

The Blessing of Fallen Angels

- We find ourselves in shul once again. And I don't know about you but it feels like we are just about to complete a marathon that consisted of yuntif and, and shabbos, and more yuntif, and more shabbos and just when we thought we were at the end- here we are once again.
- The struggle that I think we have to address is how do we transition from this month-long season of holiness into the coming weeks ahead of us that are bereft of yomim tovim? And another question, Why does the Torah jam so many yomim tovim right next to each other instead of spreading them out more throughout the year? It would definitely make things easier in the kitchen and easier on our stomachs!

- They tell a story of a young woman who brings home her fiance to meet her parents. After dinner, her mother tells her father to find out about the young man. The father invites the fiance to his study for a drink.

"So what are your plans?" the father asks the young man.

"I am a Torah scholar." he replies.

"A Torah scholar? Hmmm," the father says. "Admirable, but what will you do to provide a nice house for my daughter to live in, as she's accustomed to?"

"I will study," the young man replies, "and God will provide for us."

"And how will you buy her a beautiful engagement ring, such as she deserves?" asks the father.

"I will concentrate on my studies," the young man replies, "God will provide for us."

"And children?" asks the father. "How will you support children?"

"Don't worry, sir, God will provide," replies the fiancée. The conversation proceeds like this, and each time the father questions him, the young idealist insists that God will provide.

Later, the mother asks, "How did it go, honey?"

The father answers, "The bad news is, he has no job and no prospects, but the good news is he thinks I'm God."

- We live in a world where sometimes people rely on us like one should rely on G-d and expect us to provide for them like God provides. But no one in their right mind would ever think they are *ACTUALLY* God!

And no one in their right mind would ever think that they can *BECOME* God!

- And yet, in this week's parsha, after the story of creation of the World, we learn about the creation of Adam and Chava. The Torah tells us very little about what type of people they were. It doesn't talk about their personality, their struggles, their goals, or their aspirations.

Instead of discussing any of those key elements that are integral to laying down the framework for a story, the Torah **immediately** tells us the story of Chava's encounter with the nachash, the snake.

- The snake says to Chava, "Eat from the Tree! The only reason God doesn't want you to eat from it is because if you do, **והייתם כאלקים יודעי טוב ורע**." You'll be like "אלקים". You'll be like God.

- The obvious question we must ask ourselves is, what was Chava thinking?! Did she actually think she would be like God? Did she think she would be able to create worlds and universes just from eating a fruit?
- I think the answer to this can be found in the Ibn Ezra and the Chizkuni. They explain that the word "**א-להים**" **can also mean מלאכים, angels**. Chava did not want to become like God. Rather, she wanted to become an angel.
- Why did Chava want to become an angel? What separates angels from human beings is that angels have a very clear and defined mission in life. They have no struggles ..., no big decisions to make....., no hardships that they must suffer. Chava was not trying to be God. She was trying to run away from life's responsibilities and difficulties that affect every human being.
- And isn't that true in our own lives as well?
Don't we somewhere deep down inside ourselves wish we didn't have to deal with the struggles of the world? Why do I have to live in such a confusing world where I don't know what G-d wants from me? Essentially we are asking, "Why can't I just be an angel?"
- The truth is that there is a time period of the year where we **are** like angels. That is the time period of the last two months that we experienced.

In **Elul** we began the Teshuva process. We were working on becoming better people and we knew exactly what our mission was.

That led us to **Rosh Hashana** where we, just like angels, proclaimed G-d as Creator of the Universe and the The King in our lives.

That led us **Yom Kippur** where we *literally* mimicked angels by dressing in white and abstaining from physical pleasures. Immediately after we started the holiday of **Sukkos** where we found ourselves in G-ds loving embrace in the Sukkah.

- During this time period we were as close to angels as it gets! We kind of had a vacation from the “real” world where we took our minds off some of life’s challenges and focused, to a certain degree, on our relationship with Hashem. We didn’t focus so much on the big life decisions that we would have to soon make.
- But now we find ourselves in Parshas Bereishis. We have settled back to reality and have to remember that we are not angels. We once again have to confront life’s challenges as human beings have to do. We must turn back to the confusion of life, the struggles..... and we are scared. Perhaps we don’t want to confront these challenges. Perhaps now we understand and share Chava’s desire to become an angel. Perhaps we hear the proverbial serpent whispering to us to eat the forbidden fruit!
- So what went wrong? Why did God punish Chava if her intentions seem so normal?

The answer is that God sent her here to this world to not eat from the tree. God does not want Chava, or us for that matter, to be angels. God realizes that there are struggles and He knows it ok

sometimes to fail and struggle. He wants to be humans, not angels! It IS THE VERY REASON THAT G-D PUT US ON THIS WORLD

- Rav Yisrael Salanter tells a story of a person who was lost in a forest during a storm. It was pitch black, torrential rain was pouring on his face, and it was freezing cold. He couldn't see his way out of the forest to make it back home. He wandered aimlessly in the night trying to find his way until suddenly, a huge lightning bolt struck the ground a few hundred feet in front of him. During that split second the lightning illuminated the path in front of him. He was able to see where he was and how to get back home. The man kept the image of that clear and bright forest in his mind until he was eventually able to make it back home.
- We now find ourselves wandering through a dark forest. We are entering a period bereft of the illuminating lights of the yumim tovim season we just experienced.
- This is why we read parshas bereishis right after all the chagim. Hashem is telling us, after all the spiritual highs we experienced during the chagim, that it's time to come back to earth and be human again. We should, of course, keep the image of the illuminated forest in our minds so we can get back home. We should take the inspiration of the yumim tovim with us as we continue on our journey. But we shouldn't be afraid to encounter life's challenges and to experience its ups and downs. We must

march confidently in **THIS** world and try to contribute our portion to creation. Don't be afraid to mess up or fall in in this forest of life- Hashem accepts us and loves us for being human, not angels.