

CHAPTER 1: MISHNA 18: PART 4

by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Upon three things the world is sustained: On judgment ("din") on truth ("emeth") and on peace ("shalom"). As it is written (Zechariah 8:16) "Truth, and judgment of peace [you should] judge in your gates.

(The Maharal has been presenting a summary overview of the chapter.)

Chronologically, the world preceded man, giving it a certain level of primacy. Therefore the chapter opened with Shimon HaTzadik's lesson about the world, teaching the three foundations upon which it was created. This is followed by the pairs of lessons teaching man how to reach his potential and his perfection. When this is achieved, man becomes the primary element, preceding the world in importance. So the chapter closes with the lesson of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel about the sustained existence of the world. But due to man having attained primacy through the perfection of his actions with love and awe, an expression of man's essence precedes the closing lesson about the world.

The Torah stands above the world, and, as the will of G-d, it is the origin of the world's existence. It is with a lesson about the Torah that the Anshei Knesset HaGedolah opened the chapter. This is followed with Shimon HaTzadik's lesson about the foundations necessary for the world to be brought into existence. Antignos Ish Socho then taught a lesson about man and his service of G-d, for man is the primary element of creation, and he is the purpose of the world's existence. It is man's service with love and awe that enables him to attain his perfection, and each of the five pairs taught how man, as the primary element of the world, can better attain this perfection. Man finds himself in this world constantly interacting with others. Those interactions begin with primary ones with people to whom he is closest, and continue through interactions with people with whom he has less and less connection. All his actions must be perfected with both love and awe.

This is followed by lessons that relate to the essence of man (as opposed to his actions), perfecting both dimensions of his existence: a spritual/intellectual component and a material/physcial one.

Finally, there are the three pillars that give support to the world, ensuring its ultimate perfection. This is the conclusion to the chapter, which began with the three pillars of creation that connected the origin of the world to the Divine. The origin of the world requires support in its initial creation phase, connecting it to G-d, which are the pillars of Shimon HaTzadik. And it requires support after it has

been completed, ensuring that it remains connected to its Creator through the fulfillment of its purpose, which are the pillars of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel.

(The Maharal now references "drashoth" of Chazal that connect the word "Breishith" at the opening of the Torah, with Torah, Avodah and Chesed. We will not go into the intricacies of how these elements relate to the word "Breishith," but leave it to those who are interested to see the sources firsthand.)

In Breishit Rabbah (1:2) we are taught that the true "Breishith" (beginning) is the Torah, as we see in Mishlei 8:22. Avodah is also alluded to in the word "Breishith" as we learn in Sukkah (49a) that the word can be divided in to "bara sheeth," he created a pit, alluding to the pit next to the altar. Finally, we are taught in Breishit Rabbah (1:6) that the world was created for agricultural gifts that man has to give, all of which are called "beginnings": Challah (Bamidbar 15:20); Ma'aser (Devarim 18:4); Bikurim (Shemoth 23:19). These agricultural gifts are more related to "Gemiluth Chasadim" than agricultural gifts given to the poor, which are like "tzedakah," charity. The difference between charity and chesed (kindness) say Chazal (Sukkah 49b) is that charity can only be to the poor, while chesed can be given to both rich and poor.

The three foundations of Shimon HaTzadik are intimated in the word "Breishith," in the original creation of the world. The three foundations of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel are alluded to in the completion of the world, in the verse (Breishith 2:3) "...Asher barah Elokim la'ashoth..." for on it (Shabbath) he ceased from all his creative work. The Midrash (Breishith Rabbah 10:12) asks what work was still left to be done for Shabbath? To create peace, tranquility and rest. (See the end of the Maharal's explanation on the Introductory Mishna.) Shabbath itself, which is the completion of creation, is Shalom, peace and tranquility.

This verse also alludes to "din," through the mention of G-d's name as Elokim, which is used to refer to a judge (Shemoth 22:8) and identifies G-d in His role as judge.

Finally, the verse alludes to "emeth" through the final letters of the words: barah (aleph) Elokim (mem) la'ashoth (thaph). It is with these three letters that G-d sealed the creation, "emeth" being the seal which is G-d's identity (see Shabbath 55a).

We have three foundations of the beginning of creation of the world, and three foundations of the completion of the creation. These matters are very deep; it is impossible to explain more; you must apply considerable understanding to grasp the depth of these words of wisdom. (Yes, that was a verbatim quote from the Maharal...)

(The Maharal concludes this chapter with further explanations of the lack of precise chronological order of the Tanaim towards the end of the chapter. None of this is coincidental in the view of the Maharal, but was done with precision and intention. And the fact that the lesson of Rebbe (Rebbe Yehuda HaNassi, the son of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel) was chosen to open the next chapter, as opposed to including him with his father at the end of this chapter, is also not by chance. After the

lessons of our chapter that parallel the ten declarations of creation, preceded and followed by the foundations of creation, the Tanna wants to teach lessons that parallel the product of that creation. For a righteous person, his good deeds are likened to his offspring and the fruit of his labor (see Isaiah 3:10). The lessons of Rebbe, as we will see, relate to the totality of man's deeds, which is the next stage after creation. The Maharal concludes this chapter by outlining the development of the first Mishnayoht of the next chapter. Since we haven't learned these Mishnayoth yet, we will include much of what he says here with what he writes in the next chapter.

(With this, we conclude the first chapter. It has taken us exactly one year to finish it, and if this would be a "live" shiur, we would make a siyum! I am not sure what the "netiquette" is for on-line shiurim, but those of you who are with us for the entire first chapter, or those who joined late but picked up the missed shiurim from the archive, should certainly make some kind of celebration.

The class is taught by [Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky](#), Dean of [Darche Noam Institutions](#), Yeshivat Darche Noam/Shapell's and Midreshet Rachel for Women.
