MASHIB HARUAH: What would happen if it stopped raining?

In today's modern world, when most of us live in urban areas and not in farms, it is difficult to appreciate the importance of rain. For us, rain is more an annoyance than a blessing.
Today, I want to share with you some facts about water and rain, which hopefully will help to understand why we praise our Creator for the miracle of rain when we say the beautiful Tefila mashib haruah umorid hageshem (=You are the one Who makes the wind blow, and the rain to fall)
What makes our planet unique in the universe? You might say "life". And that is true. But there is something else that enables life, and which according to our Tora, was created before life. Something that scientists look for when they search elsewhere in the universe to find life. You would probably say "water". And you will be partially right. To be more precise you need to say: "liquid water". Why? Because water (H2O), or the signs of it, was found on other planets, but always in the form of ice. Our planet is blessed to be the only little place in the entire universe which possesses "liquid water", thanks to the Intelligent Design of the earth's mass, the sun's mass, and particularly the fine-tuned distance between our planet and the sun.
But this is not the end of the story of water. Normal salt water, i.e., ocean's water, is not suitable for living organisms that live on dry land. All land creatures, including humans, need water-without-salt to survive. That precious liquid is called "freshwater". Freshwater allows life to exist on our planet. And the only source of freshwater in the entire universe is "precipitation". (Precipitation includes: snow, mist, hail and mainly "rain", and it is normally used as a synonym of "rain").
According to Maimonides (More Nebukhim 2:30) and many other Hakahamim (like Rabbi Moshe Hefets, *melekhet mahashebet* pp. 49-50, see here) the mechanism of rain was established on the second day of Creation. When HaShem separated the upper waters (clouds, rain) from the lower water (oceans). John Lynch, the author of the BBC Book "The weather" (p.84) describe with his

own words the clouds as upper waters: “We live on a water planet. The seas dominate the world, but there is also an ocean around us and an ocean above us.” The Second Day was dedicated entirely to describe the miraculous mechanism of converting ocean water into the most precious liquid in the entire universe: rain.

Now, let’s see some numbers to appreciate a little more the miracle of rain. Freshwater is water with low concentrations of dissolved salts. Out of all the water on Earth, only 2.75% of it is freshwater. From it, 2.05% is water that is frozen in glaciers. 0.68% is groundwater. And just 0.0101% of it, is surface fresh water gathered in lakes and rivers. This 0.0101% is what all creatures that live on dry land, including us, drink for our survival! The Second Day was dedicated entirely to establish the conversion process of primeval ocean water into the most precious liquid in the entire universe: rain.

This is why our Rabbis considered rain one of God’s most important blessings to mankind. In the second blessing of the ‘amida, when we say mashib haruah umorid hageshem we praise God for His Might (geburot), pointing out His kindness and power to produce rain, which supports and maintains life.

The sole source of freshwater in the entire universe is rain from the earth’s atmosphere. In the words of L. O’Hanlon (Discovery Channel):

“Imagine an entire planet where the universe’s finest liqueur is boiled out of fermenting seas by a brilliant yellow star, distilled in the skies and rained back down on the land, forming lakes and rivers of the inebriating brew. The planet, of course, is Earth, and the liqueur is freshwater.”

*Adapted from **AWESOME CREATION** by Rabbi Yosef Bitton.* Get the book HERE

.