



פרשת נח

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Secrets of the World

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Part I. Rainbow Secrets

Dichotomy of Creation

In the *sefer* Chovos Halevavos he makes a statement that the *ruchniyus* and the *gashmiyus* of this world are combined; it means that the physical existence of everything in this world possesses also a spiritual existence. Whatever object you will see, in addition to its obvious, its palpable qualities – its size, its shape, its properties, physical and chemical – in addition, it possesses a certain spiritual entity, a spiritual quality. And these two, the *ruchniyus* and the *gashmiyus* are intertwined in every object.

Now if you'll ask me to explain this fully, I must admit that I am not capable. Because when it comes even to physical things, I cannot explain much. When it comes to spiritual things, I can explain even less. And when it comes to something that's a combination of physical and spiritual, I can explain even less than that. But we can approach the subject by analogies, with some examples, and that will help us to understand the matter somewhat.

The Original Rainbow

In the Torah we read what Hashem said to Noach after the Mabul: וְהָיָה בְּעָנְנֵי עָנָן עַל הָאָרֶץ – When I shall cast a cloud over the earth, וְנִרְאָתָה הַקֶּשֶׁת בְּעָנָן – and the rainbow will appear in the cloud, וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת, וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם – it means that I am remembering My covenant between Me and you, וּבֵין כָּל נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה בְּכָל, וּבֵין כָּל נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה בְּכָל, בְּשָׂר – and every living being among all flesh, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה, עוֹד הַמַּיִם לְמַבּוּל לְשַׁחַת כָּל בָּשָׂר – and never again will there be a Mabul to destroy all the flesh (Noach 9:14-15).

Now these words might make it seem like until now there hadn't been rainbows in nature. Until that day when Hashem displayed the rainbow as a sign of the covenant, there hadn't yet been such a phenomenon. Only now, after the Mabul, it was created *l'os bris*, for the especial purpose of being a demonstration of Hashem's promise.

But that raises a question because we know that a rainbow is a result of natural causes; it's a consequence of the breaking up of the sun's rays into its various components. Sunlight, you know, is

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not one color. When you walk out in the street and you see that golden light streaming down on you it's really a number of colors, only that when they're combined it looks like yellow sunlight.

Homemade Rainbows

That's why if you take a prism, a shaped piece of glass with sides to it, and let the sun's rays pass through it you'll see that the prism breaks up the sunlight into various colors. What's happening there? As the light passes from the air into the prism it slows and the change in speed causes the light to bend; only that the different wavelengths, the different colors, bend at different angles and so on the other side of the prism you'll see all the various colors that make up sunlight.

And so a rainbow is nothing new; the whole thing is a natural phenomenon. As the sun shines through a curtain of moisture, the water droplets act like a prism; they cause the sun's light to slow down as it goes from the air into the denser water droplet and it breaks up into all kinds of colors. That's why you can create a rainbow of your own whenever you want. If you take out a hose to water your lawn and you hold it up in the air, so as the water cascades through the air and the sun's rays are shining through the water, you'll see a rainbow.

And therefore it's a question: What's so marvelous that a rainbow should be construed as a covenant-sign from Hashem? What kind of sign could it be? All it is is the sun's rays going through a veil of moisture.

Retrograde Rainbows

So the Ramban says *ein hachi nami*; the rainbow wasn't created now, a made-to-order *os bris*. As long as there was a sun and rain there were rainbows. And therefore when Hashem said, אֶת קִשְׁתִּי נִתְּתִי בְּעָנָן – *I put My rainbow into the cloud*, He's referring to the *sidrei bereishis*: "From the beginning of time I put a rainbow in the clouds."

Only that at the beginning, because mankind wasn't apprised yet of its significance so the

rainbow was just that – a rainbow. But it was waiting for the time when Hashem would reveal its secret. And now, after the Mabul, it was אֶת קִשְׁתִּי נִתְּתִי בְּעָנָן, it was retroactively revealed that already at the beginning of time the rainbow was intended by Hashem to one day serve as a sign of a covenant.

אֶת קִשְׁתִּי נִתְּתִי בְּעָנָן – "Look at My rainbow that I put in the clouds from the beginning of time and know that it means much more than what you thought. When you see that apparition you should know what it means. It's My promise to you that rain will never again fall in such quantities to destroy all mankind. That's My Word."

You know what that means? It means that everything we said till now about rainbows and prisms and wavelengths of colors is all secondary. It's true of course; what they told you in the Beis Yaakov or in the English department in the Mesivta is the truth. But it's only superficial; it's good enough for a gentile maybe. But when a Jew sees a rainbow he's expected to see much more. He's expected to see the secret of that natural phenomenon – a covenant is hanging in the sky.

A Merciful World

Now, if we'll reduce that covenant to its simplest form, it's a promise that such a flood, a universal flood, is not going to be anymore. So if you live in Queens or you live in Sheepshead Bay, and in the morning you get up and you find that there's water on the floor of your bedroom, you can rest assured that it's not the beginning of a new Mabul. Whatever happens, someone outside will survive. He's a Merciful Judge and He promised us there is not going to be a repetition of a universal flood.

By means of His rainbow Hashem declares to us that even though He may sometimes have to punish – Hakadosh Baruch Hu will never declare peace with those who declare war on righteousness – but the overriding *hanhagah* of the world is *rachamim*. עַד כָּל יְמֵי הָאָרֶץ יִרְעוּ וְקִצְרִי וְקָרוּ וְחָם וְקִיץ וְחֹרֶף – *During all the days of the earth,*

seedtime and harvest and cold and heat and summer and winter and day and night shall not cease (ibid. 8:22). All the seasons and various times and functions of the world that give us the happiness of normal life will continue always because that's Hashem's overriding Plan in this world, to make mankind happy.

A Sweet World

Chom, heat is happiness. It's hot? Wonderful! The apples are getting red on the trees. The pears are becoming sweet on the trees. If it wasn't hot, they wouldn't become sweet. Ah! Red apples and luscious cherries and plums and peaches; they're plentiful in the summer and the prices go down in all the fruit stores. Now you're living!

The seasons mean food! It's *kor*, cold? That's also wonderful! The earth is taking a rest from producing and it's recuperating all the minerals it lost, all the materials it lost during the summertime. Without the winter, there can't be a summer. If it was summer all year, the earth would keep on producing and it would become arid and infertile. That's why the earth takes vacation in the wintertime. Cold is wonderful. Cold forces the earth to stop producing.

Snow is *chessed*. Rain is happiness. All the seasons and functions of the world are *chessed*. That's the picture of our existence in this world and that picture is what we are supposed to learn from the phenomenon of the rainbow. He made a good world, a fun world, a safe world, a beautiful world, a world of happiness! And He promises us that it's going to continue that way always. Because that's His general Plan for the world: עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה.

The Colors of Kindness

And that's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu intended when He made the phenomenon of the rainbow; to teach the world that the *hanhagah* is *rachamim*. That's the secret of the rainbow, that the general plan of the world is kindness. The processes of nature are so arranged that they maintain life; they

support the existence of living things. Wherever you look, you see that every component of nature is part of a grand scheme in which everything cooperates to maintain the existence of the living. Whether it's the function of the rotation of the earth, day and night, or the procession of the seasons, chemical reactions of all kinds, all the biological functions of the organisms; wherever you look you see that everything is cooperating in the grand process of *rachamim*! That's the meaning of this *os bris*.

It's a sign of a covenant between the Borei and all the living, a covenant of mercy that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made with mankind that the world will be conducted with compassion. טוֹב ה' לְכָל יוֹרְחָמָיו עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו. He is a *chafetz chessed* and He created the world for kindness.

By means of the rainbow, Hashem declares: "In spite of My insistence on meting out consequences, My *midas harachamim* is My overriding *hanhagah* and the world will continue in the usual manner." Isn't that remarkable? What the world thought was just a rainbow, it turns out is an *os*, a lesson! It's trying to teach you something. Whenever we see that, we should be reminded of the great principle on which the world is founded. *Olam chessed yibaneh*, the world is founded on kindness.

Horses, Professors, and Jews

It means that if you see a rainbow and all you see are some colors, you're looking at Hashem's *os bris* like a horse looks at it. A horse also sees nothing but a few colors.

And even if you look up at this glorious phenomenon spread out before your eyes, an apparition of various colors, and you're thinking about how beautiful it is, how breathtaking it is to see the moisture acting as a prism and breaking up the sunlight into various colors, so you're looking at it not like a horse, but it's not much better; you're looking like a scientist, a professor.

Hashem told us to look at the rainbow differently. A horse sees nothing. A gentile, an *am*

haaretz, sees beauty or prisms. But the one who knows the secrets of the world sees an *os bris*. It's breathtaking because it's reminding you of something even more breathtaking than beautiful colors. It's trying to teach you something. A rainbow means, "Stop and think! Put these thoughts into your head!"

The Truth of Matter

Now I understand that this idea is remote even from the minds of *frum* people. We're not accustomed to hearing such things, that natural phenomena are teaching us to think about Hashem. So start getting accustomed now because this is a very big teaching that is not limited to rainbows; all of the natural phenomena possess a vast spiritual significance.

That's the important principle of our great teacher, the Chovos Halevavos, that every physical phenomenon has a soul to it, an inner, *penimiyus'dige*, purpose to it. The rainbow is only one example; there is an endless number of such ideas, of the *penimiyus*, the inner purposes, of nature. Only that because we live in a physical world with physical eyes, so it's not easy to get into the habit of seeing the spiritual side of things. But that doesn't minimize the truth of the matter and it doesn't minimize the obligation to search out and study the secrets of the world.

Part II. Secrets of the Sun

A List for Lights

If you look in the Chumash, when Hashem created the *meoros*, the luminaries – it means the sun and the moon – it lists a number of purposes that He intended them for. וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּלְשָׁנִים וּלְהָאִיר עַל הָאָרֶץ – And they should serve as signs, and for appointed times, and for days and years and to give light to the earth (Bereishis 1:14).

Now we have to pay attention to the list here because it's not random; it's telling us a certain order in importance. And it says that the first

purpose is לְאֹתוֹת. That's number one on the list, that they should be signs, that they should demonstrate something to us. The sun is a sign, and the moon is a sign, and the stars are signs. We'll soon see what that means.

The second is לְמוֹעֲדִים, for appointed times. The sun and the moon are both instrumental in calculating when the *yomim tovim* fall out. So the second purpose is to let us know 'set times' – "when will Yom Tov fall out?"

Third on the list is לְיָמִים – for days. The sun and the moon tell us when it's day and when it's night. A very important function. And then also וּלְשָׁנִים – for years. The movement of the sun around the earth divides time into years. And then last on the list, fifth in importance, is לְהָאִיר עַל הָאָרֶץ – to illuminate, to give light to the earth.

First Comes First

Now, if you give it just a little bit of thought, it's a remarkable list because it seems to be upside down. After all, we would say that the *meoros* are chiefly to illuminate. That's why they're called *meoros*, luminaries. Also for day and night, and for years, to be a universal calendar. Those are the most evident and most practical purposes of the luminaries.

But those are all way on the bottom of the list. What comes before that? לְמוֹעֲדִים, to be a Jewish calendar! That's jarring even to the ears of *frum* Jews. We're willing to admit that we *make use* of the sun and moon for our calendar, but to say that it was *created* for that, even more than for לְיָמִים וּלְשָׁנִים וּלְהָאִיר – days and years and to give light?! That's a stunning thing to say. If a professor of astronomy, a Jewish professor, would make that claim in his class he'd be finished; he'd be looking for a new job.

But the Torah is saying even more than that; we're being told now that more important than to give light, and more important than to make days and nights and years, *and even more important than the yomim tovim*, is לְאֹתוֹת, to serve as signs, to demonstrate certain principles to us. That, says the

Torah, is the number one reason. Yes, there are other reasons too but they're just auxiliary reasons; the primary purpose Hashem had in mind when He created the sun and the stars and the moon is for us to look at them and be reminded of certain ideals.

Understanding Sign Language

Because what does it mean לְאוֹתוֹת? It means *that it should cause you to think of something, to recognize something*. An os means it's demonstrating something; you have to see the sign and know what it's trying to tell you, otherwise, it's a wasted sign.

And so we see now that we are not fulfilling the will of Hashem, we're foiling His purpose in creating the luminaries. I'm talking now *poshut pshat* in the Chumash. We're expected to use the *me'oros* to be informed of certain important ideals, certain principles, but who's doing that?

How are the sun and the moon and the stars fulfilling their function, their primary function, of providing signs if we're not gaining information when we see them? We don't even know what to think. And so we'll see now, maybe we can supply some of the missing information by looking in the *siddur*.

The Sun of Glory

The truth is that when we study what we are told in the *davening* about the purpose of the sun, we see that there is a paramount purpose that overshadows all other purposes and makes them almost insignificant. And that's as follows: **טוֹב יֵצֵר לְשִׁמּוֹ כְּבוֹד לְשִׁמּוֹ**. You say that every morning: "The good One created all this glory for His name."

Now, what's the glory we're talking about? It's talking about the sun. Like it says in Tehillim, **הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד אֱלֹהֵי** – *the heavens declare the glory of Hashem*, (19:2), and he goes on and says how the sun comes out every day **בְּחֶזֶק יוֹצֵא מִחֶפְזוֹ**. It's talking about the sun. Every morning the sun comes out in all its glory.

Now that's *pashtus sheb'pashtus*. That's what the *peasukim* are talking about and that's what the *davening* is talking about, that the purpose of the sun is to let us know about a Creator. The sun is one of the most prominent phenomena in our world and it's coming to give glory to Hashem. It's an os, a sign, of Hashem's magnificence and resplendence; His brilliance.

Trying to See Hashem

You remember when the emperor spoke to Rabi Yehoshua ben Chananya (Chullin 59b). "Let me see your G-d," he said, "I want to see Him."

"Well, you can't see Him."

So the emperor said, "That's baloney. I can see my gods," and he pointed to his *getchkes*. "Here is my god." He showed him a figurine standing on a shelf. "Here is another one. You can see mine," the emperor said. "So where is yours?"

In the olden days that was a reproach to the Jewish people. **לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵיךָ נָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם** – "Where are your gods?" the Gentiles said (Tehillim 115:2). Even today they show you a statue of someone nailed to a cross, "That's our god, a dead god. Where's yours?"

Debunking the Emperor

But Rabi Yehoshua ben Chananya was up to the task because he learned this subject of osos. So he said "If you insist, come up on the roof. I'll show you something."

They went up on the roof of the palace and he pointed at the sun. "Take a good look at that," he said, "Don't take your eyes off it."

"That's impossible," the emperor said. "I can't look at that. It's too brilliant. I'll go blind."

So Rabi Yehoshua ben Chananya said "Do you know what the sun is? The sun is one of the smallest, one of the most minuscule servants that serve our Creator." You know there are trillions of suns. Out in space, the stars are much bigger than the sun. There are some stars as big as the entire solar

system. One of the biggest stars is so big you can fit five billion suns into that star.

So Rabi Yehoshua ben Chananya said to the emperor “If you cannot look even at the least of the servants of the Creator, do you expect to look at Him? You’ll get blind if you look at His messenger. You expect to look at Him?”

A Story With a Lesson

Now this is not just an anecdote, a story for children. It’s an important Torah lesson because it’s telling us *pshat* in this *possuk*, וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת. The primary purpose of the sun is to be for us a tiny token of its Creator. Of course it’s not tiny as far as we’re concerned but that’s the point. It’s a mighty phenomenon, a huge endless storehouse of atomic energy. You know the sun burns by atomic energy, by nuclear energy? It’s been burning for five thousand years, and it shows no sign of weakening. It can go on and on. Only nuclear energy can supply that.

It’s a tremendous phenomenon that bombards this earth with so much heat and so much light. And most of the sun’s energy is not even used. A tremendous surplus goes off into space. And that big fireball, that tremendous sun, is nothing after all. It’s one tiny, infinitesimal, creation of Hashem. It’s a mote, an atom, a nothing, compared to its Creator. And that’s what the sun is for. That’s the most important purpose of the sun, so that you should remind yourself every day – a few times every day! – about the vastness, the greatness, of the One Who created that sun.

And that’s why this *os* is available wherever you go; the sun shines everywhere because wherever you go, that’s the most important reminder you’ll need – that there’s a Great Creator.

Traveling to the Sun

Now the truth is that it’s such an important demonstration that even if this phenomenon would be available only, let’s say, in the heart of China, on a tall mountain in the Tibetan wilderness, we’d be

obligated to travel there to see it. Suppose that’s the only place where you could see the sun; so it would be our duty to tap our way with white canes – all mankind would walk in darkness tapping our way through the world until we reach that mountaintop. And we’d open our eyes and see the sun! “Aha! We made it! Look at that *os*! Look at that sign of Hashem’s greatness!” And it would be worth living just for that; it would be worth being born just to see that demonstration once.

But because it’s such an important demonstration of the One Who is כָּבוֹדוֹ מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ; it’s also, to a certain extent, כָּבוֹדוֹ מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ; it’s an *os* that shines everywhere. כָּבֵל הָאָרֶץ יֵצֵא קוֹלָם וּבִקְצָהּ. תִּבֵּל מְלִיקָהּם – *To all ends of the earth its voice, its words, go out* (Tehillim 19:5). You can’t avoid seeing it; you can’t avoid hearing its message.

Sunset for the Lazy

And sometimes as an added convenience, in case all day long you’re too lazy to lift your head up and look at the sun, so when the sun begins to set it comes down low and it’s right in front of your eyes. And then it’s big and red – it’s more conspicuous for lazy people. And so at sunset, that’s the time to take a good look.

That’s why the Gemara (Brachos 29b) says that’s the best time to *daven minchah*; יִירְאוּךָ עִם שְׁמֶשׁ – *they will fear you together with the sun* (Tehillim 72:5). It means that as the sun goes down that’s when we should stand *Shemoneh Esrei*. Only that some of the Sages said it’s not a good idea; don’t wait that late because you might miss *minchah*; better to daven early. But the original, proper time was ‘with the sun’ – when it comes down low on the horizon, in front of your eyes and it’s bigger now – at least it looks bigger – and it’s glowing red. That *ohr* of glory is a testimony to the One Who created it. It’s an *os* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made the world.

So when the sun rises in the morning or the sun is setting at night time or anytime during the day, if you’re able to take a quick peek without

spoiling your eyes, think הַשָּׁמַיִם – the sun in heaven, מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד אֱלֹהִים – is telling about the glory of Hashem, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו מִגִּיד הַרְקִיעַ – what's up there in the sky is showing you the work of His hands (Tehillim 19:2). That's the primary purpose of the sun!

The Laugher Loses Out

Now try and tell that to someone outside. The sun is for that?! He'll laugh at that. He went to high school. He took the regents tests even and so he knows all about the sun.

But he knows nothing; he knows only the *gashmius*. But of the real purpose, the soul of the sun, he knows nothing. And even if he's a yeshivah man, he'll tell you about *l'moadim ul'yomim ul'shonim*, but the most important purpose, *l'osos*, the spiritual component of the sun, that he forgets about. וְהָיוּ לְאוֹתוֹת means that the sun will be a sign to teach us of something that's *penimiyus*. The secret of the sun, the soul of the universe. And that secret is Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Part III. Nighttime Secrets

The Night Sky Speaks

Now, what about after the sun sets? Does that mean it's time to forget about the *osos*, the demonstrations of the luminaries? Oh no, the secrets of the world are too important of a subject to forget about at night. יוֹם לְיוֹם יְבִיעַ אָמַר – Each day is speaking to you important words, וְלַיְלָה לְלֵילָה יְחֻדָּה – but the nights too are teaching you wisdom (Tehillim 19:3).

Everyone knows that once a month we go out of the shul into the street and we make a *bracha* on the new moon; and we say, וְלִלְבָנָה אָמַר – Hashem told the moon, שְׁתַּחַרְדַּשׁ – should become small and disappear at the end of the month and then at the beginning of the new month it should reappear. It means that He made it happen.

Now that's not a *chiddush* to us. Only the atheists, the liars, so they'll say that it's an accident;

but the *frum* Jews, we know that וְלִלְבָנָה אָמַר, that Hashem gave the command to the moon.

But even that is not the whole truth. Because why did He do it, that's the question. So you'll say it's for important purposes. Hakadosh Baruch Hu has good reasons for the phenomenon of the phases of the moon; the waxing and waning of the moon is purposeful. When the moon changes its appearance, it helps us eat. It creates food. It facilitates many processes of life. And so what's the question 'Why did He command the moon to wax and wane'? There are so many beneficial reasons.

The Real Renewal Reason

The answer is that those aren't the real reason. וְלִלְבָנָה אָמַר שְׁתַּחַרְדַּשׁ – Why did He give that command and create a system of the moon traveling around the earth so that sometimes it reflects more of the sunlight towards the earth and sometimes less? Not for all those reasons you thought. He did it so that it should be עֲטֹרַת תְּפָאֶרֶת – be a crown of glory, לְעַמּוּסֵי בֶטֶן – to those whom Hakadosh Baruch Hu has carried since their birth. That's the Jewish nation. Since we became a nation He has carried us like someone carries a child in His arms, taking care of us with an especial providence.

How is the moon a crown of glory for us? שְׁהָם עֲתִידִים לְהִתְחַדֵּשׁ כְּמוֹתָהּ – because we are going to be renewed someday just like we see the moon being renewed. The moon you know is sometimes not visible. It disappears at the end of the month. It becomes smaller and smaller and disappears. But don't give up hope; as sure as anything it's going to reappear. In a few days you'll go out to the street and you'll see it again.

And the Am Yisroel too, it may seem that they're disappearing. Forget about that. It's never going to happen. As long as there's going to be a world, there's going to be an Am Yisroel. And not only they're going to be, but they're going to reappear and get greater and greater.

The Moon of Encouragement

And so the moon is the sign of what's going to happen to us. The moon disappears and then reappears to be a message that no matter what, the Am Yisroel will someday reappear and become the greatest in the world. We will be restored to our full greatness eventually. And that's why we mention Dovid Hamelech. Because *ben Dovid* is going to come. Moshiach ben Dovid will come at that great time, and **כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תְּבֵל יִכִּירוּ וְיִדְעוּ כֹּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תְּבֵל** – *everybody will recognize the truth then.*

It's a pity, people come out and say *kiddush levanah* and don't even think once about what the moon is saying to them. The *levanah* is saying, "Take heart! Be of good courage! Whatever happens to you in your history don't be disheartened. Because you are going to win out in the end. The future belongs to you. And someday you will illuminate the world!" That's what the moon is there for, just for that.

Poetic and Primary

Don't think it's a little *remez*, that *agav orcha*, we decided to take this natural phenomenon of the moon's phases and attach our own ideals to it, that we're using it as a parable like somebody might do in a poetic way. No. He's telling us a fact of creation: **וְלִלְבָנָה אָמַר שְׂתַתְּחַדֵּשׁ** – *He commanded the moon to renew itself*, **עֲטֹרַת תְּפָאֶרֶת** – *and the purpose is just for that to be a crown of glory for us.*

So the question is what about all the other purposes of the phases of the moon? They're not even mentioned in the *brachah*. Wasn't the moon told to renew itself because of other purposes?

And the answer is certainly it was. **עוֹלָם חָסֵד יִבְנֶה** – Hashem built this world for *chessed*. Certainly it's all kindness and all the kindly purposes are intended. And yet the greatest kindness of all is the *penimiyus*, the inner soul of the moon. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "The moon is My messenger to the Am Yisroel and that is its most important function. More than the purpose of controlling the tides, the purpose of giving light at night, and even the many

functions that haven't been discovered yet, all these purposes are minor purposes; the major purpose is *leosos*.

A Month-Long Kiddush

And therefore it's not just a *good* thing to think about. It's the *main* thing to think about. Unfortunately most people look at the moon like cows. But a cow, we can't blame him. When he looks at the moon we don't expect him to have any kind of feelings at all. But we, we're the ones the moon is speaking to. We're the ones the moon is speaking about. And therefore, as much as possible, even when you're not saying *kiddush levanah*, we try to listen to its message.

You see a full moon? The most beautiful object in the sky is a full moon. It's too late for *kiddush levanah* but it's still an *os*, a demonstration of the utmost importance. It's reminding us that someday we will be recognized as the most beautiful firmament of the world. We will be the nation that shines in the whole world.

The Sign of the Stars

Now, before we finish our talk and we walk outside into the night to practice up on these ideas, one more example of the night demonstrations. Because not only the sun and the moon but all the star worlds are also *meoros*. **וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים** – *and also the stars* (Bereishis 1:16). The trillions of stars are also *osos*, demonstrations. What are they for?

So, it could be that the scientists and the astronomers have their ideas. I imagine they publish long papers in their scientific journals and they pontificate about the various functions of the stars. Very good. It could even be they're right. But whatever they say, even if it's something true, you have to know that it's secondary to the function of *l'osos*.

What type of sign, what type of spiritual lesson are we expected to learn from the stars?

Almost Infinity

And the answer is that, among other things, it's for the purpose of letting us know the vastness of Hashem, His infinite greatness. So many star worlds! There are billions and billions and billions and billions and billions of stars. If I would sit here all evening and say the word billions over again, I wouldn't be finished. That's how many there are actually.

It's so much space! You know the scientists say that there's no end to space. It's not true because everything in *gashmiyus* has an end, but it's almost endless.

If you started out in a space shuttle before you were *bar mitzvah* and you wanted to go to that star over there, before you get to the star you'll have a long white beard. You'll be an old, old man. That's how long it will take and you're not even halfway there yet. Some of the places are so far away that your great-great-great-grandchild will not reach it yet even though your shuttle is traveling at the speed of light. You hear that? That's how far away it is.

Making Space

Now, space, you have to know, is a *briah*. It's not a vacancy; it's a creation. Why did Hashem do that? Why did He give us an almost endless remote world to look at? With a naked eye you could see the Milky Way where there are billions of stars. And the telescopes open up new vistas.

Why so much? Hashem could have made a little world. He could have boxed us in, confined us in a small space and we could have lived quite comfortably. Hakadosh Baruch Hu as an Engineer is able to do everything. He could have air conditioned the space perfectly. Who needs the endless star worlds?

Prophetic Advice

And the answer is *we* need it. Because more than anything in this world we need a Torah mind and we acquire that mind by looking up into the sky

and thinking! That's what the Navi Yeshaya told us. **שָׂאוּ מְרוֹם עֵינֵיכֶם** – Lift up your eyes on high, **וּרְאוּ** – and see, **מִי בָרָא אֱלֹהִים** – Who made these (Yeshaya 40:26). Because from the greatness of space you get somewhat of an idea of the greatness of the One Who made it. That's the purpose of space, so that you should raise up your eyes and say, “Look how far that is! How could it be, a creation that goes on almost forever?!”

It's only because there is a Creator even greater than that. Greater than endless?! Yes, the purpose of the stars is to make you see the vastness and the remoteness of space and think how great is Hakadosh Baruch Hu as a Creator of this tremendous universe which seems to have no end. The stunning vastness of the star worlds give us an inkling, a *mashehu*, of Hashem's greatness.

Old Fashioned Torah

Now, I know that when some people hear this they think what kind of talk is that, old-fashioned talk. It is old-fashioned. It's from the beginning of the world, because that's why Hashem made these luminaries; to be signs, to teach us how to think.

And don't say that's superfluous, that you know it anyhow. “I need the sun and the star worlds for that? I know all about it.” You don't know it. You never spent even five minutes thinking about the greatness of Hashem. It means you're ignoring the purpose of the world. The world was constructed for one purpose and let us get it clear in our minds because there is no other purpose – and that is to make a man a more perfect being. We are here in this life to become better, to create for ourselves a Torah mind. And for that, the *navi* said, **שָׂאוּ מְרוֹם עֵינֵיכֶם** – “Lift up your eyes on high and look.” *Se'u* means always; you should never stop.

Coming Back to Reality

Now we have to understand this may seem all exaggerated. Rainbows and moons and star worlds, it's just something to talk about in an idle evening – you come here, you hear the lecture but then you

walk out and go back to the realities of life and forget about it. After all, we're all *frum* Jews and we have to practice *mitzvos* and we have to learn Torah, and such things like the secrets of the rainbow and the sun and moon are not something that you have to dwell on.

The answer is it's a big error. Don't think that by getting back to practicalities you're really doing what the Torah requires of you. You're just dodging one of the main obligations of a Jew, and that is to learn from what your eyes see; to live up to our great responsibility of learning the lessons from the secrets of the universe.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Seeing and Studying Secrets

While the rainbow seems to be a simple physical phenomenon, the Torah tells us that there's an underlying spiritual message, a covenant with Hashem. The Chovos Halevavos teaches that all physical phenomena have a spiritual element as well. In order to get into the habit of learning the lessons of the natural phenomena that Hashem is showing us, we have to practice attaching thoughts to the osos that are intended by Hashem for this primary purpose.

This week I will *bli neder* use the day and night to practice learning the secrets of the universe. Once every day I will take a quick glance at the sun and I will spend thirty seconds thinking about what it's trying to teach me. And every night I will spend thirty seconds looking at the moon or the stars and review the lessons they are trying to teach.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

- 15 - Spirit of Matter | 127 - The Rainbow | 224 - Purposes of the Sun
- 394 - Soul of the Universe | 459 - Concealed and Revealed
- E-239 - Hashem Speaks in Nature

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What do we answer about the rifts that NASA found on Mars?



This question reminds me of a question once asked here by a timid little boy; he thought he was going to turn the world upside down. He said, "What do we answer to the question of the dinosaurs?!"

So I told him, "We don't answer anything. What do you answer to the giraffes?"

What is the difference between a dinosaur and a giraffe? There are plenty of animals that went extinct. So the dinosaurs also went extinct.

"Oh, but the fossils; they're so old!"

Who said fossils are old? Don't you know that we have found fossils of modern men, fossils as recent as 300 years old. I explained here already once that in the Museum of Natural History in London, you have a fossil of a Guadalupe Indian that's no more than 300 years old. Fossils are not old; it's only because evolutionists need great time periods – otherwise how could such a fantasy be realized that from a germ should develop a man? – you must have untold eons of time for it to happen. So because they needed so much time, they manufactured a theory of time. But there isn't the slightest indication anywhere that there was such time.

And therefore in Noach's time, before the Mabul, there certainly were dinosaurs and probably none of them survived the Mabul. And so a dinosaur is just as significant to us as the passenger pigeon which also went into extinction.

Now, what do we say to the rifts on Mars? What do you say to the rifts in the Sahara Desert? Whatever you'll say there, you'll say here. It could be that the rifts in the Sahara Desert were created in the beginning of the world – Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't make the world as smooth as a billiard ball; He certainly made the world with ups and downs, with hollows and with mountains and so on. It's necessary for the control of climate and for various other reasons. So the same thing on Mars; Hakadosh Baruch Hu made rifts on Mars. And if you'll say the rift in the Sahara Desert came after Creation by means of some upheaval so there was an upheaval on Mars too.

So what's the problem? Just because someone says "Boo!" without any explanation at all, immediately the person who has no emunah is frightened out of his wits. Say "Boo!" back to him!

TAPE # 60 (April 1974)