



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

Shabbat Table Sparks

Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table

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Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“R. Akiva says: If the saving of a life overrides the sacrificial service, which overrides the Sabbath, how much more so does the saving of a life override the Sabbath!...R. Shimon b. Menassia says "And you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you" Sabbath is given to you and you are not given (i.e., "surrendered") to the Sabbath.”

Melchilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 31:13

Parashah Re’eh Devarim 11:26-16:17

א *The blessing....Dt. 11:27* In R’ Munk’s commentary he states that Sfas Emes teaches that there is a special blessing to thank HaShem for the *gift* of free will, which distinguishes man from all other creatures. This is the blessing “Who gave the heart understanding to distinguish between day and night” (siddur page 19). We are not like the animals nor are we like the angels. We have the gift of choice. We can choose to follow HaShem or not; we can choose life or death. Through this gift, we merit salvation. Through the gift of choice we enter the Kingdom of Heaven. **Why do you think that HaShem gave us free will? Why didn’t he just “make us” want righteousness?**

ב It is well known that HaShem is full of mercy and grace. However, that is never more evident than when we read what the Sages taught regarding G-d’s view of the gentiles. As Chullin 13b says, “Inhabitants of foreign lands are not considered idolaters in the sense of rebellion against HaShem as they are merely following the traditions of their fathers.” This teaches us that HaShem judges us based upon what we know. **What if you were brought to knowledge through the Messiah but then walked away? Are you also given this “grace”?**

ג Parashah Re’eh begins by teaching us there are such things as blessings and curses. Whether we receive a “blessing” verses a “curse” depends on our choice. A blessing is an act of grace, giving us something we don’t deserve. The Kehot Chumash points out that a curse is an act of mercy, helping us to improve our ways. **With this in mind, how is a curse an act of mercy?**

Psalm of The Parashah

Psalm 97

HASHEM reigns, let the earth rejoice, let the many islands be glad. Clouds and darkness are all around Him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Fire goes before Him and burns up His adversaries on every side. His lightning lights up the world the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax at the presence of HASHEM, at the presence of the Lord of all the earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen His glory. Let all who serve graven images be ashamed who boast in idols. Bow down before Him, all you gods! Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of Your judgments, HASHEM. For You, HASHEM, are Elyon above all the earth. You are exalted far above all gods. You who love HASHEM, hate evil! He watches over the souls of His godly ones. He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in HASHEM, you righteous ones, and praise His holy Name.

