



אור ישראל
Partnering with Parents
Enhancing the Shabbos Table

בשבת

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BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT

The Awesome Power of Torah

When *Moshe Rabbeinu* was in *Shamayim* to receive the Torah, the *Malachim* were jealous that Hashem was giving his precious Torah to fallible human beings. The *Malachim* refused to relinquish the Torah until Hashem explained that the Torah wasn't created for the *Malachim*. The *Malachim* don't have a *Yetzer Horah*, don't have parents to honour, don't have non-kosher food to avoid, and don't have a need to 'rest' on Shabbos.¹

Rabbeinu Bechaya asks – the *Gemara*² states the *Malachim* do not have the trait of jealousy. This is because the *Malachim's* sole focus is to do what Hashem wants; how can they possibly be jealous of humans after Hashem decreed that the Torah should be given to them? Furthermore, wasn't it obvious that the Torah doesn't apply to them, as they don't have a *Yetzer Horah*?

Rabbeinu Bechaya explains, the term 'jealous' refers to the bewilderment the *Malachim* felt. Although they understood that they could not perform the *Mitzvos* of the Torah, they were baffled at how humans, imperfect and weak, could have access to a means of elevating oneself to heights that even the *Malachim* themselves cannot attain.

Imagine our *Neshama* resembles a light bulb and the brightness of our "light" is based on our learning, doing *Mitzvos*, and improving our *Middos*. Naturally, you would expect that the *Malachim's* "light" would be brilliant and dazzling because they don't have a *Yetzer Hara* and therefore always listen to Hashem. However, whenever *Klal Yisrael* learns Torah we connect to a colossal generator that causes our "light" to shine even brighter than that of the angels' "light."

The *Malachim* themselves recognize the stunning transformation that is caused by learning Torah. The Torah was concealed until a nation would be worthy of accepting this powerful gift. By understanding the reason for the *Malachim's* "jealousy," may we come to a deeper appreciation of the life changing Torah that we received on this day many years ago.

¹ *Rabbeinu Bechaya* introduction *Parshas Va'eria*. Compare to *Shabbos* 88b, *Yalkut Shimon Korach* 752 and *Medrash Rabbah Tehillim* 641

² *Chagigah* 15a

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

It can be hard to internalize this important concept, especially when a person doesn't see immediate changes. How can we truly incorporate this awareness in our daily lives?

There are multiple ways to make an idea a part of a person's psyche. One method is "כח הציור" creating a picture in one's mind. That, coupled with repetition, is a very powerful way to create new ways of thinking.

Paint the picture in your mind, *Moshe Rabbeinu* standing on one side, with the *Malachim*, the holiest and purest beings, on the other, begging Hashem not to give the Torah to human beings. There they stand, expressing their dismay that this amazing transformative delightful gift is being given to humans. To *Klal Yisrael*. To you. You are the recipient of this powerful gift.



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ILLUMINATING THE MIND

R' Elchonon Wasserman (1874-1941) was known for his erudition and piety. As well, many sought his advice, as his keen intellect and deep understanding allowed him to solve the thorniest problems. A businessman once approached R' Elchonon with a conundrum, and asked R' Elchonon for his counsel. After discussing the matter, R' Elchonon opened his *Gemara* while the visitor waited silently. After a few minutes, R' Elchonon turned to the man, gave his recommendation, and the man left.

R' Elchonon's *Talmidim* were baffled. What did the *Sugya* that R' Elchonon learned have to do with this man's dilemma? R' Elchonon responded, "The words of the *Gemara* illuminate one's mind and force him to think straight. After I studied a little, Hashem helped me to give the man sound advice."

Adapted from "For Love of Torah" by R' Shimon Finkelman.

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Since the moment that Hashem created the world the existence of everything He created was dependent on *Bnei Yisrael* accepting 2448 years later.¹
- Torah learning keeps the world going. Therefore if there were one second without Torah learning in the world, the world will return to nothingness.²
- Ever since the Torah came down from *Shamayim* it still retained its heavenly *Kedusha*. Thus it is forbidden to merely think in Torah when going to a soiled area.³
- The reason Chazal refer to understanding Torah as a *Metziah*⁴ – finding of a lost object – is because understanding Torah is not really based on how smart we are. It is really based on putting in the effort – trying – and Hashem then does His part – allows us to “find” or understand the Torah.⁵

1 *Rashi Bereishis* 1:31

2 *Nefesh Hachaim* 4:25

3 *Nefesh Hachaim* 4:27

4 *Megillah* 6b

5 *Gr"o* (as quoted by *Chochmas Betzalel Niddah* 30b)