying the principles of G-d’s Divinity. That is the whole story of Jewish decline, against which the Tochachah gives solemn warning.” ***Selah***



A Mikvah Moment

“I asked the busy mikvah attendant what to do if a siren should suddenly signal a missile attack...there had been two sirens the night before, and those sirens hadn’t stopped anyone from proceeding with the precious mitzvah of mikvah. Saddam Hussein would have been infuriated...HaShem was running the world and we were following his directives.” **Total Immersion**

An Inspirational Story

Concerning Hospitality

A man came and complained to Rabbi Mendel that he could not fulfil the commandment to be hospitable because his wife did not like to have guests, and whenever he brought people to the house it gave rise to quarrels which threatened his domestic peace.

The rabbi said, “Our Sages say: ‘Welcoming guests is a greater virtue than welcoming the Divine Presence.’ This may sound exaggerated to us. But we must understand it properly. It is said that when there is peace between husband and wife the Divine Presence rests in their minds. That is why welcoming guests is described as being more important than welcoming the Divine Presence. Even if hospitality destroys the peace that exists between man and his wife, the commandment to be hospitable is still the more important.”

The Way

R” Baer of Radoshitz once said to his teacher, the rabbi of Lublin: “Show me on a general way to the service of G-d.” The zaddik replied: “It is impossible to tell men what way they should take. For one way to serve G-d is through the teachings, another through prayer, another through fasting, and still another through eating. Everyone should carefully observe what way his heart draws him to, and then choose this way with all his strength.”

A Spark Of Mussar

“The *penitent* person should take to heart that it was his physical desire that induced him to transgress and to pull sin upon himself with cords of falsehood. Therefore, he should create a *fence* to protect the path of teshuvah that he has taken...”

~ R’ Yona, Sha’arei Teshuvah, Contributed by Batyah Gage