

Seeing the Eclipse Through a Jewish Lens

Judaism provides a framework of meaning for the entirety of our lives. Our ancestors feared the phenomenon of the solar eclipse, believing it to be a bad omen for the world. They assigned no blessing to the moment of viewing such a miracle. Today we are lucky to understand that an eclipse poses no danger to us; only an opportunity to gaze (carefully!) at the natural world with wonder.

Below is a selection of blessings and readings for the viewing of the eclipse. Choose one of these offerings, or be creative and make your own! Share your experiences from the August 21st viewing on Micah's facebook page!

ברוך אתה יי' יוצר המאורות.

Baruch atah Adonai, yotzer ham'orot.

Blessed are you, Adonai, creator of the heavenly lights.

ברוך אתה יי' עוזה מעשה בראשית.

Baruch atah Adonai, oseh ma'aseh v'reishit.

Blessed are you, Adonai, who makes the work of creation.

ברוך אתה יי' אלוהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיי'מנו והגינו לזמן זהה.

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyahu lazman hazeh.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, sovereign of the universe, who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

On Seeing the Solar Eclipse of 1991

The New York Times, July 12, 1991

"The universe works," proclaimed Dr. Rosenzweig, a gynecologist from Burlingame, California.

"There's some satisfaction in that..."

The sky got very dark, the horns of the crescent sun shrank together...as the sun disappeared, and the leading edge of the moon's shadow swept over them at 1,500 miles an hour...They put away their filters and looked up at a blank circle surrounded by a pure white ring of light, the corona formed by the sun's atmosphere...

Dr. Rosenzweig was having trouble looking through his viewfinder. "I've been crying for four minutes," he said. "I haven't taken any 35mm pictures because I just forgot about it. I'm absolutely awed..." Dr. Rosenzweig stood up and started clapping. "Encore! Encore!" he shouted. And then upon reflection, "Author! Author!"