

Berachos 8:2 - What are זיקי'י?

זיקי'י according to the Bartenura's first pshat, are meteors.

A meteor is the visible streak of light that occurs when a meteoroid enters Earth's atmosphere. People often call this a falling star or a shooting star.



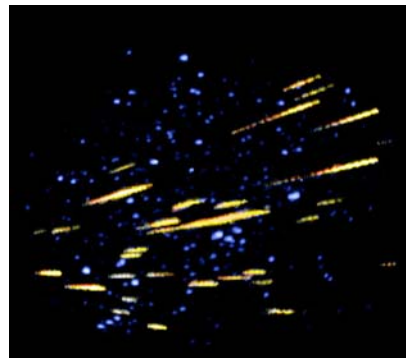
Meteors typically occur 50 to 85 kilometers (30 to 50 miles) above the Earth's surface. Millions of meteors occur in the Earth's atmosphere every day. Most meteoroids that cause meteors are about the size of a pebble. They become visible between 65 and 120 kilometers (40 and 75 miles) above the earth. They disintegrate at altitudes of 50 to 95 kilometers (30 to 60 miles). Meteors have roughly a fifty percent chance of a daylight collision with the Earth as the Earth orbits in the direction of roughly west at noon. Most meteors are, however, observed at night as low light conditions allow fainter meteors to be observed.

The visibility is due to the air friction that heats the meteoroid so that it glows and creates a shining trail of gases and melted meteoroid particles. The gases include vaporized meteoroid material and atmospheric gases that heat up when the meteoroid passes through the atmosphere. Most meteors glow for about a second. A relatively small percentage of meteoroids hit the Earth's atmosphere and then pass out again: these are termed Earth-grazing fireballs.

Meteors may occur in showers, which arise when the Earth passes through a trail of debris, meteoroids, left by a comet, or as "random" or "sporadic" meteors, not associated with a specific single cause. The meteoroids are entering Earth's atmosphere at extremely high speeds on parallel trajectories and appear to radiate from one point in the night sky. Most are smaller than a grain of sand, so almost all meteoroids disintegrate and never hit the Earth's surface. Fragments which do contact Earth's surface are called meteorites. In 1902, the Willamette Meteorite was found. It is the largest meteorite ever to be found in the United States and the sixth largest in the world.



*The Willamette Meteorite*



*Part of the sky during a meteor shower, the meteors have actually occurred several seconds to several minutes apart.*