



## **Sicha Summary**

Chelek 18 | Shavuos | Sichah 1

### **The Talmud:**

The Talmud relates that when Moshe ascended to receive the Torah, the angels wanted to know what he was doing there. When G-d told them Moshe had come to receive the Torah, the angels protested: "This beautiful concealed thing (Torah) You desire to give to one who is of flesh and blood?! "Give Your glory upon the heavens!" (*Tehillim* 8:2)

G-d told Moshe to reply. So Moshe said: "The Torah states 'I am the L-rd your G-d who took you out of Egypt.' (*Shemos* 20:2) Did you (angels) descend to Egypt? ... It goes on to say, 'Do not have any other gods.' (*Ibid*, verse 3) Are you dwelling among nations that serve idols?"

Moshe then went on to include the rest of the Ten Commandments: "Do you labor ... do you engage in commerce ... do you have parents ... does jealousy exist among you ... do you have an evil inclination?"

The Gemara concludes that the angels then acknowledged that G-d was indeed correct in giving the Torah to man. (*Shabbos* 88b ff)

### **The Explanation:**

Commentators explain that the legal basis of the angels' point that "G-d's glory be given upon the heavens," rested on the law of *bar metzra*, a neighbor's right of preemption. (See *Pnai Dovid* and *Rosh Dovid* (from the Chida) on *parshas Yisro*) According to Jewish law, when one sells a field, the owner of the neighboring field has first rights of acquisition. (*Bava Metzria* 108a) This is because it is good to have fields next to each other,<sup>7</sup>

and the Torah states: “You shall do that which is proper and good in G-d’s eyes.” (*Devarim* 6:18)

This, too, was the complaint of the angels. Since up to that time the Torah was concealed in the heavens, and the angels too are in the heavens, they felt they had the preemptive rights of the *bar metzra*.

Since the law of *bar metzra* was the legal basis for their protest, we must understand how Moshe’s response neutralized their complaint.

The ultimate purpose of Torah is that through it the aim of creation may be fulfilled: “G-d earnestly desiring to have a dwelling in the nethermost level.” (*Tanchuma, Naso* 16; *Tanya*, ch. 36) Just as a dwelling is a place where the person finds himself in his entire essence, so too G-d desired that His entire essence be found in the nethermost level. This is accomplished through Torah, for with regard to Torah, G-d says: “You are getting Me.” (See *Vayikra Rabbah* 30:13)

Accordingly, the angels’ complaint of *bar metzra* is entirely negated. For the law is that if the neighbor desires the land for farming while the alternate purchaser desires the property in order to build a house, then the field goes to the purchaser, inasmuch as “dwelling is more deserving, and the law of *bar metzra* does not apply.” (*Bava Metzia*, *ibid*) Here, too, since the purpose of Torah is to make a domicile for G-d in the nethermost level, the law of *bar metzra* does not apply.

This is why Moshe replied: “Do you labor ... do you engage in commerce, etc.” Moshe, in effect, was saying that Torah is the province of the Jew, as he is associated with transforming this physical world into a dwelling for G-d.

The fact that Torah was not given to the celestial beings in no way implies that they are not in need of the Divine essence drawn down thereby. For even within the higher realms, without the revelation of G-dliness brought about through Torah, there is only a glimmer of holiness. It is merely that

the spiritual service of the Jewish people in this world effects the drawing down of G-d's essence within all worlds, higher as well as lower.

This is similar to the use of a lever when lifting a building. If the lever is placed on an upper level, only that part will be raised. Only when the lever is placed under the building — in the “nethermost level” — can the entire building be elevated.

This is why the Torah was given specifically in this world, the “lowest level, of which there is no lower.” (*Tanya*, *ibid*) By doing so, the entire “edifice” of creation can be elevated.

This was also stressed by Moshe when he responded: “does jealousy exist among you ... do you have an evil inclination?” He was informing the angels that G-d desired to give the Torah to a world so low that jealousy and the evil inclination exist within it. By giving Torah here, in this world, G-d intended that His essence would permeate all levels, from the lowest to the highest.