The age of the Earth, according to the book of Job

One difference between science and Tora, which relates to the "evolution" and "age" of planet Earth, might be solved by understanding an idea conveyed by a verse from the book of Yiob (Job). Yiob was a good and honest man who suffered the death of all his children. The book, 42 chapters, deals with Divine justice and when bad things happen to good people. Towards the end of the book, chapter 38, HaShem reveals Himself to Yiob. It shows him how little humans can know about the reality around us and how our knowledge escapes the grasping of physical reality. If that is the case in the material, visible and accessible realm—how much more remote is our potential access to the dimension of Divine Knowledge? Among these is the administration of Divine Justice. God demonstrates Yiob the inescapable limitations of human knowledge and deters Yiob (and the reader) from the illusion of understanding Celestial Designs. In this chapter, which is a monologue because Yiob has no answers to God's inquiries, God confronts Yiob with a series of fascinating questions on issues related to Creation, the harmony of the cosmos, the mystery of light, the secrets of life on the seabed, and much, much more. In this context, we find a verse (38:38) where God challenges Yiob's knowledge of the formation of the Earth. The text says: «[Where were you …] when [the planet] merged into a mass, and the layers of the Earth adhered to each other?" This last expression [□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□] which does not appear anywhere else in the Scriptures, led the Rabbis to assert two thousand years ago (Yoma 54b)that our planet is composed of several strata and not, so to speak, of just one piece. The Beur, a contemporary commentary on the Bereshit Rabba written by Rabbi Abraham Shteinberger (Midrash Bereshit Raba HaMeboar, Jerusalem, Makhon HaMidrash haMeboar, 1980, page 13,) says: that *"the fact that our planet has been*

created by strata and layers makes the Earth appear older than it really is, and that is the reason why some non-believers assume that millions of years must have passed between strata and strata ".

It is interesting to know that this coincidence between the Biblical text and geology was evident only in modernity. For thousands of years, scientists did not suspect that our planet is made up of different strata below the surface. Only after "uniformism" –a concept developed by James Hutton (1726-1797), the father of modern geology– "discovered" that Planet Earth was formed step by step and consists of numerous layers.

To summarize, the Biblical text states that while Creator created our planet in a single instant, it was created composed of different strata, from the core to the surface of the Earth. Thus, if a geologist examines the composition of our planet and "discovers" its numerous layers, it will attribute this composition to an evolutionary process that theoretically demanded millions of years of formation. From the Biblical point of view, however, the geologist is not discovering something that contradicts the Tora but something that confirms it. The only conflicting element is the "interpretation" that the terrestrial strata imply a process of millions of years. And this "interpretation" is based on taking the initial act of Creation out of the equation. However, when we examine the facts based on the premise of an initial Act of Creation, the geological discoveries of a planet with numerous layers is precisely what we were expecting to find!

(To be continued …)