



שבת שולחן ניצוצות

Shabbat Table Sparks

Igniting Torah Learning at the Sabbath Table

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Insights & Questions From the Parashah

“Moreover, Rabbi Matya ben Charash said, If a person has a sore throat, it is permitted to put medicines into his mouth on the Sabbath, because of possible danger to his life, and whatever threatens to endanger life supersedes [the observance of] the Sabbath.” **Mishnah Yoma 8:6**

Parashah Va'era Exodus 6:2-9:35

א *I am G-d...Gen. 6:2* The Chassidic Insights say, “This statement is G-d's preface to His announcement that He is about to redeem His people. It informs us that the reason He exiled us to Egypt was in order to bring us to the level of Divine consciousness signified by the Name Havayah (I AM). The Name Havayah connotes G-d's trustworthiness because it indicates His transcendence, i.e., that He is not limited by the laws of the world He created.” Yeshua used “I AM” when referring to Himself. ***In what way did Yeshua display His divinity by demonstrating that He was not limited to the laws of the world?***

ב *but they did not listen to Moses...Ex. 6:13* Rabbeinu Bachya states that “The reason was not that they either disbelieved G-d's promise or His servant Moses, but it was due only to shortness of breath and hard work. The people's collective condition was much like that of an individual who wishes himself dead as he can no longer bear the pain that he is enduring.” The Sages have also said that “where there is no bread there is no Torah” meaning that one's physical needs must be met before they will be open to spiritual truth. ***Do the burdens of life distract you from following HaShem? What are some practical steps we can take to keep “bread” before us?***

ג *Behold, the Children of Israel have not listened to me...Ex. 6:12* Rabbi Munk comments that “the true leader does not attribute his failures to others. Rather, he looks for the fault in himself.” Successful people agree that failure is a necessary step toward success. ***Why do you think that this is true?***

Psalm of The Parashah

Psalm 46

G-d is our refuge and strength, a tested help in times of trouble. And so we need not fear even if the world blows up and the mountains crumble into the sea. Let the oceans roar and foam; let the mountains tremble! There is a river of joy flowing through the city of our G-d-the sacred home of the G-d above all gods. G-d himself is living in that city; therefore it stands unmoved despite the turmoil everywhere. He will not delay his help. The nations rant and rave in anger but when G-d speaks, the earth melts in submission and kingdoms totter into ruin. The Commander of the armies of heaven is here among us. He, the G-d of Jacob, has come to rescue us. Come, see the glorious things that our G-d does, how he brings ruin upon the world and causes wars to end throughout the earth, breaking and burning every weapon. "Stand silent! Know that I am G-d! I will be honored by every nation in the world!" The Commander of the heavenly armies is here among us! He, the G-d of Jacob, has come to rescue us!



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T In our parasha we find Pharaoh seeming to make teshuvah and then “hardening his heart”. However, after the plague of hail, the Torah says that HaShem hardened Pharaoh's heart. As the Sages have said, HaShem will let us go down the path we choose. There comes a point at which He will harden our heart. At this point the blind man does not realize that he is blind. ***What is the obvious solution to prevent this from happening in our lives?***

T During the Passover seder we remove 10 drops of wine from the “cups of the plagues”. We recite the name of each plague as we dip our pinky in the wine cup in order to remove a drop. ***Why do we have this custom? What does it represent?***

T *In order that you should know...in order to show you My power...and in order that you will proclaim My name in the whole land...Ex. 9:16* “You who have said: “who is G-d?” will now be the first one to proclaim My name all over the earth. Obviously, Pharaoh did not have the kind of communications media which are at our disposal today. The Torah means that as a result of what would happen to Pharaoh he would be the instrument through which the whole of mankind would become aware of what G-d does to those who refuse to accept His orders. Even nowadays kings have been heard to say that if the Jewish Messiah arrives and performs a miracle they would not repeat Pharaoh's mistakes.” (Ohr HaChaim) Notice that Ohr HaChaim says that HaShem's will is to reach *all of mankind*. ***In what way is the complete story of the Exodus a spiritual picture for us? What are the plagues meant to teach us in particular?***

A Mikvah Moment

“The mikvah therefore saves from all troubles, as it is written (Jer. 14:8), “Mikveh (Hope) of Israel, Who saves her in times of trouble.” It is supernal lovingkindness, which saves from all troubles. This is why the mikvah purifies from all impurities, as it is written (Ez. 36:25), “I will sprinkle pure water on you, and you will be purified.” For there is no suffering without sin (Shabbat 55a). Therefore, the mikvah, which saves from all troubles and all suffering, purifies from all impurities and all sin.” **Likutei Moharan 56:7**

An Inspirational Story

Black Fire

Each year, the maggid of Koznitz visited his father's grave in the city of Apt. On one such occasion, the heads of the community came to him to ask him to preach in the great house of prayer on the Sabbath, as he had done the year before. “Is there any reason to believe,” he said, “that I accomplished anything with my last year's sermon?” The men left in dismay, and the entire crowd was stricken with grief. A crowd collected in front maggid's inn. All stood silent with bowed heads. But then a man, a craftsman, came forward, went into the maggid's room, and said to him: “You claim that you did not accomplish anything with the sermon you preached last year. You did accomplish something as far as I am concerned. For at that time I heard from your lips the words that every son of Israel must do as it says in the Scriptures: ‘I have set HaShem always before me.’ Ever since then I see the Name of HaShem before me, like black fire on white fire.”

“If that is the case,” said the maggid, “I shall go and preach a sermon.” Tales of the Hasidim page 291

A Spark Of Mussar

“Let the honor of your

friend be as *dear*
to you as your own.”

~ Rabbi Eliezer Pirkei Avot, contributed by Batyah Gage