



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

Shabbat Table Sparks

Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table

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Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“On the Sabbath we are to eat well (meat) and drink well (wine), to dress in finery, to engage in marital relations with our wives and in general to call the Sabbath, “a delight,” (Isaiah.58.13)...adopting the ways of the Torah results in man becoming a happy personality.”

Rabbeinu Bachya Devarim 18:10:4

Parashah Breishit Noach 6:9-11:32

א *Of the birds of the heavens...Gen. 7:3* In the Talmud Zevachim 116a it says that Noah recognized the pure species by whether or not the Ark accepted them or rejected them. The word for “Ark” is *Teiva* which also means “Word”. **What does this teach us about how we will be judged when the end of time comes?**

ב *Forty days and forty nights...Gen. 7:4* The number 40 has great spiritual significance. Rashi points out that the human fetus takes 40 days to form. Therefore, the rains fell for 40 days in order to establish a rebirth of mankind. Moreover, a mikvah requires 40 seah of natural water in order to immerse in a kosher manner. These waters are likened to the amniotic fluid of the womb. When we immerse in a mikvah, we experience rebirth and renewal. **How many times can you visit the mikvah? Why do you think that HaShem would want us to do so?**

ג *HaShem smelled the pleasing aroma...Gen. 8:21* Rabbi Munk comments as follows: “R’ Chanina said: ‘Whoever becomes pacified thanks to the atmosphere created by wine has something of the spiritual of his Creator. He follows G-d’s example. G-d needed only to smell the pleasant odor of Noah’s sacrifice to swear never to curse the world again.’ (Eruvin 65b, Rashi). Our Sages say: ‘the pious are hard to anger, but easy to appease’ (Avot 5:14). **Anger is a terrible trait. What are some practical steps we can take to avoid anger?**

Psalm of The Parashah

Psalm 29

A psalm of David. Ascribe to HASHEM, O sons of G-d, ascribe to HASHEM glory and strength. Ascribe to HASHEM the glory of His Name. Bow down to HASHEM in the beauty of holiness. The voice of HASHEM is over the waters. The G-d of glory thunders HASHEM is over mighty waters. The voice of HASHEM is powerful. The voice of HASHEM is full of majesty. The voice of HASHEM breaks the cedars. Yes, HASHEM shatters cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of HASHEM hews out flames of fire. The voice of HASHEM shakes the desert. HaShem shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of HASHEM makes the deer writhe in birth and strips forests bare, and in His Temple all are saying, “Glory!” HASHEM sits enthroned over the flood. Yes, HASHEM sits as King forever. HASHEM gives strength to His people. HASHEM blesses His people with shalom.



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T In his commentary to Noah, Rabbi Munk makes the following observation about Noah’s sacrifice: “The true servant of G-d is not a visionary, not a sage plunged into mystical contemplation, not a subtle philosopher, not a fanatic or exalted prophet. His religion, far from being limited to prayers, beliefs, ritual practices, or mortification, is first and foremost made up of absolute devotion to G-d. This devotion knows no bounds, it is never-failing, ready to sacrifice fortune, life itself, one’s dearest affections, everything, for the love of G-d. The sacrifices are but the concretization of this ecstasy of devotion.” ***HaShem requires devotion. What does that look like in everyday life? How do we live a life of true “sacrifice”?***

T *Leave the ark...Gen. 8:16* The Kehot Chumash comments: “As we have seen, “entering the ark” is a metaphor for enveloping oneself in the words of Torah study and prayer. It may be tempting to remain in this protective spiritual atmosphere, and its serene perfection might delude us into thinking that there really is no need to perfect the world around us. However, we are instructed to leave it, for the true purpose of entering the ark is to ultimately emerge from it, enter the world, and transform it into God’s home. (This is reflected in the law that one only becomes purified through immersion in a mikveh after having emerged from its waters.) We should not view the departure from our personal ark as self-sacrifice for the sake of others, since leaving the ark benefits and completes us, as well.” ***How does this change your perspective of the “Great commission”?***

T Let us make ourselves a name...Gen. 11:4: The Kehot Chumash states, “The Generation of the Dispersion wished to receive sustenance from on High without curbing their egos and desires.” A key aspect of Torah observance is self-nullification. However, the unspiritual man desires the benefits of “Heaven” without this price. ***What does it mean to make G-d Will our will?***

A Mikvah Moment

“In many ways, mikvah is the threshold separating the unholy from the holy, but it is even more. Simply put, immersion in a mikvah signals a change in status—more correctly, an elevation in status. Its unparalleled function lies in its power of transformation, its ability to effect metamorphosis.”

From the Introduction to Total Immersion

An Inspirational Story

The Glow of Emunah

Rabbi Shmuel noticed an interesting stranger dining at a local tavern. Rabbi Shmuel couldn’t help but notice that the man had a particularly unusual spiritual “glow”. He sensed a holiness in the man. Rabbi Shmuel approached him to inquire. “Can I ask you something?” the Rabbi asked. “Of course!” The man responded.

“Who are you?” asked the Rabbi

“I’m a simple man. I sell shoes for a living, Baruch HaShem!”

“I mean, what do you do spiritually? How long do you pray? How much Torah do you study?” The Rabbi asked searching for his source of “light”.

“I don’t pray. I mean, I try to but I don’t know how to read so I’m able to say the Shema by heart but nothing else. Same goes for learning. Rabbi, I’m afraid that I’m quite ordinary” The man said humbly.

Rabbi Shmuel was still at a loss. Why did the man glow?

The man concluded, “And before I go to sleep I say to G-d: “Master of the world, I ask only one thing from you. If I don’t have what it takes to fulfill the mission for which you created me, don’t wake me up tomorrow. Wake me up only if you believe I can do everything you need me to do in the world.”

Rabbi Shmuel had his answer.

A Spark Of Mussar

“With song and *joy* one can pour out his words like water in the *presence* of the Lord”

~ Rebbe Nachman, contributed by Batyah Gage