



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

# Shabbat Table Sparks

**Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table**

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## Insights & Questions From the Parashah

*“Three who ate at one table and said upon it words of Torah, it is as if they ate from the table of the Holy One, blessed be He...” Pirkei Avot 3:3*

### Parashah Matot-Masei Numbers 30:2-36:13

**א** The first portion of Matot is about how to annul a vow. Rabbi Munk comments to these opening verses by stating, “The Shulchan Aruch begins its discussion of the laws of vows and oaths with the advice that we not become accustomed to utter vows (Yoreh Deah 203:1). Furthermore, the Shulchan Aruch states that to make a vow is like building an altar at a time when that was forbidden, and to carry it out is equivalent to offering a sacrifice on the altar outside the Temple.” Messiah Yeshua also taught strongly against taking a vow, “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” ***Why do you think that taking a vow is discouraged with such strong teaching?***

**ב** Vows are usually taken to prohibit something unto ourselves that the Torah permits. The Talmud Yerushalmi Kidushin 4:12 says, “In the future, every person will be called to account for the pleasures that he encountered but did not partake of.” In Yerushalmi Nedarim 9:5 we read, “Is that which the Torah has forbidden not enough for you, that you must seek to prohibit yourself from other things as well?” And finally, we are encouraged in Talmud Bavli Yevamot 20a to “sanctify yourself with that which is permitted to you.” ***Why do you think that the Sages discouraged prohibiting to oneself that which is permitted? What is the potential danger?***

**ג** In Bamidbar Chapter 31 we read about the war with Midian. It was, as the Torah says, a war “to inflict HaShem’s vengeance...” R’ Munk quotes Rashi (to Dt. 23:9) to explain why HaShem was particularly vengeful against Midian as opposed to other aggressors. He writes, “that someone who kills a man takes his life in this world, whereas someone who causes him to sin takes his life from the World to Come.” Yeshua HaMoshiach said, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Instead, fear the One

## Psalm of the Parashah

### Psalm 111

Halleluyah! I praise HASHEM with all my heart in the company and congregation of the upright. Great are the works of HASHEM searched out by all who delight in them. Glorious and majestic is His work, and His righteousness endures forever. He made His wonders memorable. HASHEM is gracious and full of compassion. He gives food to those who fear Him. He remembers His covenant forever. He shows His people His powerful deeds, giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of His hands are truth and justice. All His precepts are trustworthy they are upheld forever and ever, made in truth and uprightness. He has sent redemption to His people. He has ordained His covenant forever. Holy and awesome is His Name. The fear of HASHEM is the beginning of wisdom. All who follow His precepts have good understanding. His praise endures forever!



## Inspirational Stories

### When All Else Fails

Rashi comments to Bamidbar 31:8: Bilaam came against Israel and exchanged his craft with their craft, for they triumphed only with their mouth, through prayer and supplication. Prayer can accomplish anything. At times, people come to me with difficult questions regarding *shalom bayit*. “I’ve done everything to bring peace to our home,” the husband or wife will tell me, “but nothing is helping.” Other times, *baalei teshuvah* come to be and tell me that their spouses are unwilling to go along with their religious observance. “What should I do?” They ask. “I tried so hard to follow the suggestions I was given, but nothing worked!”...That is when I give them the real advice. “You’ve done everything in your power,” I tell them. “Now, let HaShem do what is in His power to do. Hope and pray for HaShem’s salvation, and you will see that, in the end, things will fall into place in the best possible way.” ~ *From Aleinu L’Shabeiach*

### A Spark Of Mussar

“A person who tries to practice trust in *HaShem* while leaving himself a backup plan is like a person who tries to learn to *swim* but insists on keeping one foot on the ground.”

~ Contributed by Batyah Gage  
From Rabbi Hurwitz Alter of Novarodok



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who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.” (Matt. 10:28) **What is sin? How can one “cause us to sin”?**

**T** Parasha Matot teaches us that even the Levites fought against Midian. The Gutnick chumash commentary, “Sparks of Chasidus”, explains the reason why: “What is the “subtle evil” that can plague even the most dedicated servant of G-d?...a lack of unity and camaraderie between one man and another, indicating underlying emotions of divisiveness and unjustified hatred.” **What are some practical ways in which we can fight this “war” to eradicate divisiveness and to bring love and unity?**

**T** In Bamidbar 35 we learn about the cities of refuge. In Makos 10a the Sages state that the words of Torah protect like a City of Refuge. Similarly, Psalm 18:3 says, “HaShem is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. My God is my rock, in Him I take refuge, my shield, my horn of salvation, my stronghold.” Also, Proverbs 30:5 says, “Every word of G-d is purified. He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.” **How do the Words of Torah protect us? If we are in Torah are we also “in HaShem?” Yes or No? Please explain.**

**T** Bamidbar 35:11, “and to such a city a murderer who killed a person unintentionally shall flee.”...Rabbeinu Bachya comments that such a person is not guilty of the death penalty because he did not intend to kill his victim. This proves that both heart and action must be in unity in order to receive the full punishment. Likewise, even if one performed a mitzvot with all of its details but did so without true feeling, it has no value. (Nazir 23a). **How do we ignite passion for serving HaShem? We all go through times of spiritual lethargy. In those times, how can we re-ignite the fire of emunah in our hearts?**



### A Mikvah Moment

“Tumah, 'spiritual impurity', is definable as the absence of holiness. Chasidic philosophy states that true holiness is when one’s own independence existence is nullified to G-d.” **Total Immersion, pg. 62**