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The Sinai Files

A SciFi/Fantasy version of the classic story
of Moses' battle with the angels to receive the Torah

By Tzvi Freeman



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Shavuot With Chabad.ORG

The Sinai Files

The Babylonian Talmud (Shabbat 88b) and the Midrash both mention a debate that occurred between the angels and Moses concerning the Torah's appropriate recipient. The account, however, is rather cryptic.

Finally, here is the complete version, pieced together from a wealth of classic commentaries.

Round One Morning of Panic

For Joe Angel, it had been a typical night up in heaven, packed with high-energy singing and praise. Things had gone slightly better than last week—just as things had been steadily improving every week for the last 2,448 years since the Creation. Little did he realize that this morning

would be the one to permanently upset the status quo he and his colleagues had found so comfortable all these ages.

It occurred as the morning shift was just taking over, fully prepared with a great set of wild new hits—when someone smelled something.

"It's coming from there!" they hollered, frantically, "Looooook!! It's a...a...EARTHLY BEING!!! EEEEEEE!!!! Get him out of here, FAST!"

In a flash, the senior choirmaster had Supreme Angel Michael on the phone. His metaphysical wings waved frantically in the ether, as he almost screamed into the receiver. This was an emergency, he argued. Clandestine procedures were now out of the question. All had to be laid out in black

and white immediately. Michael had to go before The Boss right now for a disclosure agreement.

Within minutes, the phone call was returned. A heated, but brief exchange ensued, after which the choirmaster demanded silence to make an announcement.

“OK, everyone, we’ve got rights to make this public knowledge now. That human being over there is none other than Moses. He’s here because The Boss, blessed be His Name, in His infinite wisdom...

“Holy, holy, holy...” the angels, at hearing mention of the Boss, began crying out in heavenly harmony, “...the Infinite Lrd of Hosts...blessed be the Name of His glory...”. In a bid to regain their attention, the choirmaster pulled Moses in front of their faces. The shock of seeing an earthly being in their immaculate world chilled their song like a mountain of ice on a barbecue pit.

“Like I was saying,” continued the choirmaster, “this is Moses. He’s a person, and he’s here because, well...”

Stillness.

“He’s going to receive the Torah in proxy for the Children of Israel.”

At first, such silence as though all the sounds of a millennium had been sucked in to the void. Then a popping here and there as the more ethereal beings, unable to contain the revelation, dissolved into flashes of cosmic dust. Then, the more robust, those who survived, murmuring in

protest, ranting louder and louder, and then furiously in the most ultimate of all crescendos, like the roar of a cosmic tsunami approaching the physiosphere, the howl of a galactic hurricane whipped up in the Milky Way...

“Your precious, most hidden of all treasures!” they wailed. “A treasure you have hidden for 974 generations before the world was ever created, and 26 since then —and now You plan to fork it over to EARTHLY BEINGS!!! CAST YOUR GLORY UPON THE HEAVENS (Psalms, 8)! Let us—Your immaculate servants who have sung Your praises all these ages, us who truly understand the Depth of Your Wisdom and Holiness—let us have Your Holy Torah! WHAT IS MAN THAT YOU SHOULD EVEN CONSIDER HIM (ibid.)?!!”

The wails and howls soared in ever-rising amplitude until the entire cosmic order resonated at super-sonic frequencies, its energy level treacherously approaching the point of auto-nihilation—when The Boss, blessed be His Name and Glory ad infinitum, put His holy foot down (so to speak).

And so there was silence—sharp and sudden like the edge of a mighty cliff before the abyss.

The choirmaster, himself freshly re-incorporated into a more resilient spiritual form, wiped sweat from his brow and struggled to articulate the announcement he had just been instructed to make, “OK, everybody get to the benches. The concert is cancelled. We’re going to have a legal debate.”

Round Two Battling Angels

Scene changes are instant up there. It was not even a moment and the heavenly concert hall had become the heavenly court. A legal team was appointed to defend Moses and the Children of Israel, as well as an opposition to represent the angels themselves.

The defense began:

"It's not good enough to make all these claims of being better, demanding favoritism. If you wish that we angels should have the Torah for ourselves, you're going to have to play by the ground rules of Torah itself!"

The opposition replied smugly:

"And we shall: Baba Metzia, folio 108, second side. Cited by Maimonides, Laws of Neighbors 12..."

"Please get to the citation..."

"Very well: But first, observe exhibit A:"

A map delineating real estate properties was presented.

"You'll note that this landowner has a portion of real estate for sale that borders on his neighbor's property—over here. But he's nasty. Rather than deal with his neighbor, he sells it to some Joe off the street. So the neighbor is empowered by Torah law to go to this Joe, pay him his money, and nab the property for himself. Why? Because the Torah says, "You shall do that which is upright and decent" (Deut. 6:18). Upright and decent is to

sell the property to your neighbor—because he's the one who can make the best use of it."

"And just what," demanded the defense, "has that got to do with our case?"

"Quite simple: The Torah is something heavenly and divine. We are too. That makes us neighbors. Earthly beings, aside from their many other serious defects, are very distant from spiritual matters. They have to struggle to grasp that which comes naturally to us. So we are neighbors and they are the distant Joe-off-the-street. Which gives us first rights."

The heavenly spectators couldn't help but let out a cheer of gladness. Their case seemed ethertight.

But then the defense retorted:

"You may consider yourselves erudite in the paths of Torah, dear opposition. But in this case, you have failed to note the gloss of the Maggid Mishna on that chapter in Maimonides. There, he cites the opinion of the "Itur" that these "rights of the neighbor" only apply to real estate. Torah, on the other hand, is not real estate, but movable property."

The opposition: "And what, pray tell, is your evidence that Torah is moveable property?"

The defending angel rose to his full stature, as if exasperated: "Of course it's moveable property! If it weren't, you wouldn't have any complaint! It's being taken from up here in heaven and being given down there on earth!!"

In case anyone hadn't gotten the point by now, those words drove it home with a bite. One youthful angel had begun vibrating dangerously. Unable to contain his life-force in a passive mode any longer, he vaulted the bench and in flames of ionic crimson stormed above the frenzy:

"Yes! They'll have the Torah down there! Every time we want to pray, we'll have to wait for them to get out of their beds! When we want to sanctify the new moon, we'll have to go to their earthly courts to find out what they have established with their puny brains! We will be reduced to no more than gagged back seat drivers, shlepped around by the whim of their paralogistic human mishugas, completely dependent for our very life force upon their clumsy, lackadaisical fulfillment of material mitzvahs! We, who stand here every day and commune with the Divine, to whom light and revelation is our very being, we shall become no more than accessories to those egomaniacal, vulgar, physical beings who walk in thick darkness, ready to deny the very existence of their own souls! NO! WE CANNOT LET THIS BE!!!"

Before the court clerks were able to haul the protestor away, he had already dissolved into the ether, returning to his source in the supernal void, yet another victim of cerebral overload for the day.

Round Three Beyond Panic

As the pandemonium subsided to the mallet of the chief justice, the opposition continued:

"We've had a chance to look over your sources, and, frankly, we're not convinced."

A sigh of relief rose from the crowd—in unison, of course.

"Certainly, the argument of the Itur would hold true in most cases, since the neighbor can always find similar goods elsewhere and bring them to his property. But in the case of the Torah, there simply is no replacement. Once it's gone, it's gone. There are no "similar goods". They will have it, and we shall be forced to descend to their realm to learn it from them. The entire flow of cosmic energy shall be in the hands of their good deeds and mitzvahs—and we shall only hope to assist them along. This, we assert, is unethical and contrary to Torah itself. Even the Itur has no reason to distinguish this from the law of real estate. The Law of the Neighbor's Rights still applies."

All heads nodded enthusiastically. The defense, however, was undeterred: "Our next argument is that these laws only apply to sales, whether barter or monetary. The Torah is not being sold. It's being given as an outright gift to the earthly beings. Look on the next side of the page there in Baba Metzia and you'll realize that none of these neighbor's rights apply to gifts!"

In the crowded aisles of the court, one angel whispered to another, "I told you we could never, never truly understand Him. Torah? An outright gift?!"

The opposition rebutted, indignantly:

"This is a clear misrepresentation of the facts! The Torah is being sold, not donated!"

"It's being given away! Gratis! In a nice box with ribbons and a birthday card!"

"It's being sold! For barter!"

The defense: "I cite Brachot 5a, "Three good gifts did the Holy One Blessed Be He give Israel... Torah..."

The opposition: "And I cite the same page in the same Gemora: The Holy One Blessed Be He says to Israel, "I have sold you my Torah..."!"

The debate shot back and forth as an electric storm across the heavens. Finally, it was conceded that some aspects of Torah were being given as a gift and others as a sale (and still other features as an inheritance). At any rate, the Law of the Neighbor still applied.

The defense was not yet stumped. Now Moses was being brought to the stand, not as the defendant, but as "Exhibit A".

The defense: "Behold the subject in question. Your first reaction was that this is an earthly being who has no business up here in our realm. But look again! You call this a man, I say he is truly an angel—and perhaps even greater!"

The defense was dangerously bordering on treachery, and knew it well. But that was a risk that had to be taken.

"This is the man who defied Pharaoh, who brought ten plagues upon the Egyptians, who

spoke with Gd even while within the chambers of Pharaoh's palace! Split the Red Sea, made manna fall from heaven..."

"Big deal!" cackled the opposition, "Angels do similar things daily."

"...Led the Jews out of Egypt and through the wilderness for 50 days and put up with their kvetching!"

Now the angels were impressed. But the opposition protested, "So what does this have to do with our case?"

"Moses is no Joe off the street! Just as we are neighbors to the Torah, so is Moses!"

The opposition was forced to yell over the ensuing commotion: "Deceit! Deflective tactics! You can't pull the wool over our eyes! He's not coming here to get the Torah for himself! He's planning to give it out freely to every Berel and Shmerel down there that wants to learn! And they are most certainly NOT OUR NEIGHBORS!"

"YES THEY ARE OUR NEIGHBORS!" The defense retorted. "They all—every one of them—have a spark of Moses within them! See Tanya, chapter 42. And furthermore, they are better than neighbors—they are RELATED to The Boss Himself! See Psalms, 148:14."

"This Law of Neighbors' Rights applies to relatives as well," snapped the defense.

"Not according to the reading of the Baal Hilchot Gedolot, as brought by the Bet Yosef."

"That's not the final ruling!"

“But did He not call them “my child, my first born” when He demanded that Pharaoh let them go? Rabbi Yitzchaak Alfasi claims that these laws certainly do not apply to children, and the Siftei Cohen contends that this is the halacha. They are all holy, divine beings themselves, their souls carved out from under the Throne of Glory. They are capable of the most wondrous things! They deserve the Torah as much as we do!”

Round Four The Last Resort

The galleries were stunned. Their sensibilities as ethereal beings had been trashed. A backlash seemed imminent. Somebody in the opposition had to come up with something quick, or a riot would ensue.

“Hush! Children, be still!”

And so it was that an ancient being, one of those who had come into existence alongside time itself, rose to speak. All were hushed. His words, as follows, were perhaps the most revealing of the entire proceedings.

“If they are so holy,” he softly spoke, “then I say, let them come up here. Let them ascend and share the Torah with us. After all, that is all we are asking: That the Torah should remain in the heavenly realms. It should remain a Gdly wisdom, a teaching of mystical abstractions that reveals the inner workings of the cosmos and allows us to bond with that essential force. They, too, may be permitted to transcend their corporeal

bounds—through the efforts of meditation, fasting and prayer—and thereby rise to our spiritual plane and partake of this wonderful Torah with us.”

The sagacious being stopped to ponder for a moment, as it beheld in a single vision all that would transpire over the coming millennia. And now he glowed with passion.

“But to allow this greatest of all treasures to descend to the material realm...to become manifest in the form of deeds bound by physical objects...performed by crude semi-animals formed from the earth who are filled with deceit and avarice...in a place where the Holy Torah could be mistaken for just another set of ethno-rituals or—yet worse—an exercise of cyber-acrobatics to feed the arrogance of silly men??!! For this the cosmos came into being? This should be the destiny of the Wisdom of the Most High??!!”

“Holy, Holy...Blessed be...ad infinitum...”—the choir took off in inspiration. The defense called for order, asserting it had one last argument. Apparently a deflective tactic.

“Maimonides, *ibid.*, chapter 12, halacha 5. Rosh on Baba Metzia 31. Brought as the final ruling in the Code of Jewish Law: The Right of the Neighbor does not apply in the event that the owner has a partner interested in purchase of the property.”

“Now they are partners?”

“They’ve already kept one Shabbat, and (Shabbat 109b): Anyone who recites the verses, “And the heavens and the earth and all their host were completed...” as the Shabbat enters becomes a

partner with the Holy One Blessed Be He in the act of creation.

The opposition snapped back with a fury: “Now, I ask you: Is that fair? Of course they are partners! They have been given some preview mitzvahs already! Every mitzvah they do binds them in wonderful union with the Source of All Life—except that they remain coarse physical beings. But could you imagine—imagine it right now—if we, with our ethereal forms of light and divine energy, if we would be commanded to fulfill those same mitzvahs in our spiritual realm, as mystical meditations, as songs and holy communions? What greater unity could possibly exist? The Most Ultimate Oneness...”

The speaker for the opposition did not continue. In the excitement, he had already diffused his form and become absorbed into the Infinite Light. He wasn't the only one. The mention of such communion struck hard in the hearts of a multitude of beings, they too dissolving into the Nothingness. Other beings formed from the ambient energy and took their place.

Under these conditions, the debate could no longer continue, and so a vote was taken. An almost unanimous resolution was passed on to The Holy One Blessed Be He that the Torah be given to the angels, citing the law of Torah itself. Cheers of joy and gladness accompanied the clinking of glasses that echoed through the heavenly spheres.

The corks were still coming out of the champagne bottles, the band was warming up and the party was in full swing—when an

unexpected response was announced. It came in the form of a cryptic memo—from the Boss:

“See Rashi ad loc., words beginning, “Akum, etc.””

Angels are quick. “It means that the Torah has already been sold! Our case is no longer with The Boss, Blessed Be He, but with Moses, the buyer. He is hereby referring us to Moses to present his case!”

Moses, the man who defied Pharaoh and argued with Gd, took the stand. He held two impressive carved stones in his arms.

Round Five Moses Takes a Stand

As we left off, the supernal realms were in turmoil. After extreme debate, the Heavenly Court resolved that the Torah must be given to them and not to the Children of Israel—citing a ruling in the gemora “Baba Metzia”. Their case was sealed, victory declared, but The Holy One Blessed Be He responded by referring the angels to Moses himself for a rebuttal.

Now Moses, the half-man, half-angel who defied Pharaoh and argued even with Gd, took the stand. He held two impressive carved stones in his arms.

The heavens trembled.

“This Torah about which we are arguing,” he began, “what is written in it?”

“Yes, we've been through all that,” mocked one of the angels. He elbowed a colleague, “Look who's trying to teach us Torah! Heh, heh!”

Moses continued, unperturbed, “I am the Lord your Gd Who took you out of the land of Egypt...”

His eyes scanned the hall. “So, you heavenly beings descended to Egypt?” With each word, his voice rose louder—but still controlled.

“You soiled your hands with bricks and mortar? Suffered the sting of the taskmaster’s whip? Watched as your brothers and sisters and your very own children cried in pain and succumbed to the perverse cruelty of their oppressors?”

The Angels of Mercy poured out their tears. The Angels of Judgment shifted uncomfortably in their places. The Angels of Critical Analysis were frozen in stillness. The mockers were silenced.

Moses looked back down to read from his tablets.

“Let us see what else is written here: “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

He looked up. “Now, tell me, for whom is that written? For beings who perceive the Oneness of Gd as everyday reality? Do they require such stern warning, “Do not have other gods before Me”? Or is this meant for we who live in putrid, brain-confounding darkness, among nations who stray after literally hundreds of gods—each god with its seductive allure and missionary cult? Is it not we who are the ones to be told to have no other gods?”

His words echoed in the silent hall. Now Moses took his chance and made his words sharp as a dagger:

“I say, this Torah is not relevant to any of you in the first place!”

Indignation steamed over their heads in crackles and spurts. But no retort was heard.

Moses had his head back into those tablets. “Now lets see what’s next...Taking Gd’s name in vain! Now, why for heaven’s sake would anyone want to take Gd’s name in vain?”

The angels chewed on that one, but it didn’t go down. Take Gd’s name in vain? The words were meaningless to them.

“So let me explain: Earthly beings make business. I know you find that sort of thing rather appalling, but that’s what we do. In business, you sometimes have to take an oath, to assure the other party. Someone taking a false oath and using Gd’s name...”

“Oh, no!” they screamed in horror. “Please don’t go on!”

“Very well. You get the point.”

He continued: “Now we get to the Holy Day of Shabbat. ‘Six days a week you work...’”

“...And on the seventh,” they rejoined, “a holy day of rest to the Eternal...”

“Rest?” countered Moses. “But when did you last work for six days?”

“We sing. Like Holy, holy...”

“I mean work! Like plow, sow, harvest, build and tear down—refashion the world about you through physical proaction!”

“You mean to say,” enjoined one of the more thoughtful of the angels, “that you need the Torah more than us. You need it for your very survival, considering the perilous conditions in which you live. Well, this is an interesting argument, and we are quite willing to argue this point...”

“No!” a flame-headed angel interrupted. “Torah is the life of all worlds—ours included! Without Torah, their world cannot go on, but neither can we! Imagine if all the effulgence of divine energy we received were put into their hands!? One letter of a mezuzah improperly written by one of these careless creatures, and entire universes could go under! One incorrect blessing could wreak irreparable havoc for giga-myrriads of us! How could we allow our life force to be in their hands?!!?”

“I don’t think that’s his point at all,” opined another ethereal abstraction. “What he’s been asserting all this time is that the precepts of the Torah are only applicable in the material realm. Now, this is preposterous: We all know that everything that exists in the material realm first exists in a spiritual sense here above, just as audible speech first exist as thoughts within the mind.”

Angel heads were bobbing noddingly in accord.

“That angel over there, he is the life source of an oak tree on a hill on a small island. And that angel is the supernal origin of a squirrel that lives inside that tree. This fellow next to me is a rock at the bottom of the Aegean Sea. We are all the primal sources of all creatures below, from the inanimate to blades of grass to the wild and

domesticated animals—even including the animal soul within Man. All the forces of nature and its elements, earth, water, air and fire, all are but mere reflections of our sublime intellects in their state of being here above. Every nuance of every wave of the sea, every bristle of leaves in the wind begins here...”

“Would you kindly cut the didactics and get to your point?!”

“...What I mean to say is that if they can fulfill these precepts in their lower realm, then all the more so can we in a spiritual sense. And we do: Every day we make our escape from an abstract Egypt—the bounds and limitations of being as we transcend to higher realms. Once a week, we keep the Shabbat by leaving the worlds created by divine speech and rising to the inner worlds of divine thought. We can do acts of kindness by bringing Divine energy lower. We can perform the sacrifices and prayer services by raising divine sparks higher. All through our meditation and song and great music...”

“Yes!” exclaimed an Angel of Excitement. “Whatever earthlings can do, angels can do better!”

Delight and gladness once again returned to the angels’ court. Many cried together in unison: “Yes! He is right! Our mitzvahs will be so much more sublime than whatever they can do! Yes! The Torah belongs to us, the ministering angels!”

“And you, dear Moses,” one turned sympathetically to the stand, “you need not feel left out: You or any of your people will be permitted to delve into the Paradise of Kabala, untie yourselves from

your earthly bonds and join us in spiritual service!”

Heavenly harmony once again filled the cosmos. Pure, enchanting light flowed down from above. The dance choir had already risen and was carrying a protesting Moses on their shoulders, singing: “Holy, holy...blessed be...ad infinitum! Come sing with us!...”

It was then that the ancient being who had spoken earlier in our drama cleared his throat once again. It was ever so subtle, yet within the square root of a nanosecond the song and dance stopped. All heads turned respectfully. All aural senses were alert.

“I’ve been paying careful attention,” he began, “and I don’t think any of you have interpreted our dear Rabbi Moses correctly.”

This was not what the angels had expected to hear. Energy levels sank sharply.

“He seems to have in mind something much deeper than you fathom. According to Moses,” the venerable sage leaned on his luminous staff, “there is something special about the material realm that we have yet to realize. Something that somehow makes it the appropriate place for Torah to be—for our own good as well. I submit that we must allow him to continue.”

Reluctantly, the heavenly court was forced to agree. Moses was plumped back down at his podium.

Round Six Moses Hits Where It Hurts

Moses was also hesitant about the next one. After all, it was certainly not pc. But the stakes were high. Moses looked back down into the tablets and read:

“Honor your mother and your father.”

The angels saw what was coming. They began to wish they had never started all this in the first place.

“So??!!” his powerful voice shook the walls. “Where are your mothers and fathers?!”

“Umm, Moses...we don’t do that sort of thing up here, we just...”

“So you admit!” Moses lurched forward, “You are creations of light! You have no mother or father! This miracle belongs only to us! Only in our world is found the Essence of the Infinite! Only in our world is reflected the most awesome, essential power of the Divine—the power to create being out of nothingness.”

Even the most sublime of metaphysical intellects needed time to think about that—but Moses didn’t give them a chance:

“And now see what else is written here: “Do not murder! Do not steal! Do not covet!...”—is there then jealousy up here? Do you fight one with the other? Do you struggle with an ominous darkness inside? Do any of you have these warped emotions that plague us below, this perverse drive to rebel against our very Source of Life and

deny there is any authority outside of our own selves?!!”

“But, Moses, you take pride in this?!”

“Yes!” Moses retorted, “Because when we shall use the magnificent power of the Torah to resist, to redirect those nefarious energies to channels of holiness, to overcome darkness and transform it to light...we shall then uncover in the cosmos the Source of All Being Himself. For as He creates out of the void a being that feels absolute autonomy, we shall make that ultimate of being admit its nothingness.”

The angels were lost. Moses’ eyes opened wide. “Look below,” he uttered softly.

Round Seven: Secrets of the Depths Revealed

The lights were dimmed. Two hefty panels of the hall slid back revealing a panoramic screen. The aroma of heavenly buttered popcorn wafted through the ether. The angels munched away as the scene faded to a twilight-lit room where a young girl stood, stretching forth her hand to light a candle. The flame took hold and without warning, the heavens were filled with a blinding light.

“What is it? We have never experienced this light before!” they burst out.

“Keep watching,” Moses told them.

On the screen was a table covered with wine, challah, and a mess of food. A family sat about,

talking and eating. Inexplicably, the television was blank—even though the NBA finals were playing that night. The family began to sing—adults and children together. In their world, it seemed a cacophony of noise—but through the audio system up there resonated the sweetest of holy harmony.

“Who wrote that stuff?” the choirmaster demanded. “I’ve never heard anything like it!”

“Keep watching,” said Moses.

They kept watching and they ahhed and oaed as earthlings sacrificed time from work to squeeze in a few prayers or catch a few words of Torah, as small children rejected candies because they weren’t kosher, as these creatures transformed mundane activities of eating, sleeping and bodily functions into divine service with a simple blessing. With each scene, flashes of light jumped out from the material world and the objects of their deeds began to glow with divine emanation.

“What are those?” an astounded angel whispered.

The ancient sage of the angels replied, his voice, too, filled with awe, “Those are the divine lost sparks. They fell from high beyond our world down and down to the earthly realm at the Dawn of Creation. These beings somehow have the ability to uncover them with their deeds, thereby transforming material objects into holy vessels.”

“They make darkness into light!”

“Finite into infinite.”

“Being into non-being!”

“You haven’t seen nothing yet.” Moses spoke, “Watch this!”

The date stamp at the bottom right of the screen indicated it was the eve of the final redemption. An earthly being sat and stared into a 17 inch trinitron tube, every once in a while clicking a button or typing on a keyboard. It seemed a dull activity, yet the angels could feel an essence-light emanating from those fingers and that machine, a light that seemed it could finally uncover the secret of Oneness within all the created realms.

“What is he doing?” begged the angels.

Moses explained: “The earthly beings created horrible tools of rampage and destruction, tools which they almost used to destroy all of their world. But now they have begun to transform these tools into good. This being is using an evolution of such a tool for connecting with other minds across the planet and learning Torah from them and with them, spreading kindness and wisdom. They call it “Internet.””

“You mean to say they use a tool created out of their most evil impulses to reveal the Oneness of their souls that transcends space and time?” they asked.

“You couldn’t have put it better,” replied Moses.

“You see,” he continued, “you conceive of Torah as it would be in your realm: Now you have light—Torah, you imagine, would be just more of the same. More inner, more essential, but just light.”

Now his audience was receptive. They realized that Moses had chosen an argument that satisfied their needs as well, and even beyond their highest expectations. They were to get “even more”.

“But, for us,” Moses went on, “Torah is more than light. When we take the Torah He gave us, we hold in our hands Gd Himself.”

“Midrash Rabba, Leviticus 30,13,” cited a scholarly angel.

“In the essence of the Torah is the Essence of Gd, and where is that revealed? Not here in the heavens, but there in the darkness, in the struggle to find good within the evil and godlessness.”

The angels were about to begin their applause and sing a new song. But then...

“Wait!” shouted one of the Angels of Compulsive-Obsessiveness, “Have you all forgotten? What about the Rights of the Neighbor clause?”

“Baba Metzia, ibid. Maimonides ibid. 14.1,” cited Moses. ““If the neighbor wants the property for planting seeds and the buyer bought it to build a home, the law does not apply.” We are using the Torah to make the cosmos into a dwelling place for Gd in all his essence, a true home for Him. And that can only be accomplished by working in our realm, as demonstrated previously.”

“And that,” added the ancient of angels, a gleam in his eye, “is the purpose of all of Creation. Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 16.”

The applause burst forth as water breaking through a dam. The choir commenced their recital burning with crimson fire.

“Moses!”—one of the angels stepped forward to shake hands, “That was great! You know, your people will make great lawyers!”

Moses had not just won the Torah, he had won friends and allies. Our sages say that each of the divine beings gave him gifts and revealed their secrets to him. Even the Angel of Death, they tell

us, whispered to him the secret of the holy incense—which he used later to prevent a plague.

And on that day, as the Eternal Gd descended on Mount Sinai, heaven came down to earth.

“The angels are jealous of he who struggles with darkness. They have light—but he touches the essence.”

—Bringing Heaven Down to Earth, Meditation 95.

Source: See Likutei Sichos, vol. 18, pg. 28.