

# The lesson of the fourth day of Creation

**The moon decided that Creation should be otherwise and was duly punished.**

[Danny Ginsbourg](#)

Oct 12, 2023, 6:55 AM (GMT+3)



'Blood Supermoon'

We read in our Parasha, of the wondrous events of the fourth day of Creation:(1:14-19)'G-d said: 'Let there be מאורות: luminaries in the firmament of the heaven to separate between the day and the night'..And it was so. And G-d made the two great luminaries, the greater luminary to dominate the day and the lesser luminary to dominate the night; and the

stars..to separate between the light and the darkness. And G-d saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.'

The parshanim see the need to expound these psukim, to explain why initially it refers to 'two great luminaries', the literal meaning being, that they were of equal size, but, subsequently referring to 'the greater luminary' and to 'the lesser luminary', implying that the two luminaries were of different sizes.

Rashi comments:'They were created equal, but the moon was made smaller because it brought charges and said:'It is impossible for two kings to use the same crown'.

His commentary is based on the Gemara:(Chulin 60:):'The two great luminaries:Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi queries: it is written 'two great luminaries, and it is written 'the greater luminary..(and) the lesser luminary! The moon said before Hakadosh Baruch Hu:'Master of the universe, and is it possible for two kingd to use the one crown?' Answered Hashem: 'Go and diminish your size'. Retorted the moon:'Because I said an honest thing, I should diminish my size?'

The Torah Temima adds:'We find in many places in the Gemara, that those who are insulted and do not reply, are worthy of great praise; and, like them, just as the moon 'embarrassed' the sun, which did not react, resulting in the moon being directed to reduce its size, and in the sun becoming larger than it, just as those who are insulted and do not respond, their honor will grow, and those who insulted them, will be punished, and their actions will rebound on them.'

In his sefer, Tosefet Bracha, the Torah Temima adds:'In its complaint, the moon was implying in its jealousy, that the sun should be reduced in size, to be lesser than it; Hashem took its umbrage, and ordered the moon to reduce itself, because the sun, heard its humiliation, and did not respond.'

The Panim Yafot brings a different understanding, by first noting, that:'The words of the moon, that 'it is not possible for two kings to rule with one

crown', is not alluding to the moon's 'rule' at night, because this is not 'two kings ruling with one crown', since each of them - the sun and the moon - has its own time, in which it rules.

'Rather, the moon, in its righteousness, commented that, at the beginning and at the end of each monthly cycle, it shines in the day, as well as in the night; and this, it observed meant that the light at these times - when combined with the light of the sun - was beyond the ability of human beings to bear, and, therefore, it - the moon - should diminish its light, and not shine its light in daytime, at all, in the domain which is not its, but only in its domain, at night.

'Therefore, Hashem said to it, to diminish its own light completely, even at night, and that it should only reflect the light of the sun.

'This is why Hashem said - as our Gemara relates : 'I caused it, at Creation, to enter the domain of its fellow - of the sun - that it was all by reason of man that Hashem created, and this requires atonement.'

Rav Eliyahu Dessler, concludes, from the moon waning during its monthly cycle, that ' the atonement that is to be brought by the people, for the moon having to 'diminish' itself, is because this may cause people to have a 'complaint' against Hashem, that it may appear, as a result of it completely 'disappearing' each month, that there is a 'defect' in Hashem's Creation; and the atonement is, that from this, we should know that Hashem desires 'smallness', that is smallness and humility, as this leads to closeness to Hashem.

'This is what the offering of Rosh Chodesh alludes to - when man, like the moon at those times, completely 'nullifies' himself, that is the peak of cleaving to Hashem.

'Like the observation of the moon, man may feel that sense of self: אנוכיות, is the way to spiritual growth, and that mussar and self-rebuke leads to spiritual 'smallness'.

'To teach us that the opposite is true, Hashem decreed that our festivals - the times of our greatest elevation, and closeness to Hashem - should be determined by the phases of the moon, to teach that the greatness of the righteous is because they diminish themselves, and this is why we are commanded specifically to bring 'for the moon', the offering of Rosh Chodesh, and this 'atones' for the concern of the moon, that it may be the cause of people being misled.'

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin, offers a different insight, as to this 'offering of atonement': 'We learn from the complaint of the moon, that 'those who chase after honor, honor runs away from them'.

'At the same time, we also learn from this wondrous episode, that Hashem does not with-hold the reward of any of his creations, even be it only for a proper saying; thus, the actual complaint of the moon, that 'is it possible for two kings to serve with the same crown' - was, in other circumstances, a laudable observation, which merited the moon being appeased.

'And, when it was not appeased, Hashem even commanded that atonement be made - for Him having to order the moon to diminish itself - that being the reward for the דבר הגון: the 'proper thing' that it said.'

The Chatam Sofer also finds favor for the moon, saying: 'Clearly, initially the moon was created with its own light, not as it is now, when it only reflects the light of the sun.

'But because, in the eyes of Hashem, there is no greatness and smallness in quantity, only in quality, He created these two luminaries, to serve Him, as by them is the conduct of the Torah and of the world.

'Thus, be one of them large in size and the other smaller, nevertheless by their quality, and the purpose for which they were created, both are equally great.

'To teach this, that before Him, there is no 'greatness' in quantity, the moon, in its righteousness and humility, said in the way of the

humble: 'How can two kings rule with the one crown', and since I am smaller than the sun, I am rightly called 'small', in the manner of the righteous, who diminish themselves.

,

Said Hashem: if so, there will be a barrier to men, as they will say that there is 'greatness' and 'smallness' in quantity, and not in quality, just as the moon called itself 'small', because it was smaller in size, and this will lead to the stronger and wealthier being wrongly prized.

Therefore, it is only proper that you, the moon, should diminish yourself, and receive your light from the sun, as then, you will, because of this, be rightly called 'small' compared to the sun, and this will not mislead man, because they will realize that you are called 'small' because of your 'lesser' quality, not physical size.

'But when the world will be perfected, and the yetser ha'ra nullified, then you, the moon, will merit the hidden light from Creation, and your light will be your own independent light, as bright as the light of the sun.'

We can now nourish our souls, from the beautiful drasha, of Rav Aryeh Leib Heiman: "What' he asks, 'was the sin of the moon? It seems to have made a logical observation: what purpose is there for the sun and the moon to illuminate together?

The answer may be found in a passuk from Kohelet (2:12), and the Midrash on it: 'What is man that he should 'come after the king, as to what has already been done?' - expounds the Midrash: 'this can be likened to a king who has built a palace, and to those who come into it, saying: 'We would have built it differently'. So too, those who have 'second thoughts', who 'come after the King', having 'second guesses', as to Creation.'

'From this Midrash, the sin of the moon is very evident: it 'decided' that, Creation should, as it were, have been otherwise, with regard to it and the sun.

'Therefore, measure-for-measure, it was ordered to reduce its size, because its complaint arose out of pride; it felt that it was 'difficult' for it, for there to be another entity like it, and the punishment for this pride, was that its size should be reduced.

'A further concern as to our Gemara: What did the moon mean, in claiming that it was being punished, for 'saying an honest thing'. From where did it decide that its complaint, was 'an honest thing'? It appears to me, that, since Hashem said to it: 'diminish your size', the moon saw this as the best proof, that its claim was right, that 'two kings cannot rule equally, together'. As, were this not true, why would it - the moon - now be ordered to reduce its size.

'This, however, is based on a false premise; had the moon not second-guessed Hashem's Creation, the world would have been better, for having - as originally was the case - two equally large luminaries, to better light the world for man.

'When the moon transgressed, in its haughtiness, it caused to itself the reduction on size - and, thereby, made it worse for the world.

'In short, from its punishment, there is no proof that its complaint was justified.

'Why, then, did Hashem not explain this to the moon? First, because of the prideful - and not submissive - manner, in which the moon made its complaint - and, since it did not ask 'why?', why should Hashem respond to a question that was not asked? Second, the Creator is not obliged, to explain to his creations, the reasons for His deeds: they are decrees, which must be obeyed, and man, His creations have no right to 'query' them.

'As to the actual dialogue between Hashem and the moon, it is wholly wondrous: first, that Hashem does not rebuke the moon for its complaint; indeed, instead, He tries to appease it, and to 'compensate' it - by it giving it a consort of the stars at night - for it having to 'reduce its size'.

'Second, after this did not appease the moon, Hashem declares:"Bring for Me an atonement, because I reduced the size of the moon'. Does the concept of 'transgression' have any relation to Hashem, that He should need 'atonement'?

'Why, now, does the moon choose not to respond? The Midrash Rabba brings an exposition, seemingly at odds, with our Gemara: Because the moon did not continue to 'query' Hashem's Creation, to say that it was worthy of being the same size as the sun - it was rewarded, as a consolation, by the consort of stars, which would accompany it, at night.

'And this is a wonder - did the commentaries on this Midrash, overlook the Gemara, and the strong words of the moon, in it?

he answer is: true, initially, the moon 'argued' with Hashem, and did not want to reduce its size - as the Gemara brings - but the moment that Hashem said:'Bring an atonement for Me..', the moon understood, as is plain to all, that Hashem does not need 'atonement' for anything - and, from this seemingly meaningless statement, the moon understood that all of its complaint was one big mistake!

'That Hashem answered its complaint with such 'pleasantness', because He was acting in His attribute of Mercy; because He created the world, not for His glory, but to do chesed to his creations, and to have mercy on them.

'So much so, that, in His great humility, He was even prepared to take blame on Himself, to appease His creations, so as not to have to punish them.

'It was this that caused the moon, to realize the greatness of Hashem, and to make it see the truth; that it should desist from second-guessing Hashem, and to repent for its imprudent complaint.

'Proof that the moon now understod this, is, that though Hashem only told it to 'reduce its size', without specifying by how much, it 'reduced' itself

completely, by nullifying all its light, and thenceforth only reflecting the light of the sun.

'The humility of Hashem, awakened the attribute of humility in the moon, and, instead of its original prideful wish that it alone should rule and illuminate the world, it completely nullified itself!

'Because of its complete repentance, the moon merited the gift of the accompaniment of the stars.

We now understand, that the Midrash relates what happened after the events narrated in our Gemara, after the moon 'accepted with shining countenance the decree of Hashem' - in the words of the commentary Yafe Toar, on the Midrash Rabba.

'The moon thereby had the zechut of being the first Ba'al Teshuva, to fulfill the dictum of the Rambam, that, in order to uproot a bad attribute, one has to go to the very opposite extreme.'

לרפואת נועם עליזה בת זהבה רבקה ונחום אלימלך רפאל בן זהבה רבקה, בתוך שאר חולי עמנו

I.

Retrieved October 12, 2023, from [The lesson of the fourth day of Creation \(israelnationalnews.com\)](https://www.israelnationalnews.com)