



**B'NAI
DAVID-JUDEA**
Shabbat Shorts

"...It was always burning since the world's been turning"

These are not just the words of a Billy Joel song...they actually explain why we say בורא מאורי האש at havdalah!

The Rabbis tell us that fire--as we know it-- was created in the first week of creation-- specifically on the first Motzei Shabbat, תחלת ברייתו הוי במו"ש. Since the world's been turning!

According to the Gemara, the light (אור) that God created on the first day of creation was a light through which a person could see from one end of the world to the other (Masechet Chagigah 12a). But it was not fire.

Following Adam and Chava's sin in Gan Eden, God caused darkness to fall after the first Shabbat. Adam HaRishon was frightened that the world had ended. To comfort Adam, במו"ש נתן הקב"ה דעה באדה"ר וטחן ב' אבנים זו בזו ויצא, מהן אור Motzei Shabbat, God gave him knowledge and Adam hit together two stones and fire came out" (Mishnah Berurah 298:1:1). In gratitude to God, Adam said בורא מאורי האש (Blessed is He Who creates the lights of the fire)-- blessing God for giving us the ability to ignite a flame. And so, fire was a creation from the very first havdalah (Pesachim 54a, Bereshit Rabbah 11:2).

When we say בורא מאורי האש today, we are tapping into this same gratitude to God for our ability to do melachah (of which fire is a primary example). Gratitude for our ability to create light physically and spiritually-- and to feel the comfort fire provides in an imperfect world outside of Gan Eden. And even if we are the ones striking the match, it is God Who is בורא, the Creator. We didn't start the fire, God did, and we bless Him for it.

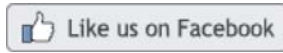
Stay tuned for next time, when we will explore the multiple wicks in a havdalah candle and why we look at our nails in the light!

I love feedback!

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