

Solar Eclipse 2024

Source Sheet by Rabbi Earl Kideckel

Genesis 1:16

God made the two great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars.

Ibn Ezra on Genesis 1:16:2

[TO RULE THE DAY.] The sun rules during the day and not at night because it is not seen. Conversely, the light of the moon and stars are not seen during the day. One may ask, do not the astronomers teach that Jupiter and all the stars, with the exception of Mercury and Venus, are larger than the moon? Why, then, is it written *the great lights*? The answer is that the term great does not refer to size but to light, and the light of the moon is many times greater than their light because of its proximity to the earth. Thus we see that Scripture describes them as lights.

Chullin 60b:2

§ **Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi raises a contradiction** between two verses. It is written: **“And God made the two great lights”** (Genesis 1:16), and it is also written in the same verse: **“The greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night,”** indicating that only one was great. Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi explains: When God first created the sun and the moon, they were equally bright. Then, **the moon said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, is it possible for two kings to serve with one crown?** One of us must be subservient to the other. God therefore **said to her, i.e., the moon: If so, go and diminish yourself.**

Chullin 60b:3

She said before Him: Master of the Universe, since I said a correct observation before You, must I diminish myself? God **said to her:** As compensation, **go and rule both during the day along with the sun and during the night. She said to Him: What is the greatness of shining alongside the sun? What use is a candle in the middle of the day?** God **said to her: Go; let the Jewish people count the days and years with you,** and this will be your greatness. **She said to Him: But the Jewish people will count with the sun as well, as it is impossible that they will not count seasons with it, as it is written: “And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years”** (Genesis 1:14). God **said to her: Go; let righteous men be named after you.** Just as you are called the lesser [*hakatan*] light, there will be **Ya’akov HaKatan, i.e., Jacob our forefather (see Amos 7:2), Shmuel HaKatan** the

tanna, and **David HaKatan**, i.e., King David (see I Samuel 17:14).

Chullin 60b:4

God **saw that** the moon **was not comforted**. **The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Bring atonement for me, since I diminished the moon.** The Gemara notes: **And this is what Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: What is different about the goat offering of the New Moon, that it is stated with regard to it: "For the Lord" (Numbers 28:15)? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: This goat shall be an atonement for Me for having diminished the size of the moon.**

Mishneh Torah, Blessings 10:18

A person who sees the sun on the day of the spring equinox at the beginning of the twenty-eight year cycle that begins on Wednesday night [must recite a blessing]. When he sees the sun on Wednesday morning, he should recite the blessing "who performs the work of creation." Similarly, the blessing **בְּרוּךְ עוֹשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית** "who performs the work of creation" should be recited when the moon reaches the beginning of the zodiac constellation *taleh* at the beginning of the month when it is not pointing to the north or the south, when any of the other five stars [that revolve in separate spheres] arrive at the beginning of the constellation *taleh* and do not point to the north or the south, and when one sees the constellation *taleh* ascend to the eastern corner [of the sky].

Sukkah 29a:8

Apropos the fact that rain on *Sukkot* is an indication of divine rebuke, the Gemara cites several related topics. **The Sages taught: When the sun is eclipsed it is a bad omen for the entire world.** The Gemara tells a parable. **To what is this matter comparable? It is comparable to a king of flesh and blood who prepared a feast for his servants and placed a lantern [*panas*] before them to illuminate the hall. He became angry at them and said to his servant: Take the lantern from before them and seat them in darkness.**

Sukkah 29a:13

The Sages taught that on account of four matters the sun is eclipsed: On account of a president of the court who dies and is not eulogized appropriately, and the eclipse is a type of eulogy by Heaven; on account of a betrothed young woman who screamed in the city that she was being raped and there was no one to rescue her; on account of homosexuality; and on account of two brothers whose blood was spilled as one.

Sukkah 29a:9

It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Meir says: When the heavenly lights, i.e., the sun

and the moon, **are eclipsed, it is a bad omen for the enemies of the Jewish people**, which is a euphemism for the Jewish people, **because they are experienced in their beatings**. Based on past experience, they assume that any calamity that afflicts the world is directed at them. The Gemara suggests **a parable: This is similar to a teacher who comes to the school with a strap in his hand. Who worries?** The child **who is accustomed to be beaten each and every day** is the one who **worries**.

Sukkah 29a:11

If, during an eclipse, **the visage of the sun is red like blood**, it is an omen that **sword**, i.e., war, **is coming to the world**. If the sun **is black like sackcloth** made of dark goat hair, it is an omen that **arrows of hunger are coming to the world**, because hunger darkens people's faces. When it is similar both **to this**, to blood, **and to that**, to sackcloth, it is a sign that both **sword and arrows of hunger are coming to the world**. If it was **eclipsed upon its entry**, soon after rising, it is an omen that **calamity is tarrying to come**. If the sun is eclipsed **upon its departure** at the end of the day, it is an omen that **calamity is hastening to come**. **And some say the matters are reversed:** An eclipse in the early morning is an omen that calamity is hastening, while an eclipse in the late afternoon is an omen that calamity is tarrying.

Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 227:1

Upon a comet, which is like a type of star that is seen like an arrow across the sky from place to place, whose light stretches like a staff, and upon shaking of the earth, and upon lightning, and upon thunder, and upon winds that blow angrily: on each of these one says, בא"י אֱמ"ה עוֹשֵׂה מַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית, "Blessed are you, God our Lord, king of the world, creator of the original (first) creations." And if you'd like, say, בא"י אֱמ"ה שְׁכֹחוּ וּגְבוּרַתוֹ מְלֵא עוֹלָם "Blessed are you, God our Lord, king of the world, whose strength and might fill the world."