



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

Shabbat Table Sparks

Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table

BY RABBI MORDECAI GRIFFIN | A SHABBAT TORAH LEARNING PROGRAM OF SAR SHALOM SYNAGOGUE AND LAPID JUDAISM | Shevat 5780

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Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“ R. Tarphon said: "The Sabbath lamps should be lit only by means of olive oil." Thereupon R. Jochanan b. Nuri stood up and said: "What shall the Babylonians do who have nothing else but poppyseed oil? And what shall the Medeans do who have nothing else but nut-oil? And what shall the Alexandrians do who have nothing else but radish-oil? And what shall the Kapadocian do who have none of these oils but naphtha? We therefore have no recourse but to accept the words of the sages who pointed out those oils with which it is not permitted to light the Sabbath lamp [and claimed the others to be suitable for that purpose].” **Ein Yaakov, Shabbat 2:8**

Parashah Bo Exodus 10:1-13:16

א *This month shall be for you the beginning of the months...* Ex. 12:2 This is the first mitzvah given to the Jewish people. Tishrei is the month from which we count the *years*, however, Nissan is the month from which we count the *months*. As Ramban says, “but it is the first month for you, meaning that it is called ‘first’ only as a remembrance to us of our redemption from the Egyptian bondage.” The very first mitzvah to Israel is directly associate with the event of redemption. **Why do you think that HaShem made this connection?**

ב The New Moon is called Rosh Chodesh in Hebrew. Chodesh is directly relate to the word *Chadash* meaning “new”. One of the definitions of *chadash* is to “polish a sword”. The first use is in 1 Samuel 11:14, “Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and *renew* the kingdom there.” So, the context of “new” in scripture is renew. Thus the “new moon” is actually a renewal of the month; an opportunity for a new beginning. **Given this information, what impact does this have on the concept of a “new testament” from a Hebrew mindset?**

ג Prior to the Babylonian exile, the months of the calendar were known simply by their number. After the Jews returned to the land, they continued to be called by their Babylonian names. This is understood to fulfill the scripture in Jeremiah 16:14-15 and 23:7-8. As Ramban states, “Thus we recall through the current names of the months the second redemption, just as we did until then for the first redemption.” So, the final redemption will actually be the third redemption. **How many times did Moses ascend the mountain?**

Psalm of The Parashah

Psalm 77

I cry to HaShem; I call and call to him. Oh, that he would listen. I am in deep trouble and I need his help so much. All night long I pray, lifting my hands to heaven, pleading. There can be no joy for me until he acts. I think of G-d and moan, overwhelmed with longing for his help. I cannot sleep until you act. I am too distressed even to pray! I keep thinking of the good old days of the past, long since ended. Then my nights were filled with joyous songs. I search my soul and meditate upon the difference now. Has HaShem rejected me forever? Will he never again be favorable? Is his loving-kindness gone forever? Has his promise failed? Has he forgotten to be kind to one so undeserving? Has he slammed the door in anger on his love? And I said: This is my fate, that the blessings of G-d have changed to hate. I recall the many miracles he did for me so long ago. Those wonderful deeds are constantly in my thoughts. I cannot stop thinking about them. O G-d, your ways are holy. Where is there any other as mighty as you? You are the G-d of miracles and wonders! You still demonstrate your awesome power. You have redeemed us who are the sons of Jacob and of Joseph by your might. When the Red Sea saw you, how it feared! It trembled to its depths! The clouds poured down their rain, the thunder rolled and crackled in the sky. Your lightning flashed. There was thunder in the whirlwind; the lightning lighted up the world! The earth trembled and shook. Your road led by a pathway through the sea-a pathway no one knew was there! You led your people along that road like a flock of sheep, with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds.



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T *Against all the gods of Egypt I shall mete out punishment...Ex. 12:12* Ramban brings down an insights from Sanhedrin 38b interpreting the verse to mean, “G-d Himself, and not through the emissary that is generally sent from Him, may He be blessed, to oversee all the Divine actions that ate performed on the earth. And that is the great angel who is called Metatron.” (The halacha is not to say His Name for it is like that of the Most High. Thus we say Mem-Tet). Ramban goes on to explain that the Name *Metatron* means “one who shows the way”. Rabbenu Bachya defines it slightly differently in his comments to this verse as “someone teaching the way”. It becomes clear that Metatron is not merely an angel. In fact, one source calls Him the “King of Angels”. Like Yosef to Pharaoh, He is separated from HaShem only by the throne. **Selah.**

T The meaning of the word “Metatron” is unclear, although various sources explain the name differently. Modern dictionaries define the Latin prefix “meta-” as “beyond” and the Latin suffix “-tron” as “instrument”; this implies that the translation of Metatron should be “Exceptional Tool” or something similar. Rabbi Nosson Ben Yechiel of Rome (1035-1106) wrote that the definition of Metator is a watchman. Rabbi Chanoch Zundel ben Yosef (d. 1867) expanded this definition by explaining that a Metatar, in the Roman language, was a scout who was appointed to travel ahead of legions of armies in order to find places of rest for the proceeding soldiers. Nachmanides writes that the word “Metatar” means messenger or agent in the Greek language. Rabbenu Bachaya writes that the term is related to the word “Matron” or “Mother” who is a mistress of her husband’s household, just as Metatron manages and operates the household of G-d (in whatever that that is supposed to be understood). ~ *Reb Chaim HaQoton* **In what way is Yeshua the Agnet of HaShem? What does the halacha say about the status of an appointed agent?** [Hint: If you have seen me....]



A Mikvah Moment

“That purification from all kinds of defilement shall be effected by immersion in the waters of a Mikvah, as it is said, “... then he shall wash all his flesh in water” (Lev. 15:16). It has been learnt by tradition that this means that the washing must be in a sufficient quantity of water, so that the entire body is totally immersed at one time.” **Mishnah Torah, Positive Mitzvah 109**

An Inspirational Story

The Lone Ember

In the 1700s there lived a man who held himself apart from his community. He did not attend shul; he stayed away from weddings, funerals and any other communal gathering; he made it clear that in his opinion he could live perfectly well on his own. One day the rabbi of the community paid him a visit in his home. The man was understandably surprised to be receiving such an honored guest and wondered what the rabbi might wish to say to him, but the rabbi said nothing at all. He sat himself down at the fireplace, took a stick from the woodpile, and separated from the fire just one red-hot ember. He stared at the ember, with the man silent at his side, until all the heat and light had gone from it. There it lay, dead, cold and alone. The rabbi rose and made his way to the door, without having said a word. The man paused him at the door, thanked him for his passionate, moving, and eloquent drash saying, “Bezrat HaShem, I shall see you in shul this Sabbath.” *Adapted from “Living on the Edge,” by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, with permission from Judaica Press, Inc.*

“And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”
Hebrews 10:25

A Spark Of Mussar

“A person who has

mastered peace of *mind* has gained everything.”

~ R’ Simcha Zissel, contributed by Batyah Gage