



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

# Shabbat Table Sparks

**Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table**

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## Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“The hour before the Sabbath is an extremely precious time and a period of grace... One should contemplate all the sins that he has done during the previous week, from Sunday to Friday. He should repent completely, confessing his sins before G-d and resolving never again to go on such a path.”

**Me'am Lo'ez to Genesis 2:1**

### Parashah Breishit Chayei Sarah 23:1-25:18

**א** Concerning the life of Sarah, the Chassidic Insights comment, “During Sarah's lifetime, three ongoing miracles occurred in her merit [Her Sabbath candles remained lit, her bread dough was blessed, and the Divine presence remained over her tent]: These three miracles correspond to the three commandments that G-d entrusted specifically to women: lighting the Sabbath lights, separating challah from the dough, and observing the laws governing a married couple's intimate relations. The fact that these three miracles all occurred for Sarah indicates that her life was the quintessential expression of Jewish womanhood.” **Why do you think that the “Divine Presence over the tent” is connected to family purity?**

**ב** Where was Isaac? The Torah does not mention Isaac until Genesis 24:62. Rabbeinu Bachyah comments to this by saying, “Yitzchak had decided to remain for some time on Mount Moriah until he became forty years of age when he married Rivkah. At that point the Torah does mention that Yitzchak had come “from the well of the Living One who Sees,” the well at which Hagar's prayers had once been answered.” So, we see a precedent that the Akeidah remained “hidden” after his sacrifice and returned later for his bride. **Rabbi often speaks about a “precedent” in Jewish texts. What is a precedent and why is it important?**

**ג** Me'am Lo'ez wrote: “Where ever a saint dies; he atones for the sins of his generation....His death is like a sacrifice.” **Selah**

## Psalm of The Parashah

### Psalm 45

For the music director, according to “Lilies.”  
Of the sons of Korah, a contemplative song, a love song. My heart is stirred with a good word. I speak my verses to the king. My tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. You are the most handsome of the sons of men. Grace pours from your lips. Therefore, G-d has blessed you forever. Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and your majesty. In your majesty ride victoriously, on behalf of truth, meekness and justice. Let your right hand display awesome things. Your arrows are sharp. Peoples fall beneath you into the heart of the king's enemies. Your throne, O G-d, is forever and ever, and a scepter of justice is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, G-d, your G-d, anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions. All your robes have myrrh, aloes, cassia. From ivory palaces, stringed instruments make you glad. Kings' daughters are among your honored women. At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. “Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house. Then the king will desire your beauty. Honor him, for he is your lord. A daughter of Tyre comes with a gift. The richest people will court your favor.” All glorious is the king's daughter within the palace her gown is interwoven with gold. She will be led to the king in embroidered garments. Her virgins, her companions following her, are coming in to you. They are led in with joy and gladness they enter into the palace of the king. Your sons will take your fathers' place. You will make them princes throughout the land. I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations. Therefore, the nations will praise you forever and ever.



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**ר** Me'am Lo'ez commentary to Chayei Sarah Genesis 23:2 says, "In the Torah scroll, the letter (כ) in the word *velibeikotai* (and to weep for her) is small. This is an allusion that when a person mourns another, he should be humble, saying to himself, "This good person died because of my sins." In a similar way, the Sages teach that when we mourn the destruction of the Temple we will merit to see it rebuilt. **Why do you think that mourning the loss has such relevance and meaning?**

**ה** According to Rashi, Isaac took Rebecca to be his wife only after he observed that she had the same anointing of his mother. He was looking for a woman dedicated to the mission. One of the things that he observed about Rebecca is that her Shabbat candles burned all week just like Sarah's. The Gutnick Chumash comments, "In recent years the custom for girls to light shabbos candles before their marriage has re-emerged. This is actually an ancient practice...here we see that Rivkah lit candles before she was married...". For this reason, it is important that we train our daughters (from the age of three years) to kindle the Sabbath lights! **Why do you think that Isaac recognized this mitzvah as "the sign" that Rebecca was the true bride?**

**ך** Who was Keturah? Rabbeinu Bachya comments, "Bereshit Rabbah 61:4 which held that Keturah was none other than Hagar, the mother of Ishmael...the name Keturah reflects the concept of *keturot*, incense, because her personal deeds were as pleasing to G-d as incense is to Him as a sacrificial offering." **Hagar presumably had a complete transformation. Why do you think that a change of name is often so vital after conversion?**



## **A Mikvah Moment**

"When she immerses herself, she must have in attendance a Jewish woman, older than twelve years and one day, to see that none of her hair remains floating on the water. If there is no woman available, her husband may stand by her to see to it that she immerses properly... After immersing properly, while she is still standing in the water, she should recite the berachah: *Asher kideshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu al hatevillah*. ("Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us concerning immersion.") ... Some women are accustomed after reciting the berachah to immerse one more time, and this is a proper custom. **Shulchan Aruch Siman 162**

## **An Inspirational Story**

### **Temptation**

Rabbi Mikhal said: "When the evil urge tries to tempt man to sin, it tempts him to become all too righteous." *Tales of the Hasidim pg. 153*

### **Satan's Hasidim**

In his old age, Rabbi Mikhal fasted on many occasions. Finally one of his disciples ventured to ask him the reason for this self-mortification. The Rabbi answered: "I must tell you that Satan has made up his mind to rid the world of hasidim. First he tried to harass us: he instigated persecutions; he had us maligned and denounced [by the Rabbinic authorities and leaders]. He fanned the flames of enmity in houses and alleys, and thought that in these ways he could make us despair, that we should grow exhausted, and become renegades. But when he realized that his plan had miscarried, and that the ranks he had wanted to weaken, were strengthened, he thought up something new. He decided to make hasidim of his own. Soon after, thousands of Satan's hasidim spread over the land and joined forces with the true hasidim, so that truth was mixed with falsehood. That is why I fasted. I thought I could thwart this plan of his too. But now I shall not fast anymore, for I see that I cannot keep Satan from continuing to make his own hasidim. But those who consecrate and truly dedicate themselves to the service of G-d, those G-d will separate from the false hasidim. He will light their eyes with the light of His face, so that for them truth will not be mixed with lies." *Tales of the Hasidim pg. 154*

*I know your tribulation and your poverty (yet you are rich), as well as the slander of those who say they are Jewish and are not, but are of the synagogue of satan."*  
Rev. 2:9

### **A Spark Of Mussar**

"A small *deed* done is humility is a *thousand* times more acceptable to G-d than a great *deed* done in pride."

~ Orchof Tzaddikim 1540, contributed by Batyah Gage