



1. *US doesn't know what shot down Lake Huron 'object' is and doesn't rule out UFO*, The Independent 2/13/23

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/lake-huron-object-michigan-ufo-pentagon-b2280979.html>

The US has not ruled out the possibility that an "object" it shot down on Sunday was an unidentified flying object (UFO). In a statement, the Department of Defense said the "object" was shot down over concerns about its "potential surveillance capabilities". The Pentagon, however, said it has yet to find out where it came from.

The military had downed the "object", shaped like an octagon and flying at an altitude of 20,000ft over Lake Huron in Michigan, on Sunday afternoon by a missile launched from an F-16 fighter jet at the direction of president Joe Biden, based on the military's recommendations.

"We are calling them objects, not balloons, for a reason," US Air Force General Glen VanHerck told reporters.

"I'll let the intel community and the counterintelligence community figure that out," he said, on being asked about the possibility of the object being a UFO.

2. The Drake Equation, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drake_equation

The Drake equation is a probabilistic argument used to estimate the number of active, communicative extraterrestrial civilizations in the Milky Way Galaxy.

The equation was formulated in 1961 by Frank Drake, not for purposes of quantifying the number of civilizations, but as a way to stimulate scientific dialogue at the first scientific meeting on the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI). The equation summarizes the main concepts which scientists must contemplate when considering the question of other radio-communicative life. It is more properly thought of as an approximation than as a serious attempt to determine a precise number.

Criticism related to the Drake equation focuses not on the equation itself, but on the fact that the estimated values for several of its factors are highly conjectural, the combined multiplicative effect being that the uncertainty associated with any derived value is so large that the equation cannot be used to draw firm conclusions.

N = the number of civilizations in the Milky Way galaxy with which communication might be possible
and

R_* = the average rate of star formation in our Galaxy

f_p = the fraction of those stars that have planets

n_e = the average number of planets that can potentially support life per star that has planets

f_l = the fraction of planets that could support life that actually develop life at some point

f_i = the fraction of planets with life that actually go on to develop intelligent life (civilizations)

f_c = the fraction of civilizations that develop a technology that releases detectable signs of their existence into space

L = the length of time for which such civilizations release detectable signals into space

3. Jonathon Keats: The First Intergalactic Art Exposition

<https://magnes.berkeley.edu/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/revisions-jonathon-keats-first-intergalactic-art-exposition-2/>

Concluding centuries of speculation about extraterrestrial intelligence, conceptual artist Jonathon Keats has discovered that a radio signal detected by the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico contains artwork broadcast from deep space. Initially dismissed by researchers as meaningless, the transmission – which originated between the constellations Aries and Pisces thousands of years ago – is now claimed to be the most significant addition to the artistic canon since the Mona Lisa, or even the Venus of Willendorf.

Painstakingly decoded and transferred onto canvas by Keats, the artwork will be unveiled to the public at the Magnes on July 30, 2006. "This is the ultimate outsider art," notes Keats. "Historically our culture has ignored extraterrestrial artistic expression. Exhibited at the Magnes, the art becomes accessible to everyone... Researchers expect intelligent life elsewhere in the universe to behave just like them. Since scientists are mathematical, they expect extraterrestrials to broadcast the digits of pi or the Pythagorean theorem."

Keats began seriously to question the wisdom of these assumptions while conducting independent research early last year. "If I were an extraterrestrial trying to communicate with beings elsewhere in the universe, I certainly wouldn't transmit something they already knew," he argues. "I'd try to express something about myself, as profound as possible, in the most universal language I could imagine: I'd send art."

The participation of the Magnes was crucial, according to Keats. "While it would be presumptuous to make claims about the religious background of beings elsewhere in the universe, I doubt that I'd have been able to appreciate extraterrestrial artwork had I not been brought up Jewish," he says. "Growing up in a Diaspora culture has naturally sensitized me to work unacknowledged by, and even laughable to, the mainstream. Approaching art from a Jewish perspective, chief curator Alla Efimova and the entire Magnes staff were completely open to the work I presented." The Magnes staff was also open to Keats's suggestion that the generous loan of extraterrestrial art be reciprocated, and have provided facilities for him to transmit his own abstractions – inspired by works in the museum collection – out into deep space. This unprecedented interstellar cultural exchange will be ongoing for the six-month run of the exhibition.

4. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, The Aryeh Kaplan Reader

One of the unique aspects of Judaism is its far reaching universality. Not only does Judaism provide a lesson for every human being, its teachings extended to the very boundaries of the universe.

It is an axiom of Judaism that the entire universe was created for the sake of man. In one place, the Talmud reckons that there are some [10 to the 18th power] stars in the observable universe, and explicitly states that they were all created for the sake of man. It goes further to state that all the angels and spiritual worlds also only exist for this purpose.

Of course, this immediately raises a question that many find quite difficult. How is it possible that man, living on a dust mote called planet Earth, should be the center of the universe?

5. Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, *The Religious Implications of Extra Terrestrial Life*, Tradition (1965)

<https://traditiononline.org/the-religious-implications-of-extraterrestrial-life/>

The Anthropocentric View

6. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 1:1

The Torah said (based on Proverbs 8:30), "I was the tool of Gd's craft." Normally, a flesh and blood king builds a palace not on his own, but via a craftsman. The craftsman does not build it on his own, but via plans which outline how to create the rooms and small entrances. So, too, Gd looked in the Torah and created the world. The Torah said, "In *reishit* Gd created", and *reishit* is Torah, as in, "Gd created me, *reishit* of His path. (Proverbs 8:22)"

7. Talmud, Shabbat 88b-89a

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: When Moses ascended to Heaven, the ministering *malachim* said before Gd: Master of the Universe! Why is there one who is born of woman among us?

He told them: He has come to accept the Torah.

The *malachim* said before Him: This hidden treasure, which was hidden with You for 974 generations before the world was created – now You wish to give it to flesh and blood? 'What is Man that You remember him, the son of Man that You recall him? (Psalms 8:5) Gd, our Master, how great is Your Name in all the land! Place Your glory upon the Heavens! (Psalms 8:2)'

Gd said to Moses: Answer them!

He replied: Master of the Universe, I fear that they may burn me with the vapour of their mouths!

He told him: Hold on to My Throne of glory, and answer them.

He said: Master of the Universe! This Torah that You are giving me, what is written in it?

"I am Hashem your Gd, who took you out of Egypt."

Moses said to them: Did you ever descend to Egypt? Were you slaves to Pharaoh? Why would you need Torah?

[Moses said to Gd:] What else is written in it?

"You shall not have the gods of others."

Moses said to them: Do you live among the nations, who worship idolatry?

[Moses said to Gd:] What else is written in it?

"Remember the day of Shabbat, to sanctify it."

Moses said to them: Do you perform work, such that you should need to halt?

[Moses said to Gd:] What else is written in it?

"You shall not take Gd's Name in vain."

Moses said to them: Do you engage in commerce?

[Moses said to Gd:] What else is written in it?

"Honour your father and mother."

Moses said to them: Do you have a father and mother?

[Moses said to Gd:] What else is written in it?

"You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal."

Moses said to them: Do you have jealousy among yourselves? Do you have a desire for evil among yourselves?

Immediately they admitted that Gd was right, as Psalms 8:10 says, "Gd, our Master, how great is Your Name, etc." but it does not say, "Place Your glory upon the Heavens."

8. Talmud, Chullin 91b

Israel is more beloved before Gd than the ministering *malachim*, for Israel sings to Gd always, and the ministering *malachim* only sing daily, some say weekly, some say monthly, some say annually, some say once every seven years, some say once every Jubilee, some say once in eternity. Also, Israel mentions Gd's Name after only two words, as in, *Shema Yisrael Hashem*, and the ministering *malachim* after three words, *Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh Hashem Tzevakot*. Also, the ministering *malachim* cannot sing in heaven until Israel sings below, as it is written (Job 38), 'When the morning stars [ie the Jews] sing together... And the *bnei Elokim* trumpet.'

9. Rav Saadia Gaon, Ha'Emunot v'haDeiot 4

Customary practice and construction place the most honoured element in the centre of the elements that are not as honoured. We will begin from the smallest things and note that a grain kernel is in the middle of all of the leaves – this is because the kernel is more honoured than they are, for the plant's characteristics stem from it... And the yolk of an egg is in the centre, for the chick comes from there. And the human heart is in the middle of his chest because it is the dwelling of the spirit and of natural warmth... And as we see this apply to most things, and I have seen that the Earth is in the centre of the heavens, with the spheres revolving about it on all sides, this validates for us that the Earth is the goal of Creation. We then look at all of the Earth's elements, and see that the dirt and water are silent, and the animals cannot communicate [abstract thought], and all that remains is Man...

Gd informed us via His prophets that He gave Man an advantage over His other creations, as Genesis 1:28 says, 'And they will reign over the fish of the sea, etc.'... He gave us the ability to serve Him, and He put [the world] before us and gave us control. He placed freedom of choice in our domain and instructed us to choose the good, as Deuteronomy 30:19 says, 'See, I have placed before you today life and good, etc.'... And if one will think that some non-human entity is more significant, let him show us the advantages, or some of them, which another creature possesses, for one could not find such a thing.

10. Talmud, Sanhedrin 37a

'Your navel (Song of Songs 7:3)' is the Sanhedrin; it is called 'navel' because it sits at the navel of the world.

11. Dr. Harlow Shapley, Of Stars and Men (1959), pg. 8

The presumed superiority of man as an animal; the assumption of the importance of life, especially of human life, to the universe at large; and the insistence and feeling that our moment in the geological ages is somehow enormously significant in the flow of time- all these easy postulates should be questioned. To attain a proper evaluation of the interpreter measured against the interpreted and to counter somewhat our automatic egocentrism, we may need to overemphasize the role of galaxies and stars, those "cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand his nothingness into man."

There should be, however, nothing very humiliating about our material inconsequentiality. Are we debased by the greater speed of the sparrow, the larger size of the hippopotamus, the keener hearing of the dog, the finer detectors of

odors possessed by insects? We can easily become adjusted to all these evidences of our inferiority and maintain a feeling of importance and well-being. We should also take the stars in our stride; we should adjust ourselves to the cosmic facts. It is a magnificent universe in which to play a part, however humble.

The Other Side

12. Talmud, Sanhedrin 38b

Rav Yehudah said, citing Rav: When Gd wished to create Man, He created a group of ministering *malachim* and said, "Do you wish for us to make Man in our image?" They said, "Master of the Universe, what are his deeds?" He replied, "Such and such." They said, "Master of the Universe, 'What is Man that You remember him, etc?'" He extended His finger among [the *malachim*] and burned them. The same happened with a second set. The third set said before Him: Master of the Universe, what good did the first set accomplish with what they said? The entire world is Yours, do whatever You want with Your world. When the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Dispersion came, whose acts were corrupt, [the *malachim*] said before Gd: Master of the Universe, didn't the earlier groups speak correctly before You? He responded: "Until old age I am He, and until old age I will be patient, etc. (Isaiah 46)"

13. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 53:14

The angels leapt to argue against [Yishmael's] survival, saying, 'Master of the Universe! You would provide a well for this man who is going to murder Your children with thirst?'

G-d replied: What is he now – righteous or wicked?

They said: Righteous.

He told them: I only judge a man based upon his moment! Rise, and take the youth...

14. Talmud, Berachot 61b

When they took out Rabbi Akiva to murder him, it was the time to recite Shema, and they were raking his flesh with iron combs as he accepted the yoke of Heaven... The ministering *malachim* said before Gd: This is Torah and this is its reward?!

15. Job 38:4-7, 18-20, 31-33, 37 (adapted from Koren tr. c/o sefaria.org)

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements, if you know? Or who has stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are its foundations fastened? Or who laid its corner stone; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of Gd shouted for joy?...

Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare if you know it all. Where is the way where light dwells? And as for darkness, where is its place, that you should take it to its bound, and that you should know the paths to its home?...

Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loosen the cords of Orion? Can you bring forth constellations in their season? Or can you guide the Bear with his sons? Do you know the ordinances of heaven? Can you establish its dominion in the earth?...

Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can refill the bottles of heaven...

16. Prof. Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, pp. 239-240

As pointed out in the discussion of Chapters 29-31, Job's rhetoric repeatedly inscribes G-d into his speech as warrant and model for his conduct and his moral world (31:2-4, 6, 14-15, 23, 28). Divine and human beings occupy the same familiar territory. By contrast, the rhetorical questions addressed to Job by G-d (Where were you? Can you? Do you know?) eliminate him from presence, participation, or knowledge of the foundation and maintenance of the cosmos even as they address him.

17. Job 38:39-41, 39:1-4, 40:15-18, 40:25-29 (adapted from Koren tr. c/o sefaria.org)

Will you hunt the prey for the lion? Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? Who provides for the raven his provision? When his young ones cry to Gd, and wander for lack of food?...

Do you know the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? Or can you mark when the hinds do calve? Can you number the months that they fulfil? Or do you know the time when they bring forth? They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they send forth their offspring. Their young ones grow strong; they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not to them...

Behold now behemot, which I made with you; he eats grass like an ox. Lo now, his might is in his loins, and his force is in the muscles of his belly. He stiffens his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his thighs are knit together. His bones are tubes of brass; his limbs are like bars of iron...

Can you draw out livyatan with a hook? Or press down his tongue with a cord? Can you put a hook into his nose? Or bore his jaw through with a bridle ring? Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak soft words to you? Will he make a covenant with you to take him for your servant for ever? Will you play with him as with a bird? or will you bind him for your girls?

18. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed 3:13 (Friedlander translation)

Those who hold this view, namely, that the existence of man is the object of the whole creation, may be asked whether G-d could have created man without those previous creations, or whether man could only have come into existence after the creation of all other things. If they answer in the affirmative, that man could have been created even if, e.g., the heavens did not exist, they will be asked what is the object of all these things, since they do not exist for their own sake but for the sake of something that could exist without them?... We who believe in the Creation must admit that G-d could have created the Universe in a different manner as regards the causes and effects contained in it, and this would lead to the absurd conclusion that everything except man existed without any purpose, as the principal object, man, could have been brought into existence without the rest of the creation. I consider therefore the following opinion as most correct according to the teaching of the Bible, and best in accordance with the results of philosophy; namely, that the Universe does not exist for man's sake, but that each being exists for its own sake, and not because of some other thing.

19. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed 3:14 (Friedlander translation)

The object of the spheres may be the continuance of successive genesis and destruction; and the succession of genesis and destruction serves, as has already been said, to give existence to mankind. This idea is supported by Biblical texts and sayings [of our Sages]. The philosopher replies thus: If the difference between the heavenly bodies and the transient individual members of the species consisted in their different sizes, this opinion could be maintained: but as the difference consists in their essence, it remains improbable that the superior beings should be the means of giving existence to the lower ones.