

Appendix 1: Why Was the Sun Not Made Small?

The question

The moon wants to receive directly from Hashem. Rav Pinkus explains that, to do so, it must become small. But the sun also receives from Hashem, and it remains great! Why does the moon need to become small while the sun does not?

Daas Zekeinim miBaalei HaTosafos - Bereishis 1:16

והשמש עמד בגדולתו, לפי ששמע חרפתו ולא השיב,
והיינו דאמרינן, הנעלבין ואינם עולבין, שומעים חרפתם ואין משיבין,
עליהם הכתוב אומר, ואוהביו כצאת השמש בגבורתו,
כשמש, ששמע חרפתו ולא השיב, ונתגדל על ידי כן.

The sun remained in its greatness because it heard its disgrace and did not respond. This illustrates the teaching about those who are insulted but do not insult in return, who hear their disgrace and do not respond: “Those who love Him are like the sun emerging in its strength” (Shoftim 5:31). Like the sun, which heard its disgrace and did not respond, they attain greatness through this restraint.

A suggested answer within Rav Pinkus’s explanation

The sun was great, but it did not insist on its own greatness. When the moon challenged the arrangement, the sun remained silent. Daas Zekeinim explicitly attributes its continued greatness to that restraint.

Perhaps this answers our question. **The sun had already demonstrated inward humility while remaining outwardly great.** It did not need to lose its stature to show that it could relinquish the defence of its own honour. The moon’s sincere longing for closeness still required the lesson expressed by “Go and diminish yourself.”

You can be great and still make yourself small before Hashem. The question is whether you have to insist on your greatness.

Daas Zekeinim describes the moon’s complaint as kitrug; Rav Pinkus uncovers its longing for closeness. The connection proposed here is our suggested answer, drawing on the sun’s restraint in Daas Zekeinim. See also Shabbos 88b.