



לע"נ ברוך בענדיט וברכה גרוס ע"ה  
by Mr. & Mrs. Duvy Gross

# THE שבוע MATTERS

שבת קודש פרשת בשלח

מסכת חגיגה דף י"ב

לע"נ הרב יעקב בן ר' קיים משה יצחק ז"ל

## Insights From Our Chaburos

### Man vs. malach and the splitting of the sea

By Rosh Chabura Rabbi Yosef Ifrah

Chaburas Mercaz Torah U'Tefilah, Baltimore, MD

In this week's daf (יב.), we are presented with a machlokes between Beis Shamai and Beis Hillel concerning the order of creation. Beis Shamai contends that shamayim was created before aretz, whereas Beis Hillel argues and claims that the reverse is true, i.e., aratz was created before shamayim. Ben Yehoyada asks, what is the relevance of this discussion; and what possible implication or lesson is drawn from it? He explains that Beis Shamai's assertion that the shamayim was created first indicates a superiority of malachim over human beings; whereas Beis Hillel contends that human beings have superiority over malachim.

The notion that malachim are superior to humans is largely self-explanatory. Malachim have no evil inclination, and are wholly devoted to carrying out the will of the Creator. Human beings, on the other hand, have the freedom to choose evil and reject the will of Hashem; they may plunge to the depths of impurity and distance themselves from Him. However, it is perhaps this very notion that guides Beis Hillel's understanding because the flip side of the ability to sink to the lowest depths is the ability to rise to the greatest heights. מלאכים by contrast are called עומדים because they remain at one level. The Medrash (שמות רבה בשלח ז) states that when B'nei Yisrael were saved at the Yam Suf the malachim wished to say shira. Hashem did not allow them to do so until after B'nei Yisrael said their shira. Hashem explained to the malachim that the fragility of man dictates that he be the principal source of expression of thanks for the salvation that occurred. Malachim are not subject to worldly decrees, and are therefore never in danger of destruction as a result of their sins. Consequently, neither are they beneficiaries of Hashem's salvation. When man chooses to overcome his evil inclination and to recognize his dependence on his Creator, he unlocks the potential to promote the glory of Hashem in ways that even malachim cannot.

## Stories of the Daf

### Hot coals

“מאכילים אותנו גחלי רתמים...”

Someone once came to speak with the Ahavas Yisroel of Vizhnitz, זת"ל, but the Rebbe was deeply immersed in his learning and would not permit an interruption. It was only after he was through with his set order of study that he turned to his visitor and asked what seemed to be a question out of context.

“Are you my good friend?” the Rebbe asked.

“But of course!” the man answered.

“If so, why have you been trying to feed me burning hot coals? The Gemara in Chagiga 12b says in the name of Rav Levi that anyone who interrupts his Torah study to engage in mundane conversation is punished by being fed burning coals...!”

We see a similar exchange between Rav Boruch of Gurlitz, זת"ל, and a visitor.

Once, while the Rav was sitting and learning, this person came in to ask a trivial question. Although another person in the room tried to prevent the man from interrupting the Rav's learning, he could not quiet the loud and insistent stranger. The moment he managed to distract the Rav, Rav Boruch turned to him with a sardonic expression. “Why don't you sit down and share a meal with me?”

“Rebbe, what do you mean?” asked the man.

“In Chagiga 12 we find that anyone who interrupts his learning to speak mundane matters is fed burning coals. Since you are so insistent on interrupting my seder, I expect that I will have a table companion when this delicacy is served!”

Rav Eliezer Shick, shlit"א, has remarked on this subject, “Very often, if a person is finding it difficult to concentrate on his studies, he will find himself tempted to console himself by striking up a conversation with a friend in the beis midrash. But what a mistake this is! If he can't learn at that moment, nu. But how could he be so abysmally unaware of the consequences of interrupting someone who is learning! At the very least, he should have mercy and not disturb those who would otherwise be immersed in Torah study!”

## Review & Remember

1. What caused Hashem to hide the original light of cration?
2. How did the world reach its present size?
3. What supports the earth?
4. What is the punishment for a person who interrupts Torah study to engage in conversation?

# Halacha Highlight

## The language of the beracha for kiddush levanah

“רקיע שבו חמה ולבנה כוכבים ומזלות קבועין”  
Sky (רקיע) is where the sun, moon, stars and constellations are affixed.

The language of the berachah on the appearance of the new moon is “אשר במאמרו ברא שחקים” which means literally “With his utterance He created heavens” and refers to the sun and moon that are found in the heavens. The commentators, however, challenge the wording of the beracha from our Gemara that states clearly that the sun and the moon are not in the שחקים but rather in the רקיע, and the correct language of the berachah should be אשר במאמרו ברא רקיע.

Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein<sup>2</sup>, the Aruch Hashulchan, points out the language of the berachah on the appearance of the new moon was formulated by R’ Yehudah who disagrees with Reish Lakish and states that there are only two levels in heaven rather than seven. Furthermore, it is logical to assume that the names of the two levels would be רקיע and שחקים since those are the terms found in Tanach. Accordingly, although there may be seven levels in heaven they are nonetheless grouped into two, namely רקיע and שחקים, and the sun and the moon are affixed in the level R’ Yehudah calls שחקים. Rav Avrohom Dovid Wahrman<sup>3</sup>, Eishel Avrohom Butchach, suggests that the term שחקים that appears in the berachah is based on the verse that states<sup>4</sup> —and in His majesty through the upper heights. The monthly renewal of the moon testifies to Hashem’s majesty in the upper heights because it testifies to His capacity to renew creation and that He does so *ex nihilo* יש מאין and all of creation, including the sun and the moon, is powerless. Hashem’s conduct of providing food for tzadikim also testifies to His power to create something from nothing. Tzadikim do not invest effort to obtain sustenance and yet food is provided for them, seemingly *ex nihilo*. Therefore, the term שחקים is used to connect these two concepts to one another. Just like שחקים is the place in heaven where Hashem arranges sustenance for tzadikim, which is a manifestation of Hashem’s capacity to create something from nothing, so too the renewal of the moon testifies to Hashem’s capacity to create something from nothing and the term שחקים is thus appropriate.

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אשל אברהם בוטשאטש ריש סי' תכז.  
דברים לג: כז.

# Mussar From the Daf

## Why was the world created flimsy?

One of the ten things Hashem created the world with was Gaarah. The Gemara gives three examples of how Hashem used Gaarah in the creation of the world. What is Gaarah?

Rashi in (Bereishis 1, 6) explains that the world was still flimsy on the first day and Hashem used Gaara (Rebuke) on the second day to make the world firm.

Rav Yerucham Levovitz Z”TL (Daas Torah, פרשת תולדות ע' קע"ו) asks based on the פסוק in (משלי ג י"ט) “ה' בחכמה יסד ארץ” Hashem founded the earth with wisdom and established the heavens with understanding. How is it possible for a creation of wisdom and understanding to be flimsy? And, what does it mean that the world only became firm on the second day through the Gaarah (Rebuke) of Hashem? What happened?

Rav Yerucahm goes on to explain a very important concept: in life you can have something which is perfect - yet with a little bit of pressure it can be destroyed. This is the measuring block of a person in this world. To the extent that they can withstand pressure, to that extent the perfection which they are expressing is real and will be there for a person for eternity. Doing the right thing when it is easy is relatively simple. However if a person can do the right thing even when there is a tremendous pressure and Yetzer pushing a person not to do the right thing, it is a true sign of a person’s level.

This is symbolized in how the world was in essence perfect, but it was still flimsy, subject to be moved. Only through the Gaarah, which brought Yirah into the world did the world become firm.

## Point To Ponder

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב עשרה דברים נבראו

ביום ראשון. כו' Ten things were created on the first day of creation. Included in the list is light and darkness (אור וחושך). How can darkness be created? Isn't darkness just the absence of light?

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