



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

# Shabbat Table Sparks

**Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table**

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## Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once saw a Jew accidentally drop his tefillin. Aghast, the man quickly picked it up, dusted it off, kissed it and returned them to their proper place. Rav Yitzchak stopped and looked up to heaven, “HaShem, see how a simple Jew treats his tefillin? What about Your tefillin? HaShem, Your nation is in exile. We are lying on the floor in disgrace as the nations of the worlds trample us underfoot. Have mercy upon us, pick us up, dust us off, kiss us and return us to our proper place.”

Likutei Kedushas HaLevi, p. 204

### Shabbat Chol HaMoed Pesach Ex. 33:12-34:26; Ez. 37:1-14

**נ** Sfas Emes writes a response to the question of why there isn't a blessing to recite the Haggadah?: “The Exodus was important not only to our ancestors but to the universe itself, whose continued existence was in jeopardy until then...without a nation devoted to serving the Creator, the universe would have no reason for continued existence. Thus it would be inappropriate to make a blessing that implies that our ancestors were the main benefactor of the miracles when in reality the entire universe depended on them.” **How has the whole world benefited from the Exodus?**

**ב** The word “Passover” implies a type of *skipping* as stated in Shir HaShirim 2:8: “the voice of my lover...making me skip on the mountains.” When G-d “skipped” over us, He imparted us the spiritual ability to “skip” over spiritual obstacles. Sfas Emes relates that this is the ultimate meaning of Malachi 3:24 “G-d will return the hearts of the fathers to the children.” That is to say that HaShem will give us the ability to “skip” or “leap” beyond our own limitations to follow the path of our forefathers. This all due to the power of the Pesach. **How does the Pesach help us to “leap” to new heights?**

**ג** Rosh HaShanah 21b says that Moses was able to ascend to the fortieth gate of knowledge of G-d. The fiftieth gate, which represents complete comprehension of G-d's ways, eluded him. In reality, no human can ever reach the 50th level. This is why we require a Divine Messiah. **Selah.**

## Psalm of The Parashah

### Psalm 66

For the music director, a song, a psalm. Shout joyfully to G-d, all the earth! Sing the glory of His Name make His praise glorious. Say to G-d: “How awesome are Your deeds! Because of Your great power, Your enemies cringe before You. All the earth bows down to You, and sings praises to You. All sing praises to Your Name.” *Selah* Come and see the works of G-d. How awesome His deeds for the children of Adam! He turned the sea into dry land. They crossed the river on foot. There let us rejoice in Him! He rules by His might forever. His eyes keep watch on the nations. Let no rebels exalt themselves. *Selah* Bless our G-d, O peoples! Let the sound of His praise be heard. Keeping our soul in life, He has not let our foot slip. For You have tested us, O G-d You have purified us, as silver is refined. You brought us into a net. You laid a burden on our backs. You caused men to ride over our heads. We went through fire and water. Yet You brought us out to superabundance. With burnt offerings I will come to Your House, fulfilling my vows to You that my lips uttered and mouth spoke, when I was in trouble. To You I will present burnt offerings of fat animals, with the sweet smoke of rams. I will offer bulls with goats. *Selah* Come and listen, all you who fear G-d. I will tell what He has done for my soul. I cried out to Him with my mouth, and exaltation was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But surely G-d has heard. He has listened to my voice in prayer. Blessed be G-d, who has not turned away my prayer, nor His lovingkindness from me.



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## Shabbat Table Sparks *Continued*

**ד** On the topic of a Divine Messiah, Sfas Emes writes: “The Messiah, however, will reach levels of Divine comprehension attained by no mortal not even Moshe, including the fiftieth gate of Divine understanding. As Yeshaya describes Israel’s future leader: (52:13) “He will be high and very exalted”, the term “very” indicates a level of achievement even higher than Moshe’s.” ***Why do we need a Divine Messiah? Why can a mere man save us?***

**ה** I commend you for doing this...Ex. 34:1 The Chassidic Insights comment: “G-d commended Moses for shattering the tablets because Moses understood them to be the "wedding contract" that implicated them in being unfaithful to their "husband," ...This was Moses' true greatness: he not only gave himself up completely for his people, he was even willing to sacrifice the Torah that he had personally received from G-d for the sake of the lowliest of his flock. This ultimate act of self-sacrifice expresses the depth of Moses' love for each and every Jew.” This insights shows use three key things: 1.) The breaking of the Tablets was an act of mercy. 2.) The Redeemer must sacrifice himself. 3.) Love of others in the ultimate expression of love itself. ***Why did the “wedding contract” have to be broken at this time?***

**ו** Chassidic Insights concerning the Omer: *You must count for yourselves...Lev. 23:15* “The lesson of “counting” and “polishing,” the process of spiritual refinement and maturation, continues past Shavuot and applies the whole year round. We should always be counting; every day—even every hour—must be valued as an opportunity for further spiritual growth. At the end of each day, we should know what we accomplished that day and what still remains to be done.” *Selah*

### ***A Mikvah Moment***

“It is a widely accepted custom for all men to immerse in a mikvah (ritual pool) on the day before Yom Kippur. In certain communities, women also immerse in a mikvah on this day. There are two reasons for this immersion: First, in order to be ritually pure in preparation for the holiest day of the year. Second, the immersion is symbolic of conversion. Just as a convert immerses in a mikvah and thus becomes a "new person," so, too, it is our intention to do teshuvah (repentance) and become new people.” **Chabad.org**

## **An Inspirational Story**

### **The Seder Visit**

“Reizel, the daughter of R’ Zevi Hirsh of Zhydatchov, who had married a son of the Rabbi of Kalev, lived with him in her Father’s house. Once they received an invitation to spend the Passover in Kalev. She was against it since she did not want to be absent from her father’s Seder, but her husband kept urging her to accept, until finally she consented.

The customs in her father-in-law’s house were different from those she was familiar with. But what vexed her more than anything else was that the Rabbi did not sit down at the table early on the Seder evening as her father did, but walked back and forth in the room for a long time without saying a word. Suddenly he threw open the window. A carriage drawn by two great white horses stopped in front of the house. In it were three men and four women of princely appearance. The Rabbi went out to them. They embraced and kissed him, exchanged a few words: then the coachman cracked the whip and the carriage was gone. The Rabbi re-entered the room, closed the window and sat down at the table. Reizel did not dare to question him. ”

When the festival was over and she was back home, she told her Father all that had happened. “You must know,” he instructed her, “that those were the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs. The holy Rabbi did not want to sit down to the Seder before the advent of salvation [*Yeshua*], and he besieged the upper worlds with his prayers. And so the fathers and the mothers had to appear and tell him that the time was not yet come.”

### **A Spark Of Mussar**

“If someone prays for *mercy*, on behalf of his fellow when he himself needs that very same thing, he is answered *first*”

~ Bava Kamma 92a, contributed by Batyah Gage