

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Ma'aseh Bereishis (cont.)

According to the end of the Beraisa cited to prove that Ma'aseh Bereishis may not be expounded with two students part of a verse is superfluous.

The phrase is used to teach that Adam, until he sinned, reached the sky.

R' Yehudah in the name of Rav teaches that Adam extended from one end of the world to another.

It is clarified that earth to sky and one end of the world to the other represent the same size.

2) Creation

R' Yehudah in the name of Rav identifies the ten items created on the first day and cites the relevant verses.

A Beraisa is cited that defines two of the items from the list.

The issue of whether light was created on the first day or fourth day of creation is discussed.

R' Zutra bar Toviyah in the name of Rav identifies the ten things used to create the world and cites the relevant verses.

The exact way the world and ocean expanded is described.

A Beraisa presents a debate between Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel whether heaven or earth was created first.

Reish Lakish resolves the related contradictory verses.

Two explanations are presented concerning the meaning of the term שמים.

3) Expositions on the first verses of the Torah

A Beraisa records the exposition of the first verse in the Torah by Nachum Ish Gam Zu as R' Akiva presented it to R' Yishmael.

A Beraisa is cited that explains why the Torah begins with a description of the earth before a description of the heavens.

A Beraisa describes what is beneath the earth.

A discussion is recorded regarding what is above the earth.

4) The seven heavens

Reish Lakish presents a lengthy explanation of the name and function of the seven heavens.

At one point the Gemara digresses to discuss the value of studying Torah at night.

Reish Lakish concludes by stating that above the seven heavens, i.e. where Hashem dwells there is darkness, cloud and thick clouds.

The Gemara challenges whether there is darkness before Hashem.

This difficulty is reconciled by distinguishing between Hashem's inner chambers and outer chambers. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The seven heavens

אמר רבי יהודה שני רקיעים הן... ריש לקיש אמר שבעה: ואלו הן- וילון רקיע שחקים זבול מעון מכון ערבות.

In the context of presenting Maaser Sheni, the Torah (Devarim 26:15) states that we declare that we have provided for the needy ones among us. We then ask from Hashem that He "Gaze down from Your holy habitation (מעון קדוש), from the heavens, and bless Your people Israel..." It is noteworthy that Hashem's dwelling in the sector of מעון is also featured in the verse in Tehillim (68:6): "Father of orphans and Judge of widows is G-d, in the habitation (מעון) of His holiness."

There are people who extend merciful gestures toward the poor and who perform acts to remedy the plight of orphans and widows. Few, however, actually open their spacious homes for the sake of the needy. Rather, they suffice in providing a meager home for them, albeit secure, in which they remain. As described in the verse in Tehillim, however, Hashem sets a higher standard for us to follow. Hashem raises and cares for the widow and the orphan in the "מעון" of His holiness. Consequently, only when a person follows this example can he declare about himself: "I have given to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow as invited guests in my own home as You have directed me to do." It is precisely this level of kindness which brings a person to turn to Hashem and request that He should look upon all of us from His holy habitation - "מעון קדשו".

Our Gemara tells us that there are seven levels in the heavens. Among them is the "זבול", where the heavenly city of Yerushalayim is situated. It is there that the celestial Bais Hamikdash and altar are located, and where the angel Michael stands and brings offerings. Above that is the corridor named "מעון", where groups of ministering angels sing God's praise all night but remain silent during the day in deference to the Jewish nation who sing His praise at that time.

משך חכמה explains that, as we have seen, Hashem cares for orphans in the "מעון" sphere, which is accordingly to be understood as being at a level even higher than that at which korbanos are offered (זבול). This being the case, we can appreciate the ruling of the Gemara (Sukkah 49b) that when one performs tzedakah, he is achieving a mitzvah even greater than the offerings, as it says in Mishlei (21:3): "Performing charity...is preferred by Hashem to an offering."

■

HALACHAH 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 moon¹ is "אשר במאמרו ברא שחקים" which literally means "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 Epstein², 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 Wahrman³, Eishel Avrohom Butchach, suggests that the term שחקים that appears in the berachah is based on the verse that states⁴ —ובגאותו שחקים— and in His majesty through the upper heights. The monthly renewal of the moon testifies to Hashem's majesty in the upper

REVIEW and Remember

1. What caused Hashem to hide the original light of creation?
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?

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. ■

¹ ע"י גמי סנהדרין מב.
² ערוה"ש אור"ח סי' תכ"ו סעי' ג'.
³ אשל אברהם בוטשאטש ריש סי' תכ"ו.
⁴ דברים ל"ג: כ"ו. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Hot Coals

"...מאכילים אותו גחלי רתמים..."

Someone once came to speak with the Ahavas Yisroel of Vizhnitz, ז"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, ז"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"a, 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!" ■

