



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

Shabbat Table Sparks

Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table

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Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“One should order his table on the day before Sabbath... and there should be a candle lit, the table set for eating, and the bed spread. All of these are marks of respect for the Sabbath.”

Mishneh Torah, Sabbath 30:5

Parashah Va’etchanan Deuteronomy 3:23–7:11

נ *I implored HaShem...Dt. 3:23* Rabbi Munk states that Moses was here giving us a model for prayer. There are many lessons to be learned but the first is to never give up! As Me’am Lo’ez brings down, “Even if a sharp sword is laid on a person’s neck, he should not despair of mercy but should still pray that G-d save him from death and not say “There is no hope of salvation for me.” We learn this lesson also from Hezekiah who prayed with “hot tears” and HaShem reversed the evil decree over him. His commitment to prayer gained him 15 more years. (2 Kings 20) **Why do you think that HaShem requires us to be persistent in prayer?**

Why do you think that tears “open the gate” of Heaven?

ב *A jealous G-d...Dt. 4:24* Rabbi Munk shares the following comment to this verse, “The Talmud tells of a philosopher who asked R’Gamliel why HaShem is not jealous of the idols that are being worshipped in His stead, but His jealousy is directed against the idolaters. R’Gamliel replied with the story of a prince who called his dog by the name of his father, the King. Now, at whom should the King be angry? The son or the dog? The son, of course! (Avodah Zarah 54b)” **Idols can be more than statues of stone, wood, and metal. What else can become “idols” in our life? What practical steps can we take to avoid becoming unwitting idolaters?**

א *Hear, Israel, the statutes and laws that I proclaim in your hearing today...Dt. 5:1* Me’am Lo’ez teaches that this is an admonishment to *hear* the Torah every day as if it were fresh, spoken anew by G-d *today*. Perhaps this is what is meant by *today if you hear His voice*. **Discuss some ways that you can keep the Torah new, fresh, and vibrant in your life.**

Psalm of The Parashah

Psalm 90

A prayer of Moshe the man of G-d: *HaShem*, you have been our dwelling place in every generation. Before the mountains were born, before you had formed the earth and the world, from eternity past to eternity future you are G-d. You bring frail mortals to the point of being crushed, then say, “People, repent!” For from your viewpoint a thousand years are merely like yesterday or a night watch. When you sweep them away, they become like sleep; by morning they are like growing grass, growing and flowering in the morning, but by evening cut down and dried up. For we are destroyed by your anger, overwhelmed by your wrath. You have placed our faults before you, our secret sins in the full light of your presence. All our days ebb away under your wrath; our years die away like a sigh. The span of our life is seventy years, or if we are strong, eighty; yet at best it is toil and sorrow, over in a moment, and then we are gone. Who grasps the power of your anger and wrath to the degree that the fear due you should inspire? So teach us to count our days, so that we will become wise. Return, *HASHEM!* How long must it go on? Take pity on your servants! Fill us at daybreak with your love, so that we can sing for joy as long as we live. Let our joy last as long as the time you made us suffer, for as many years as we experienced trouble. Show your deeds to your servants and your glory to their children. May the favor of *HaShem* our G-d be on us, prosper for us all the work that we do —yes, prosper the work that we do.



An Inspirational Story

The Value of Sin

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev was once accosted by a highway robber known for his violence and acts of depravity. The thief grabbed Levi Yitzchak by his coat and dragged the Rebbe from his coach. Pushing him up against the coach door, the man shouted, “Do you know who I am?”

“Yes,” the Rebbe said calmly, “and I must admit to being envious of you as well.” “You dare to jest at my expense?” The man screamed, his lips almost touching Reb Levi Yitzchak’s nose. “What do you mean - you envy me? What is there about me, a dangerous felon, that you, a sainted Rabbi, should envy?”

“Our Sages teach,” The Rebbe said, “that G-d so loves the sinner that one who repents of his sin out of love of G-d has all of his wickedness counted as deeds of merit. Now take myself: My sins are few and minor, and whatever good G-d credits me with is not helped by these transgressions. But you! You are famous for wicked deeds. If you were to repent out of love for G-d, no one could match you in merit! And for this I envy you!”

The Rebbe begged him so passionately to repent that the thief’s heart melted and he made teshuvah on the spot. ~

Hasidic Tales

A Spark Of Mussar

“There is no *sin* for which forgiveness is *impossible*”

~ Contributed by Batyah Gage from Sha'arei Teshuvah



שבת שולחן ניצוצות Shabbat Table Sparks Continued

T The main purpose of Torah study is so that one might observe the commandments. Talmud Yevamot 109b declares that if a person says, “I have only Torah knowledge,” then he does not even possess Torah knowledge. This is why I have always said that one should never learn Torah from a gentile. This is not a prejudice against a person but rather a realization that *true knowledge* can only come from *true observance*. This is akin to the truth that faith without works is dead (James 2). **Why is this the case? Why is actual observance of truth important? Why can't we just believe it?**

H *On the mountain, G-d spoke to you face to face....Dt. 5:4* At Sinai, we reached such a high level of spirituality that we were literally able to see the Shechinah of HaShem without an intermediary. According to Me'am Lo'ez, this was so that we would know that the mitzvot were from HaShem. Yeshua is the Image of HaShem; the Manifestation of HaShem. He is the Living Torah. **With this in mind, how can we see G-d today “face-to-face”?**

H *Do not have any other gods before Me....Dt. 5:17* The Sages remarked that it is forbidden to keep idols in the house even if one does not worship them. In like manner, we are not to associate with the wicked, even though one does not emulate them. Paul wrote a strong opinion about this topic, “But now I am writing to you not to mix together with anyone who is being called a brother if he is sexually immoral or greedy or an idolater or a slanderer or a drunkard or a swindler—not even to eat with such a fellow....Put away the wicked fellow from among yourselves.” (1 Cor. 5) **Why do you think that it is so important to have godly people with whom you associate?**

A Mikvah Moment

“Just as a mikvah purifies the ritually impure, so too does the Holy Blessed One purify Israel.”

Yoma 85b

