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Brachos Daf 59

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

Two Missing Stars

The *Gemora* asks what constellation the name *ash* in the verse refers to.

Rav Yehudah says it is *yuta*, which some say is the tail of the ram (Aries), and some say is the head of the bull (Taurus).

The *Gemora* says that it makes sense that it is the tail of the ram, as the verse says that *a'ish* (i.e.) *ash* will be consoled on her children, implying that it is missing something, which was covered over. This would be consistent with the tail of the ram, which faces the constellation of *kimah*, asking for her two missing stars back.

The *Gemora* explains that when Hashem brought the flood in the times of Noach, he removed two stars from *kimah*, deluging the world. When the flood ended, Hashem replaced these missing stars with two from ash.

The *Gemora* asks why Hashem didn't just put back the original stars and answers that one cannot fill in a void in something without adding something, or that the stars which caused the punishment cannot be the ones which stop it.

The *Gemora* says that Hashem didn't create two new stars, as the verse says that there nothing new is created after the creation of the world.

Rav Nachman says that Hashem will eventually replace the two missing stars of ash, as the verse says that she will be consoled. (58b – 59a)

The *Gemora* discusses in more detail the items on which one says *shechocho ugvuraso maleh olam* – that His strength and Might fill the world.

Ze'vaos – Earthquake

Rav Ketina says that this refers to an earthquake.

Rav Ketina was on the road and passed by the house of a sorcerer when there was an earthquake. Rav Ketina asked aloud if the sorcerer knew what caused earthquakes. The sorcerer produced a voice that asked Rav Ketina why he didn't know that when the Jews are suffering, Hashem sheds two tears to the great sea, and their reverberation is heard throughout the world as an earthquake. Rav Ketina said that the sorcerer is false and says falsehoods, as an earthquake should then have two shocks, one for each tear.

The *Gemora* explains that there are two shocks, but Rav Ketina wanted to prevent people from going astray by following the sorcerer.

The *Gemora* lists the following explanations for an earthquake:

1. Rav Ketina himself says that it occurs when Hashem claps His hands together, as the verse refers to Hashem clapping His hands and calming His anger.
2. Rabbi Nassan says it occurs when Hashem sighs, as the verse refers to Hashem calming His anger and consoling, which occurs when one sighs.
3. The Sages say that it occurs when Hashem kicks the heavens, as the verse says that an echo is heard, like one who is walking.
4. Rav Acha bar Yaakov says that it occurs when Hashem presses his feet under His throne, as the verse says that the world is the area of His feet. (59a)

Re'amim - Thunder

The *Gemora* asks what causes thunder, and lists the following explanations:

1. The clouds rubbing against the sphere of the sky, as the verse refers to the sound of Your *ra'am* in the sphere (Shmuel).
2. The clouds pouring water to each other, as the verse refers to the sound of Hashem putting much water in the sky (the Sages).
3. A bolt of lightning that cracks a cloud, breaking off pieces of hail (Rav Acha bar Yaakov).
4. Wind blowing through hollow clouds, making a sound like wind on barrels (Rav Ashi).

The *Gemora* says that Rav Acha bar Yaakov's explanation makes sense, as we see lightning strike, followed by thunder, and finally rain. (59a)

Ruchos – Wind

Abaye says this means *za'afa* - a strong wind.

Abaye says that we have a tradition that such a wind doesn't come at night.

The *Gemora* clarifies that we see it at night, but that's only when it began during the day.

Abaye says that we have a tradition that it can't last two hours, as the verse says that a trouble (i.e., such a wind) cannot rise up two times (i.e., two hours).

The *Gemora* says that when it seems to last this long, it actually is interrupted in the middle, never lasting two contiguous hours. (59a)

Berakim

Rava says this refers to lightning.

Rava says that a single lightning bolt, white or green lightning, clouds that rise from the west and come from the south, and clouds that meet each other are all bad signs, and one should therefore pray if he sees them.

The *Gemora* explains that this is only if they occur at night. (59a)

Meteorological Signs

Rabbi Shmuel bar Yitzchak says that clouds in the morning are not substantive indicators of a good rainfall, as the verse derides kindness which is like the morning clouds.

Rav Pappa asked Abaye how this is consistent with the saying of people that if you open the door in the morning and see rain, tell the grain salesman to go back to sleep, as there will be abundant grain, lowering its price.

Abaye answered that it is substantive only if the clouds are thick.



Rabbi Alexandri quoted Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi saying that Hashem created thunder simply to straighten people's spiritual crookedness, as the verse says that Hashem ensured that people will fear Him.

He also quoted him saying that if one sees a rainbow in a cloud, he should fall on his face, just as Yechezkel did when he saw this as a vision of Hashem's glory.

In Eretz Yisrael they would curse someone who did this, as it appears that he is bowing down to the rainbow. However, one does make a blessing.

The *Gemora* says the blessing is *zocher habris* – [that Hashem] remembers the covenant.

The *braisa* cites Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yochanan ben Berokah saying that the blessing is *ne'eman bivriso v'kayam b'ma'amaro* – faithful in His covenant, and fulfilling His statement.

Rav Pappa says that we therefore say a blessing that concatenates both versions. (59a)

Oseh Ma'aseh Braishis

The *Mishna* says that one hills and mountains one says *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis* – He who makes an act of creation.

The *Gemora* asks why we don't say this on the earlier items in the *Mishna*, as those occurrences are also part of creation.

Abaye says that the *Mishna* is applying both blessings to all the items in the *Mishna*.

Rava says that on the first group one says both blessings, as they are experienced over large distances, but on mountains and hills one only says *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis*,

as they are experienced only in their locale, not in the whole world.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says that if one sees the sky in its pristine form, he says *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis*.

Abaye says this occurs when it rains the whole night, and in the morning a northern wind blows and reveals the sky.

The *Gemora* says that this is at odds with Rafram's quote from Rav Chisda, that the pristine sky has not been visible since the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed, as the verse about the destruction says that "I will cloth the sky in black, and clothe it with sackcloth."

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which says that one says *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis* when he sees the sun in its original season, the moon in its strength, stars in their path, or the constellation signs in their order.

Abaye says this occurs once every 28 years, when the solar season of Nisan falls out at the start of the fourth day of the week, just as it was when the sun, moon, and stars were placed at creation.

The *Mishna* cited Rabbi Yehudah saying that if one sees the great sea once in a while, he blesses *she'asa es hayam hagadol* – Who made the great sea.

Rami bar Abba quotes Rabbi Yitzchak defining this time frame as once every thirty days.

He also quotes him saying that if one sees the Euphrates at the Babylonian bridge, he says *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis*, as it hasn't been modified at all above there.

The *Gemora* says that nowadays the Persians moved it above there, so one may only say the blessing above Bai Shvor, while Rav Yosef says it is from Ihi Dekira and above.



Rami bar Abba says that one says *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis* when seeing the Diglas (Chidekel) river at the Shvistena bridge.

Rav Ashi explains that the name Chidekel is because its water is *chad – sharp* and *kal – light*.

The *Gemora* says that the Pras river is named for the fact that its water *parim v'ravim – expand*.

Rava says that the people of Mechuza are sharp because they drink the water of the Chidekel. They are reddish since they have marital relations in the daytime, and their eyes dart around since they live in dark houses. (59a – 59b)

Rain

The *Mishna* says that on rain one says the blessing of *hatov v'hamaitiv – Who is good and does good to others*.

The *Gemora* challenges this from another blessing on rain. Rabbi Avahu (or a *braisa*) says that as soon as the drops on the ground greet the drops from the sky one blesses.

Rabbi Yehudah explains that the blessing is “We thank You on each drop that You showered on us,” and Rabbi Yochanan would conclude it with the praise in Nishmas (“even if our mouths were full of song like the sea, etc. we could not be able to thank You, etc. all standing ones will bow down to You”), and finish with the blessing of Hashem as the One with most thanks.

Rava explains that one must conclude with the God of Thanks, as not only most thanks but *all* thanks are due to Hashem.

Rav Pappa says that we therefore conclude with both phrases.

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this by saying that the *Mishna* is referring to one who heard about the rain, while the other blessing is for one who saw the rain.

The *Gemora* rejects this, as hearing about rain would already be included in the case of hearing good news, which the *Mishna* lists separately as something necessitating *hatov v'hamaitiv*.

The *Gemora* suggest the following resolutions:

1. The *Mishna* is referring to a lot of rain, while the other blessing is for a little rain.
2. The *Mishna* is referring to someone who enjoys the rain himself, since he has land, while the other blessing is for someone without land.

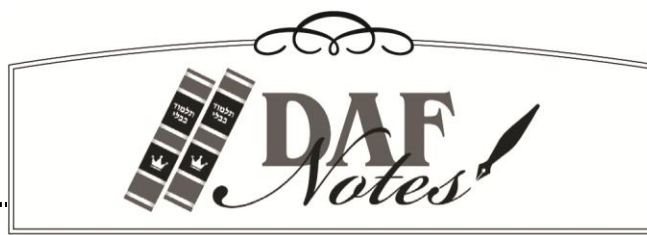
The *Gemora* challenges the second option, as the *braisa* teaches that one says *shehechyanu* when something good happens to him.

The *Gemora* answers that the *Mishna* is a case where he owns the land together with a partner, making the rain good for him and others.

To support this, the *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which says that on something good just for him one says *shehechyanu*, but for something good for him and others, one says *hatov v'hamaitiv*.

The *Gemora* challenges this restriction on *hatov v'hamaitiv* from the following cases:

1. If one's wife gave birth to a son, he says *hatov v'hamaitiv*. The *Gemora* answers that this is good for him and his wife.
2. If one's father died, and he inherited property, he first says *dayan ha'emes*, and then *hatov v'hamaitiv*. The *Gemora* answers that the case is when he has brothers who also inherited.
3. If one changes wines, he need not make a new blessing, but if he moved to a new place, he has



to make a new blessing. Rav Yosef bar Abay quotes Rabbi Yochanan saying that if he did change wines, he still has to make the blessing of *hatov v'hamaitiv*. The *Gemora* answers that this is when he is drinking with others, who also enjoy the new wine. (59b)

Shehechyanu

The *Mishna* says that if one built a new house or bought new utensils, he blesses *shehechyanu*.

Rav Huna says that this is only if he has no similar utensils already.

Rabbi Yochanan says that even if he has similar ones (e.g., from inheritance or a gift), he blesses, since this is his first time buying it.

The *Gemora* infers that both agree that if he already bought something like this before, he need not bless.

Some say that Rav Huna says that one only blesses if he never bought these types of items before, while Rabbi Yochanan says that one blesses even if he did buy these types before.

The *Gemora* infers from this version that all agree that he blesses if he has these items already, as long as he never bought them.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* in which Rabbi Meir says that one blesses only if he has no items like this, while Rabbi Yehudah says that one blesses in either case.

The *Gemora* says that according to the first version, Rav Huna follows Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yochanan follows Rabbi Yehudah. However, according to the second version, Rav Huna follows Rabbi Yehudah, but who does Rabbi Yochanan follow?

The *Gemora* answers that Rabbi Yochanan says that Rabbi Yehudah would say that one would bless even if he already bought such items. The *braisa* only chose the case of one who has such an item simply to show the extent of Rabbi Meir's opinion, which is the more lenient one. (59b – 60a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Thunder and Lightning

Rava explains that on natural occurrences that are experienced over a wide area, such as an earthquake, thunder, or lightning, there are two blessings – *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis* and *shekocho ugvuraso maleh olam*.

Rashi and the Raavad (Brachos 10:14) say that Rava means that one should say both blessings on these occurrences.

Tosfos (59a Rava), the Rif, the Rosh (13), and the Rambam (ibid) say that one may say either blessing.

The Taz (227:1) cites the general practice to say the blessing of *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis* on lightning and *shekocho* on thunder, but he says there seems to be no support for this distinction in the *Gemora*. He suggests that this came about since thunder exhibit more strongly Hashem's strength.

The Magen Avraham (227:1) says that if one sees lightning and hears thunder simultaneously, he should say only the blessing of *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis* on both.

The Great Sea

The *Mishna* cites Rabbi Yehudah who says that on seeing the big sea, one should bless *she'asah es hayam hagadol*.



The Rambam (Brachos 10:15) rules like Rabbi Yehudah.

The Tur (228) wonders why the Rambam rules like Rabbi Yehudah, as he is a minority opinion, but the Bais Yosef explains that the Rambam held that Rabbi Yehudah is not disputing the first opinion in the *Mishna*, which says that one says *oseh ma'aseh b'raishis* on seas, but adding that for the great sea there is a specific blessing.

The Rosh (Responsa 4:4) discusses which sea Rabbi Yehudah is referring to, and rules that it is the ocean, and not the Mediterranean.

The Shulchan Aruch (228:1) describes the great sea as the one through which one passes to Egypt and Eretz Yisrael, i.e., the Mediterranean, but the Magen Avraham (1) and others rule that it is said only on the Atlantic Ocean.

DAILY MASHAL

The Mazalos in Halachah and Custom

There are two sets of astrological systems in the Heavens. One set is the zodiac constellations (*mazalos*), and the other is the 'seven orbiting stars' (in the *Gemora*, the sun, the moon and the known planets of our solar system are all counted as '*kochavei haleches*').

The zodiac constellations are twelve groupings of stationary stars that, observed from Earth, lie in the path of the sun in its annual circuit of the Earth. They are seen as though they are set in a ring around the Earth, the sun and the moon. They are named after the patterns that they form, *tleh* (sheep), *shor* (ox), *dli* (bucket), *gdi* (goat) and so on.

The influence of the *mazalos* over mankind: The second group, referred to as 'orbiting stars', are the seven heavenly bodies that most directly influence the Earth: *chamah* (the sun), *levanah* (the moon), *ma'adim* (Mars), *kochav* (Mercury), *tzedek* (Jupiter), *nogah* (Venus), and *shabsai*

(Saturn). The *Gemora* refers to them by their acronym, *chala"m katzna"sh*. Each one exerts its own unique influence. For example, the *Gemora* tells us that a person born under the influence of *ma'adim* will have a violent (red) temperament. (Shabbos 156a)

The heavenly bodies were created at the beginning of the fourth night of Creation. During the first hour of that night *shabsai* exerted its influence, followed by *tzedek*, *ma'adim*, *chamah*, *nogah*, *kochav*, and *levanah*. Each one exerted its influence for one hour, forming a seven hour cycle that has continued since the creation of the world. Thus each day of the week always has the same star at any given hour. The first hour of the nights of the week starting from *motzaei Shabbos* are *katzna"sh chala"m* whereas the first hour of the days of the week are *chala"m katzna"sh* (Rashi).

Reciting *kiddush* before nightfall on Friday night: The Magen Avraham (271, s.k. 1) cites the Tikkunei Shabbos, a collection of customs from the Arizal and his students, that one should recite *kiddush* before nightfall on Shabbos eve. At the end of Friday day *tzedek* exerts its influence, but the beginning of *leil Shabbos* is under *ma'adim*, the most inauspicious star. Therefore, it is better to recite *kiddush* under *tzedek*.

Two angels accompany a person home on Shabbos night; one from *tzedek* and one from *ma'adim*: There are authenticated and ancient sources that seem to support this custom. The Raavyah (§200), a Rishon, writes that our Sages instituted the *Magen Avos* prayer for *ma'ariv* of Shabbos in order to protect us from danger – the dangers invoked by *ma'adim's* influence. The Maharil (§152) seems to imply that the two angels that accompany us home from shul, one good and one bad, (Shabbos 119a) are from *tzedek* and *ma'adim*, which are dominant at the beginning of Friday night. (See Yad Ephraim, *ibid.*)

Based on this, the custom among some Chassidic communities is to refrain from reciting *kiddush* "between 6 and 7" on Friday night. Many have attempted to verify the exact time of *ma'adim's* influence, in order to better define this custom.

Tosefes Shabbos, in order to avoid the hour of ma'adim:

The Maharsha (Taanis 8b, *Chiddushei Aggadah*) writes that one of the advantages of *Tosefes Shabbos* (accepting Shabbos early) is that one can thereby recite *kiddush* early, avoiding the influence of *ma'adim*. He adds that the influence of *shabsai* is also unfavorable, and therefore the custom is to *daven* later than usual on Shabbos morning, since *shabsai* influences the first hour of Shabbos morning. (See *Darkei Moshe*, 281)

The *Gemora* often measures time in *sha'os zemaniyos*, (literally “periodic hours.”) These are flexible units of time that depend upon the length of day or night, and change throughout the year. The daytime is divided into twelve equal hours, as is the night. Thus, in the summer an hour of the day is much longer than an hour of the night, and in the winter vice versa.

The *poskim* debate whether the influence of the stars is measured in *sha'os zemaniyos* or in fixed, sixty-minute hours. In our *Gemora*, and in numerous other instances, Rashi discusses the influence of certain stars at the beginning of the day or the beginning of the night. This would seem to imply that Rashi understood the influence of the stars to depend on *sha'os zemaniyos*. Therefore a certain star would function at the beginning of the night, regardless of when night falls.

The Magen Avraham based himself on this opinion and ruled that one should never recite *kiddush* in the beginning of Friday night. If calculated by fixed sixty-minute hours, *ma'adim* functions in Eretz Yisrael between 5:40–6:40 p.m. approximately; 6:40-7:40 summer time). During most months of the year, Shabbos begins either earlier or later than this. Nevertheless, the Magen Avraham made a blanket ruling about the first hour of Shabbos, regardless of the time of year or the hour Shabbos begins.

However, the Maharil writes that the influence of the stars depends upon fixed, sixty-minute hours. Therefore, in the winter months *kiddush* is usually recited before the influence of *ma'adim* begins and in the summer it is recited

after *ma'adim's* influence ends. Thus, if a person were to make *kiddush* during *Tosefes Shabbos* in the summer, he would be more likely to enter the problem of *ma'adim's* influence. (See *Machatzis HaShekel* and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* *ibid*, 3.)

As we have mentioned, some Chassidic communities abide by this custom. The *Mishna Berurah* does not cite it at all, and the *Aruch Hashulchan* (271:11) labels it as “perplexing, because we are not under the dominion of the *mazalos*. To the contrary... non-Jews used to sit in darkness and mourn on Shabos because of the *mazalos*... but Hashem commanded us to light brightly and enjoy to show we are above *mazalos*... he who trusts in Hashem will be surrounded with kindness” (See *Birur Halachah Telisa'ah*, O.C. 271).

It is important to note that the above discussion refers to the astrological influence of the stars, based on our tradition from our Sages. It has no relevance to the astronomical circuits of the planets and stars as seen through telescopes or satellite pictures.