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HEMDAT YAMIM

חֶמְדַּת יָמִימִים

Parashat HaShavua

Vayechi, 18 Tevet 5781

More about Starting Points of Time

Harav Yosef Carmel

We cited the Ibn Ezra about cases in which a period of time is given but it is not evident when that count starts from. Last week, we discussed the 40 years that dated Avshalom's rebellion. Now we move on to another example the Ibn Ezra gave, the 65 years that Yeshayahu (7:8) prophesied it would take until the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel (the Ten Tribes).

Chapter 7 of Yeshayahu opens a set of prophecies that were given at the time of King Achaz of Yehuda. This one is dated by *Chazal* as being in the 4th year of Achaz's rule, which was a very significant one in the history of the First Temple period. Yerushalayim was attacked by joint forces of the Kingdom of Israel, led by King Pekach ben Remalyahu, and the Kingdom of Aram, led by King Retzin. The attack was not successful, but still the leadership of Judea "swayed (with fear) like a tree sways in the wind" (Yeshayahu 7:1-2).

The Middle East of that time was like a mixing bowl. The New Assyrian Empire was based in Ninveh, which was situated on the banks of the Tigris River (in Iraq of today), and was conquering region after region. Achaz decided to accept the dominion of the Assyrians. Pekach was part of a coalition with the Aramian Empire, which included 32 mini-kingdoms, which opposed the growing Assyrian threat. Pekach took on Achaz and was victorious, with the remnant of the Judean forces retreating to the fortifications of Yerushalayim. After being joined by Aram, the idea was to force Yehuda to accept a new king who would support the Aramaic coalition. Yeshayahu was sent to calm Achaz, and he also told Achaz that in 65 years, his rival kingdom (called here Ephrayim) would cease to exist.

What type of consolation is that his rival would be eliminated in another 65 years – that is a very long time? Therefore, the Ibn Ezra posits that the 65 years is to be counted from an earlier point. Rashi and the Radak explain that the 65 years was from the prophecy of Amos against Israel and Aram (Amos 1:4-5). According to both, the event was approximately 20 years from the time of Yeshayahu's prophecy, in the sixth year of the reign of Achaz's son, Chizkiyahu. But how was Amos' prophecy supposed to calm Yehuda so far in advance?

In my book, *Tzofnat Yeshayahu, Me'Uziya ad Achaz*, p. 191, I explained that Yeshayahu was quoting the prophecy of Amos (Vayikra Rabba 6 says he also quoted the prophecy of Hoshea's father). Amos' exact prophecy was actually not recorded in his *sefer*, as those prophecies were dated from two years after the great earthquake. By the time this prophecy was cited, a relatively short time passed until the Assyrians started weakening the Aramites. The attack of the Assyrians actually forced Aram to retreat from Jerusalem and focus their forces on repelling the attack on them. This consoled and saved Achaz.

We will continue to see how Biblical dating of events follows its own system(s) and understanding them in the simplest way raises unnecessary surprise, as we will continue to discuss. In the meantime, we will continue to thank Hashem for the miracles that have occurred in past times and in our times.

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Ask the Rabbi

by Rav Daniel Mann

Eat Meat on Shabbat when it Bothers his Wife?

Question: My wife and I are relatively newly married. I am used to having *fleishig* Shabbat meals, whereas my wife is disgusted by meat (including poultry, mainly by the smell). Is it right for us to stop having meat at Shabbat/Yom Tov meals or should we try to figure out an arrangement that my wife can live with?

Answer: There is a mandate of “*v’karata laShabbat oneg*” (you shall call Shabbat a day of indulgence) (Yeshayahu 58:13). The *gemara* (Shabbat 118a-b, as does the *pasuk* *ibid.*) promises great reward for those who indulge properly in Shabbat meals, and the Mishna Berura (242:1) cites opinions that the basic obligation is from the Torah.

The basic obligation of the two main meals of Shabbat is to have bread (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 274:4) and [preferably wine for] Kiddush. But as far back as we know, it has been customary that the festivity of these meals includes meat, and meat features prominently in the sources. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 250:2) states: “He should have much meat, wine, and treats according to his ability.” While one should not normally nullify oaths on Shabbat, one may do so for a need of the day. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 341:1) gives an example of undoing an oath not to eat on that Shabbat, and the Mishna Berura (341:2) applies this even to an oath not to eat meat because “eating meat is a *mitzva* on Shabbat.”

However, there is strong evidence that there is no obligation to eat specifically meat (or poultry) on Shabbat. An *onen’s* (one before the burial of a close relative) prohibition to eat meat or drink wine is suspended on Shabbat (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 341:1). Rabbeinu Yona (Berachot 10b), accepted by the Rama (ad loc.) and the Shach (ad loc. 7), says the *onen* is not required to eat meat if he does not want to because it is not an obligation to have specifically meat. The Mishna Berura (*ibid.*, in Sha’ar Hatziyun 341:4) said that the Shabbat need justifying nullifying oaths is not limited to meat specifically but to any food that makes Shabbat enjoyable.

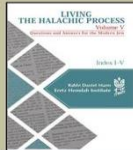
The Mishna Berura (242:1) posits that the foods mentioned in the *gemara* as appropriate for Shabbat are examples based on their time and place, and that we generally assume that meat is festive in people’s eyes, but that this need not be across-the-board. If any food preference (besides bread) is somewhat objective it is fish, as it includes a mystical element, and even there it is not required for those who dislike it (see *ibid.* 2).

So clearly, your wife should not eat meat if it bothers her in any way. But I understand your question not to be about your wife eating meat, but whether meat should be served for you or guests, who do appreciate it. Let us assume that you cannot find a technical system, such as your preparing a meat-based food whose smell does not offend your wife, but that she is capable of putting up with it with sacrifice (as she probably does as a guest of others or at *semachot*).

Lack of funds is grounds for having a simple meal, even if one can obtain more enjoyable food with sacrifice (Shabbat 118a; see details of prioritization in Mishna Berura 242:1). We also know that provisions to make the house more conducive for familial harmony (i.e., light in the house) are more important than either wine for *Kiddush* or Chanuka candles (Shabbat 23b). A husband should honor his wife, by fulfilling her needs and reasonable desires, more than himself (Rambam, Ishut 15:19). Therefore, your position should be that meat should **not** be served at your Shabbat table. If your wife feels or received advice (do not wait for this to happen) that she should/wants to sacrifice for your Shabbat experience, then you are blessed with the type of disagreement we wish on couples. It is hard to know based on a short description who we think should “win this disagreement,” and sometimes a compromise is best for all parties. As long as you are sincere about your willingness to forgo meat, things should work out fine. If, when you *im yirtzeh Hashem* have older children, they feel deprived, the matter can be revisited.

Do not hesitate to ask any question about Jewish life, Jewish tradition or Jewish law.





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Igrot HaRe'aya – Letters of Rav Kook

Departure of an Uncle to Eretz Yisrael – Vol. I, #1, p. 1-2 – part I

Date and Place: Monday of Parashat R'ei 5688 (1888), Zaumel

Recipient: The True *Gaon*, the Prince of Torah, the great *tzaddik*, **Rav Mordechai Gimpel**, the Chief Rabbi of Rozhinai (Rav Kook's great uncle)

Greeting: May your path be before Hashem, and may He look at you from His window (Shir Hashirim 2:9), to bring you in joy to the place of rest (Jerusalem), the blessed, holy city. May you be praised in the land of life (Tehillim 41:3), and soon see the comforting of Zion and Jerusalem, and raise your voice in praise of Hashem and prayer at the gateway of the heaven (Bereishit 28:17) on behalf of the remnant that is found in the Diaspora with longing eyes. Among them, may you also mention for grace and mercy the one (speaking of himself with humility) with weak wisdom and hands that are too short to be effective, a lowly servant who aspires for and desires the day when the tidings-bearing messenger will be on the hilltops (Yeshayahu 52:7) to say "Hashem has liberated His nation, He has consoled Zion and Jerusalem" (ibid. 9).

Body: This past Friday I received a letter from my illustrious father-in-law, the chief rabbi of Ponovitz (Rav Avraham David Rabinowitz Teomim = the Aderet) *shlita* who was then in Warsaw. In the letter I saw a clear light that met my surprised eyes, the form of the holy handwriting of your illustrious son-in-law, the Chief Rabbi of Kapola (Rav Tzvi Hirsch Volk), whom I met a little bit as a youngster. I had been thirsty to hear more from him and I stopped my activities to facilitate this but I did not know his address. Your illustrious son-in-law wrote to me first, and I was embarrassed that I had not written to him first.

In his letter, he informed me with happiness and exaltation, intermingled with a bit of dissatisfaction, that on this coming Rosh Chodesh Elul, with the blessed Hashem's proper grace, that my master, my great uncle *shlita* (Rav Gimpel) will raise up his legs in sanctity to go to the Land about which Hashem inquires (Devarim 11:12).

My heart was excited and broadened by the good news. Our Holy Land will rejoice when it sees the return of a loyal son, in whom it will find glory, and with the grandeur of your greatness and the sanctity of your piety, you will be a leader with honor and glory. You will be returning to the Land from a distant land to desire its stones and find satisfaction in its ground (Tehillim 102:15).

My true happiness banished the idle idea that had infiltrated me, to be sad because our land will miss such a great man when you move your home of honor to the Desired Land, and your aura and grandeur will have left (Rashi, Bereishit 28:10).

But when I thought about it, I had my mind speak to my heart: Whose is all that is desirable in Israel (Shmuel I, 9:20) if not the Holy Land? It is only she who is our glory and the glorified of all of Hashem's nation. In the Holy Land we should have our generation's most illustrious leaders, who lighten our eyes with the light of Hashem.

Next time we will see about Rav Kook's desire to visit his uncle before his uncle's aliya.



Tzofnat Yeshayahu - Rabbi Yosef Carmel

The Prophet Yeshayahu performed in one of the most stormy and dramatic periods of the Israeli nation's life, a period of anticipation for the Messiah that was broken by a terrible earthquake, and also caused a spiritual and political upheaval. The light at the end of the tunnel shone again only in the days of Chizkiyah.

"Tzofnat Yeshayahu – from Uziya to Ahaz" introduces us to three kings who stood at this crossroad in our nation's history: Uziya, a king who sought God but was stricken with leprosy because of his sin; Yotam, the most righteous king in the history of our people; And Ahaz, the king who knew God but did not believe in His providence.

In his commentary on the prophecies of Yeshayahu, Rabbi Yosef Carmel, Head of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit rabbinical court and a disciple of Rabbi Shaul Israeli zt"l, clings to the words of Hazal, our sages, and to the commentaries of the Rishonim, the great Jewish scholars of the middle ages, and offers a fascinating way to study Tanach. This reading attempts to explain the Divine Plan in this difficult period and to clarify fundamental issues in faith. Tzofnat Yeshayahu reveals to the reader the meaning of the prophecies in the context of the prophet's generation and their relevance to our generation.

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P'ninat Mishpat

Why Was the Etrog Order Changed? – part I

(based on ruling 74026 of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit Rabbinical Courts)

Case: The plaintiff (=pl) is an Israeli merchant of *arba minim* (=AM). The defendant (=def) is a representative of Company P (=CP), which sells in several places abroad. Def and pl signed a contract for specific amounts and prices of AM (in the thousands), with pl arranging where and how def would receive merchandise. The sides had disagreements about several things, including the quality of the *lulavim* and *etrogim*, due to which def did not pay pl in full. Mr. S, an AM appraiser, who represented CP, worked out a new deal between the orchard owner (oo) and CP, which was written down and signed a week later. Therefore, def claims that pl does not deserve any cut in the eventual *etrog* sale. [Those issues were easily adjudicated by *beit din*]. Def is countersuing for damages that pl caused, primarily because oo, who was supposed to provide the *etrogim*, did not give def as many *etrogim* and of the right type as he requested. Since CP ordered sales rooms and advertised for a larger quantity than ended up, CP is making def pay damages (\$85,000), and def is demanding that amount from pl. Def blames pl for not making a written agreement with oo or coming to the orchard to make sure the agreement went through.

Ruling: The contract between pl and def states that pl will reimburse def for damages he sustained, including if def has to pay others due to pl's negligence. The question is whether pl was negligent regarding the *etrogim*. First, pl claims that the agreement with oo was not carried out because Mr. S decided to raise the quality of the *etrogim* he wanted for CP, and this caused the need for a change in quantity. Def claims it was because oo was concerned that too big an order was being made and that CP would not pay oo in full. [We will discuss next time the partiality of the different witnesses on this matter.]

Was it necessary for there to be a contract between pl and oo? Pl said that the AM market is one based on trust between the major players, and there are rarely contracts. One of several indications that this is the case is the fact that Mr. S, upon making a new agreement between CP and oo, did not bother to write a proper contract but to sign on some numbers on a scrap of paper after a week.

Regarding the lack of pl's presence, the contract does not state that pl needed to be present but could have someone representing him. Since oo was serving on pl's behalf to provide the *etrogim* for def, he fulfilled that requirement. Although a representative of def asked pl to come, he was not required to agree, which is even more understandable according to his claim that a family situation arose that required his immediate attention.

We daven for a complete and speedy *refuah* for:

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Yisrael ben Rivka
Rivka Reena bat Gruna Natna
Meira bat Esther

Together with all *cholei* Yisrael

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