



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 | Cheshvan 5780

**Want to Learn More?**  
Visit [www.mySarShalom.com](http://www.mySarShalom.com)  
Or [www.myLapid.com](http://www.myLapid.com)

## Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“What is meant by honor? The sages explained this by declaring that each person should wash his face, hands and feet with hot water on Friday in honor of the Sabbath, and then enwrap himself in a fringed garment and be seated with dignity in expectation of the Sabbath, receiving it as if he were coming out to meet the king. The ancient sages used to assemble their disciples on Friday, put on their best clothes, and say: “Come, let us go out to meet King Sabbath.” We honor the Sabbath by wearing clean clothes. One must not wear weekday apparel on the Sabbath. **Mishneh Torah, Shabbat 30**

### Parashah Breishit Lech Lecha 12:1-17:27

**א** *Go for yourself...Gen. 12:1* The Kehot Chumash comments: “Literally, this command reads, “Go to you.” This instruction to Abram is also an instruction for every individual: “Go to you”—return and connect to the real you, to your essence and spiritual root.” Rabbi Munk comments that separating from one’s homeland, family, and traditions is the “first step toward the realization of Judaism. In deed he says that “to be a Jew means to break with ‘the crowd’.” **Why do you think that being Jewish requires such separation? Isn’t it true that, in this case, we leave home to come home?**

**ב** *Go...that I will show you...Gen. 12:1* The Chassidic Insights says, “Just as, in order to spread the message of G-d to all humanity, it became necessary to isolate a unique nation from all others and dedicate it as G-d’s messengers, it also became necessary to isolate a unique homeland for that nation from all other countries and designate it as the stage from which G-d’s nation would deliver His message to the world.” **What is HaShem’s message to “all humanity”? Why do you think that this message requires a “Holy Land”?**

**ג** *For he was residing in Sodom...Gen. 14:12* Sodom wanted to go to the “big city” and experience the carnality of idolatry. According to 2 Peter 2:7-8, sin seems to have taken him too far. He was tormented by their debauchery. Rabbi Munk points out that “Jewish ghettos existed not only against the Jews but also for them.” We were kept separate but this also meant that we were kept out of the gentile world. **How can we avoid being coming like Lot, being drawn away to carnality?**

## Psalm of The Parashah

### Psalm 110

Of David a psalm. The word of the Lord to my master; “Wait for My right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool at your feet.” The staff of your might the Lord will send from Zion; rule in the midst of your enemies. Your people will volunteer on the day of your host, because of the beauty of holiness when you fell from the womb; for you, your youth is like dew. The Lord swore and will not repent; you are a priest forever because of the speech of Malchizedek. The Lord, on your right hand, has crushed kings on the day of His wrath. He will execute justice upon the nations [into] a heap of corpses; He crushed the head on a great land. From the stream on the way he would drink; therefore, he raised his head.



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

**T** *The followers they had persuaded to accept monotheism...Gen. 12:5* The Chassidic insights to this verse states: “Abram's love of G-d was so palpable that its intensity inspired others to abandon their idolatrous lifestyles and serve the one, true G-d. Like a large flame that attracts smaller sparks, Abram's fiery love for G-d attracted and awakened the sparks of G-dly devotion dormant in these people.” Basically, Abraham was a Lapid to his generation. ***How can we enhance our love of HaShem so that it shines like a Torch?***

**T** Gam Zu L'Tovah means “This too is for the best”. Abraham had the opportunity to experience this reality from the onset of his great mission. He went to the “Promised Land” only to find a famine. He was forced to go to Egypt, to suffer the depravity of that land, and to risk his very life. Yet, he emerged with great wealth, fame, and respect of the surrounding people. What seemed to be a “curse” ended up being a tremendous blessing! Gam zu l'tova. We need to condition ourselves to say this at every instance. When we are met with a difficult situation, we need to resist the tenancy to be negative, pessimistic, and (G-d forbid) angry at HaShem. ***Discuss some “gam zu l'tova” moments in your life?***

**T** *Walk in My ways...Gen.17:1* Sichot Kodesh, vol. 1, p. 397 says: “Abraham had been walking in G-d's ways for virtually his whole life. But the level of Divine living to which G-d wished to elevate him now was infinitely more exalted. Relatively, then, he would only now begin to truly walk in G-d's ways.” Torah is an enhancement of our spiritual walk. When we find it, it is not a new path, it is an aliyah. We become like Abraham. ***How has your life been “elevated” in Torah-true Judaism?***

## **A Mikvah Moment**

“There are so many reasons to love the mikvah (Jewish ritual bath). My love for mikvah inspired me to keep kosher, observe the Jewish Sabbath, and cover my hair as a married woman...I discovered traditional Yiddishkeit (Judaism) during my childbearing years, and then had the opportunity and great blessing to have relations and conceive children while involved with the holy practice of mikvah. This action bestowed spiritual blessing on my children and my family, acting as a Teshuvah (repentance) retroactively for all the years that I did not practice mikvah. I know these things because they were passed to me through an unbroken oral tradition, a living practice that I accessed because I sought out people who maintain and guard these traditions.”

***Why I Love the Mikvah, by Wendy Kenin***

## **An Inspirational Story**

### **Better than Bamidbar**

Once on the eighth day of the festival of Sukkot there was a great rejoicing at the table of the Rabbi of Tchoortkov. He laughed and asked: “Why are you people so exceedingly happy? Have you had a drop to drink?”

“There hasn’t been time to drink,” they replied. “We stayed in the house of Prayer for a long time, and then we came straight to the Rabbi’s table. We are just happy because of the festival and because we are with our Rabbi.”

“It is true,” said he, “that the moment the people of Israel feel the least bit of revelation, they are filled with an overwhelming joy.” And after a while he went on: “I say that this generation of ours from whom G-d hides in great secrecy is better than the wilderness generation. They were vouchsafed that great revelation, of which a servant maid, so it is told, saw more than the prophet Ezekiel saw later on, and they had tremendous spiritual powers, and their master was Moses. But now G-d is hidden, and our strength is slight, and yet the moment we sense the least bit of revelation we are uplifted and full of joy. That is why I say: This generation is better than the wilderness generation.”

*“These men are not drunk, as you suppose for it’s only the third hour of the day!” Acts 2:15*

## **A Spark Of Mussar**

“We are all blessed with

*flaws*. The most crippling flaw is the *refusal* to be introspective and honest about them.”

~ R’ Moshe Don Kestenbaum, contributed by Batyah Gage