

1. Radak to 10:14

ואף על פי שהיה שוב השמש אחורנית לחזקיהו, האות ההוא היה לאות ולמופת, ונתנו ד' בעבור שיאמין חזקיהו שיחיה מחליו, והוא כאחד מן המופתים שנעשו על ידי משה. אבל דרך תפלה, שיתפלל אדם על שנוי הטבע ונעתר הבורא לאותה תפלה, אם לא יהיה לתת בו אות ומופת לא היה ולא יהיה. וזהו שאמר "לשמוע בקול איש כי ד' נלחם לישראל."

And even though the Sun moved backward for Chizkiyahu [Yeshayah 38:8], that sign was as a sign and symbol; Gd gave it in order for Chizkiyahu to believe that he would outlive his illness. This was like the signs performed via Moshe. But via prayer, such that one would pray for an alteration of nature and the Creator would respond to that prayer – and not do it as a sign and symbol – never happened and never will happen. And this is the meaning of, "To listen to the voice of Man, for Gd has fought for Israel."

2. Malbim to 10:14

לא היה כמוהו. א] במי שסבב את הנס, כי כל הנסים נעשו או ע"י רצון ד', או אם נעשו ע"י נביא הוצרך לתפלה ובקשה, לא שיעשה הנביא הנס דרך גזרה כמו שעשה יהושע שגזר על השמש והירח וידומו... ב] בתכלית שבעבורו נעשה הנס, שבכ"מ שנעשה הנס ע"י רצון ד' היה לפעמים להגדיל שמו הגדול, ולפעמים להגדיל מעלת ישראל, אבל בכ"מ שבא הנס ע"י תפלת הנביא היה או לכבוד ד', או להציל את ישראל מני צר, אבל לא שאל הנביא אות ופלא מעולם שיהיה תכליתו רק להודיע שד' נלחם לישראל...

There was none like it: 1) In terms of who caused the miracle, for all miracles are performed either at Divine will, or if they are performed via a prophet then a prayer and request are required. The prophet does not perform the miracle as a decree, as Yehoshua decreed upon the Sun and Moon and they halted. 2) In terms of the purpose for which the miracle is performed. Where the miracle is performed via Divine desire, sometimes it is to exalt His great Name, and sometimes it is to exalt the stature of Israel. But wherever the miracle comes at a prophet's prayer, it is either to honour Gd or to save Israel from an enemy. A prophet never requested a sign and wonder with the sole purpose of informing [onlookers] that Gd fights for Israel...

3. Abarbanel, pg. נט

"כי ד' נלחם לישראל" - לא יורה זה מעלת יהושע, כי לא נעשה הנס בעבורו, כי אם להיות הקל נלחם לישראל, ובעבורם העמיד השמש... "For Gd fights for Israel" – This [miracle] does not indicate Yehoshua's stature, for the miracle was not performed on his behalf, but rather it was that Gd would fight for Israel, and for them He halted the Sun...

4. Mishnah Taanit 3:8

שלח לו שמעון בן שטח אלמלא חוני אתה גזורני עליך נידוי אבל מה אעשה לך שאתה מתחטא לפני המקום ועושה לך רצונך כבן שהוא מתחטא על אביו ועושה לו רצונו

Shimon ben Shetach sent to him: If you were not Choni, I would excommunicate you! But what can I do for you, for you sin before Gd and He does your will, like a son who sins against his father and yet the father performs his will.

Ralbag vs. Abarbanel

5. Ralbag to 10:12

There are many doubts regarding this portion, and it is appropriate to examine them.

1. If the Sun had halted its appropriate movement, that miracle would have been infinitely more marvelous than the miracles performed by Moshe! Moshe's miracles involved an alteration of existing nature among the lower entities. This use of the more honoured entities, changing their tasks, would be much greater than affecting the lower entities' orders. There is lack of order in the lower entities already, as does not require explanation for anyone who has examined these deep subjects...

If this indeed were to be so, that would contradict the Torah's statement that "No prophet ever arose in Israel like Moshe, for all of the signs and miracles which Moshe performed before the eyes of all of Israel!"

If we will say that Moshe already performed such a miracle, and it was not mentioned in the Torah, our doubts would still remain, for Yehoshua would still have performed a miracle the equal of Moshe's miracles.

Further, it would have been inappropriate for the Torah to omit mention of such a miracle [performed by Moshe]! We see that the Torah's intent is to publicize miracles, for these events bring people to trust Gd, as the Torah says regarding the miracles Gd performed against Pharaoh, "That you may tell this in the ears of your children...and you shall know that I am Gd!"

2. Further, the simple translation of these words does not appear to say that the sun and moon halted their movement. We see this clearly from the statement, "They did not hasten to set," which does not indicate that they halted. It only suggests that they did not hurry in their motion.

Similarly, it says "Sun, be silent in Givon; Moon, in the valley of Ayalon." It does not say, "Sun be silent, and Moon," but rather it gives them a wide space. Clearly, saying they did not leave this large place does not mean that they halted entirely, for it is possible to move within a broad space. To present a comparable case: One who tells someone not to leave his land is not saying that he shouldn't move! This is clear to anyone who has examined the natural orders.

Further, it says, "There was never any day like that, neither before nor after, for Gd to listen to the voice of a human being, for Gd fought for the Jews." This shows that the miracle involved the war itself. If the miracle were the halting of the sun, that wouldn't have had any impact on the war.

3. Further, it is clear from the Torah that Gd only performs miracles for a need, or to inculcate proper beliefs in people, and here we find no mention of any impact this miracle had, whether serving a need or inculcating belief.

4. Further, it has already been explained in the Book of the Wars of Gd (*authored by Ralbag*) that no prophet can create a miracle in these higher entities, meaning the celestial catalysts.

Rather, it is clear that this was not the miracle... Rather, Yehoshua's statement to Gd was that the battle against their enemies should be completed before the Sun would leave Givon and the Moon would leave the valley of Ayalon. The verse was brief in describing this.

This may be seen from the verse's comment, "And the Sun was silent, and the Moon stood, until the nation had gained retribution upon its enemies." This means that the Sun was silent in Givon and the Moon in the valley of Ayalon until this was completed. This was marvelous; not only did Yehoshua specify that the Jews should successfully gain retribution upon their enemies, but he also specified that the victory should occur in a very brief period.

This is what was meant when the verse said, "There was never any day like that, neither before nor after, for Gd to listen to the voice of a human being, for Gd fought for the Jews." This was what allowed the Jews to complete their victory in this brief time, for the hand of Gd will never be insufficient. Gd listened to Yehoshua's voice in that Gd had never promised that they would complete the victory in this short span, and yet Gd listened to his voice.

6. Aristotle's "Active Intellect" – <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-psychology/active-mind.html>

7. Ralbag, Book of the Wars of Gd VI 2:12

ונאמר עוד שאי אפשר שיתחדש מופת בגרמים השמימיים, וזה כי כבר התבאר שהשכל הפועל הוא הפועל באלו הנפלאות, כמו שקדם, ולא יתכן שיהיה השכל הפועל פועל בגרמים השמימיים, כי הוא עלול מהם. ועוד...

We will also say that no miracle can be created among the celestial catalysts. It has already been explained that the Active Intellect is what generates these wonders, as we have said, and the Active Intellect cannot affect the celestial catalysts, since it is caused by them. Further...

8. Abarbanel, pg. 56

The compilers have agreed that miracles and wonders are an essential trait among the prophetic traits, and the level of the prophet is in accord with the level of his wonders. But I have already written in my *Machazeh Sha—dai* that it is not so. Performing miracles and wonders is not an essential trait of prophecy. It is not impossible that a person prophesy and not perform any miracles. These are not what indicate the level of the prophet, because they are performed only based on the need and demand of the moment...

Our master Moshe was distinguished from other prophets by his level of prophecy, not his level of miracles. Thus it said (Devarim 34), "And no other prophet arose in Israel like Moshe, whom Gd knew, face [to face]."

9. Talmud, Avodah Zarah 25a

כשם שעמדה לו חמה ליהושע, כך עמדה לו חמה למשה ולנבקידימון בן גוריון... למשה מנלן? אתיא אהל אהל, כתיב הכא: אהל תת פחדך, וכתוב התם ביהושע: אהל גדלך. ור' יוחנן אמר: אתיא תת תת, כתיב הכא: אהל תת פחדך, וכתוב ביהושע: ביום תת ד' את האמורי. ר' שמואל בר נחמני אמר, מגופיה דקרא שמעת ליה: אשר ישמעון שמעך ורגזו וחלו מפניך, אימתי רגזו וחלו מפניך? בשעה שעמדה לו חמה למשה. מיתבי: ולא היה כיום ההוא לפניו ואחריו! איבעית אימא: שעות הוא דלא הוו נפיש כולי האי; ואיבעית אימא: אבני ברד לא הוו...

Just as the Sun stood for Yehoshua, so the Sun stood for Moshe and for Nakdimon ben Gurion... How do we know it happened for Moshe?

- Devarim 2:25 says, "Today I will begin [אהל] to place fear of you," and Yehoshua 3:7 says, "I will begin [אהל] to elevate you."
- Rabbi Yochanan said: Devarim 2:25 says, "Today I will begin to place [תת] fear of you," and Yehoshua 10:12 says, "On the day Gd placed [תת] the Emori."
- Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachmeni said: It's from Devarim 2:25 itself, "They will hear your news, and tremble and be afraid before you." When did they "tremble and be afraid before you"? When the Sun stood for Moshe.

But Yehoshua 10:14 says, "There was no day like that before or after!" If you want I will say that the duration was not as long. Or I could say that there were no hailstones.

10. Rambam, Guide of the Perplexed 3:13

כן צריך שיאמן שהאדם כשידע עצמו ולא יטעה בו ויבין כל נמצא כפי מה שהוא, ינוח ולא יתבלבלו מחשבותיו לבקש התכלית ההיא, או לבקש תכלית למה שאין לו תכלית אלא מציאותו הנתלה ברצון האלקי, ואם תרצה אמור בחכמה האלקית:

This is what one who knows himself and does not err, and who comprehends all that exists for what it is, must believe. He should be content and not have his thoughts confused, seeking that [ultimate] purpose, or seeking the purpose of that which has no purpose other than its own existence, which is by Divine desire – or Divine wisdom, if you prefer.

11. Abarbanel, pg. 54

Because He halted the Sun in the sky, they understood that the heavens belong to Gd, and are of the new [rather than eternal] creation, like everything else... And if all of the enemies and their forces were destroyed, to the point that none remained, the land would then be conquered with minimal battle... Further, it would bring great honour to Israel via the victory over these five kings.

12. Abarbanel, pg. 54

They believe that it provides *tzurah*, and brings our intellect to life; they have forgotten the *tzur* who birthed them, as Yeshayah 27:16 says, "For the spirit from before Me is clothed, etc."...

They believe that it is the "bond of life", and that the reward for the souls is to cleave to it after death... and they do not believe in the words of the wise woman in Shemuel I 25:29, "The soul of my master should be bound in the bond of life, with HaShem your Gd."

They believe that it guards and supervises this world; they do not pay attention to King David's statement in Tehillim 33:6, "By the word of Gd the heavens were created... From the heavens Gd gazes and sees all humanity..."

They believe that it is what influences prophets, giving them prophecy, thereby requiring that they believe that prophecy is natural, denying the words of the prophet Yeshayah (Yeshayah 42:4-6), "I am Gd, who calls you in righteousness and grasps your hand..."

They believe it performs all miracles and the Creator does not perform them, but they have forgotten the statement of Moshe (Shemot 15:11), "Who is like You... the One who performs wonders"...