Abstract

Rabbi Shulman continues unpacking Hallel HaGadol (Tehillim 136) through the lens of the Maharal, showing how its sequence is a guided descent from Hashem's transcendent governance—mediated through distinct classes of מלאכים—down into the created physical order of שמים וארץ and their details. He explains why "לעושה נפלאות גדולות לבדו" is placed before the description of the heavens: miracles flow from realms beyond the physical. Finally, Rabbi Shulman frames the transition from creation to יציאת מצרים as the "tenth," sanctified stage—because the emergence of כלל ישראל is itself a completion of מעשה בראשית, giving the world its purpose.

I. Returning to "הודו" in Hallel HaGadol: the Maharal turns "mystical"

A. Locating the discussion in the piyyut

- Rabbi Shulman focuses on the phrase describing Hashem's הנהגה: "והוא מספר הנהגתו כי הוא אלקי האלקים... אדני האדנים..."
- He notes that the Maharal suddenly shifts into a more mystical framework that needs "deciphering."

B. "אלקי האלקים": Hashem as Creator of the "אלקים" (angelic class)

- Rabbi Shulman explains the Maharal's claim: **here refers to angels "אלקים"** (called אלקים), because He created them "אלקי האלקים" and Hashem is.
- Angels are not one uniform category; Rabbi Shulman describes "variety" and "classes/species":
  - Higher angelic beings (e.g., שרפים, אופנים; archangels like מיכאל, גבריאל)
  - Much lower angels (e.g., those "over every blade of grass")

C. "אדני האדנים": a different class—"masters" who govern the world

- The Maharal's second category: angels called **"אדונים"** because they are "masters" over the world (in a delegated sense).
- Rabbi Shulman contrasts:
  - **"אלקים"** = higher powers that are פועלים (cause things to be actualized)
  - **"אדונים"** = powers of הנהגה (managing/overseeing what is "under them")

II. Two angelic roles: “פועל” vs. “מנהיג” (2:30)

A. The Maharal’s “two names” framework for all angels

- Rabbi Shulman reads the Maharal: “וכלל המלאכים בשני שמות”
  - **מלאכים עליונים... נקראים אלקים** — higher angels acting as פועלים in the world
  - **מנהיגים את התחתונים... נקראים אדונים** — lower governance/management

B. Rabbi Shulman’s practical illustration

- role: the ”פועל“bringing-into-being / activation of realities (not יש מאין, which is only Hashem)
- role: the “nitty-gritty” direction of ongoing events in the functioning world ”מנהיג“
  - Example contrast: initiating growth vs. steering day-to-day outcomes

C. Connection to Bereishit language

- Rabbi Shulman highlights the Maharal’s proof:
  - In **מעשה בראשית** the Divine Name used is **אלוקים**, because it connotes Hashem as פועל הכל (the One who actualizes/establishes the system).

III. Constant renewal vs. the “clockmaker” theory (6:32)

A. The theological backdrop

- Rabbi Shulman raises the philosophical dispute (associated with Aristotle):
  - Claim: Hashem “set the world in motion” and it runs on its own.
- He notes Jewish thought strongly rejects this.

B. The Torah/liturgy assertion of ongoing creation

- Rabbi Shulman cites the idea expressed in daily tefillah:
  - **”המחדש בטובו בכל יום מעשה בראשית“** (He renews, in His goodness, every day, the act of creation)
- He adds (via נפש החיים) that this renewal is not merely daily, but **constant**.

C. Why angels “have work”

- Since reality is continuously sustained and directed, the various angelic strata are continually “employed” in their roles of פעולה and הנהגה.

IV. “לעושה נפלאות גדולות לבדו”: miracles as beyond the physical order (8:30)

A. Why miracles appear right after “אלקי האלקים… אדני האדנים”

- Rabbi Shulman explains the Maharal’s sequence:
  - After mentioning the non-physical angelic realm (“המלאכים הנבדלים”), we can speak of actions that transcend nature.

B. Miracles are “רחוקים מדעת אנוש”

- Rabbi Shulman reads the Maharal: these wonders are beyond human comprehension and **“למעלה מן הטבע לגמרי.”**
- He links this to a familiar berachah phrase:
  - ”רופא כל בשר ומפליא לעשות“

C. Placement before “לעושה שמים בתבונה”

- Rabbi Shulman emphasizes the Maharal’s point:
  - These “מעשים המופלאים” are placed **before** the making of the heavens because they are **above the heavens**, which are still “גשמיים” (physical).

V. The descent into the created physical system: שמים, ארץ, and then details (12:31)

A. From spiritual realms to physical realms

- Rabbi Shulman organizes the movement:
  - First: non-physical powers (מלאכים / כוחות נבדלים)
  - Then: miracles (also rooted in the beyond-physical)
  - Now: the physical cosmos—beginning with **“לעושה שמים בתבונה”**

B. "שמים וארץ שקולים": one balanced system

- Rabbi Shulman clarifies "שקולים" does not mean "equal" but **mutually complementary / balanced**:
  - ארץ incomplete without שמים; שמים incomplete without ארץ.

C. A Maharal cross-reference: "קונה שמים וארץ"

- Rabbi Shulman references the Maharal's explanation (Gur Aryeh) that "שמים וארץ" denotes the totality of the physical system—**the כלל**.
- Then Hallel moves to **the פרטים** (the details within the system).

D. The "highest" physical detail: light/luminaries

- Rabbi Shulman explains why Hallel next highlights:
  - "לעושה אורים"
- Light is framed as the loftiest element within the physical order.

VI. Resolving the "redundancy" of "אורים גדולים" vs. sun/moon specifics (16:31)

A. The problem in the text flow

- Rabbi Shulman notes the apparent repetition:
  - First: "לעושה אורים גדולים"
  - Then: "את השמש... ואת הירח וכוכבים..."

B. First answer: "אורים גדולים" refers to the original equality of the luminaries

- Rabbi Shulman invokes Chazal/Rashi's idea:
  - Initially, two luminaries were "great"; later the moon was diminished.
- Thus: the first phrase speaks of creation's initial state; the later phrases reflect the post-diminution reality.

C. Second answer: two distinct aspects—light vs. rulership

- Rabbi Shulman presents the alternative:
  - "אורים גדולים" = their shared function as light-providers (one category: אור)
  - "ממשלה" = divided roles:
    - sun rules day

        - moon/stars rule night
- He explains the “opposites” dimension:
    - when the sun rules, the moon does not (and vice versa)

D. Brief aside: the moon as “לית לה מגרמה כלום”

- Rabbi Shulman references the Zohar phrase that the moon “has nothing of its own,” reflecting light—while stressing (via the aside) that reflected light is still transformed and functionally distinct.

VII. The pivot: from cosmic order to Israel’s emergence as the sanctified “tenth” (25:30)

A. “כי לעולם חסדו” as the refrain for all Divine giving/acting

- Rabbi Shulman summarizes the Maharal:
    - On each created/given element we say: “כי לעולם חסדו,” because Hashem bestowed and sustained it.

B. Counting structure: nine stages, then the “tenth” which is קדוש

- Rabbi Shulman introduces the Maharal’s counting:
    - After describing the structure of creation (the “nine”), we reach the next unit:
        - ”למכה מצרים בבכוריהם כי לעולם חסדו“
- He frames the “tenth” as inherently sanctified: “בעשירי שהוא קודש”.

C. יציאת מצרים as “בריאה” completing the world

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Maharal’s thesis:
    - The formation and guidance of ”הויית ישראל שנעשו לעם והנהגתם“—”ישראל“—is itself a kind of creation.
- Without ישראל, the world lacks its intended קדושה and purpose:
    - the world would have “everything,” but not “ישראל) ”אדם אתם as “אָדָם” in the sense of covenantal humanity)

D. Linking to earlier Maharal: Pesach parallels the seven days of creation

- Rabbi Shulman recalls the Maharal's explanation in Gevurot Hashem:
  - Pesach's seven days parallel the seven days of creation because **creating כלל ישראל** is the "completion" (מכה בפטיש) of the entire מעשה בראשית.
- Therefore, the סדר in Hallel moves naturally from cosmology to redemption history.

E. The onward list: from the plague of the firstborn to inheritance of the land

- Rabbi Shulman reads the subsequent chain of חסדים:
  - striking Egypt, taking Israel out, splitting the sea, leading in the desert, defeating Sichon/Og, and giving the land "נחלה לישראל עבדו"
- He notes (without resolving) a question about the count reaching thirteen items in that segment.

X. In Summary

- Rabbi Shulman explains (via the Maharal) that "אלקי האלקים" and "אדני האדנים" describe two angelic strata: those who actualize and those who govern.
- This framework rejects a "self-running universe" and supports the idea of constant renewal: "המחדש בטובו בכל יום מעשה בראשית."
- is positioned before the making of the heavens because "לעושה נפלאות גדולות לבדו" miracles stem from what is beyond the physical cosmos.
- The Hallel sequence descends from spiritual governance to physical creation (שמים/ארץ and luminaries), and then pivots to יציאת מצרים as a sanctified "tenth" stage—because the emergence of כלל ישראל completes creation by giving the world its purpose and קדושה.