

DIMENSIONS IN CHUMASH

MASEI

“The Morrow of the Pesach” - Introducing the Torah Day

וַיִּסְעוּ מִרַעְמֶסֶס בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן מִמִּתְּרַת הַפֶּסַח

They journeyed from Rameses in the first month on the fifteenth day, on the morrow of the Pesach¹

Tosafos in Maseches Kiddushin² cite a fascinating question in the name of the Ibn Ezra. Our verse refers to the fifteenth of Nissan as “the morrow of the Pesach,” indicating that the date which the Torah calls “Pesach” is the fourteenth, presumably as that is the day the Pesach offering is *brought*. However, in sefer Yehoshua we find the following:

וַיֹּאכְלוּ מֵעֵבֹר הָאָרֶץ מִמִּתְּרַת הַפֶּסַח

They ate from the grain of the land on the morrow of the Pesach³

The grain to which the verse refers is the new grain from that year’s harvest, which becomes permitted through the bringing of the Omer offering on the sixteenth of Nissan.⁴ Yet if the sixteenth is “the Morrow of the Pesach,” then the Pesach itself is the *fifteenth* – since the Pesach is *eaten* on the evening of the fifteenth. That seems to conflict with our verse which implies that it is the *fourteenth!*

Most intriguing.

A stunning answer is given to this question by R’ Pinchas Halevi Horowitz in his commentary Sefer Hamakneh to Maseches Kiddushin.⁵ He states that the notion that the Torah day begins in the evening and ends the following afternoon was introduced with the giving of the Torah itself. Prior to that, the day began in the morning and ended with the following daybreak! As a source for this idea, he cites the verse which contains Hashem’s promise to Noach after the flood that the yearly and daily cycles would

1 Bamidbar 33:3.

2 37b s.v. *mimochoras*.

3 Yehoshua 5:11.

4 See Kiddushin loc. cit.

5 One of the teachers of the Chasam Sofer. See also in his commentary on the Torah Panim Yafos to Parshas Noach 8:22.

continue uninterrupted. The verse concludes: “וַיִּוָּמַד וְלַיְלָה לֹא יִשְׁבְּתוּ – *Day and night shall not cease.*”⁶ The verse mentions day before night since that is how the day is configured for the nations of the world, and likewise for the Jewish people themselves prior to the giving of the Torah.

The background to this idea is that the configuration of the day reflects an approach to life of which each day is a unit.

- ▷ If one emphasizes the physical aspect of life, as was the case before the Torah as given, then life begins with “daylight” with ones faculties in full power and ends in “darkness” as those faculties wane.
- ▷ If one emphasizes the spiritual aspect of life, as happened with the giving of the Torah, life rather begins in the “darkness” of ignorance and undeveloped character, progressing toward “daylight” of wisdom and refinement.⁷

Coming back to the Ibn Ezra’s question, the Sefer Hamakneh explains that the term “Pesach” refers to the night when the Pesach offering is *eaten*, i.e., the night between the fourteenth and fifteenth of Nissan. The question is: To which of those two dates does that night belong? The answer, as per the above, is that it depends whether it is before or after Matan Torah.

- ▷ Prior to Matan Torah, the night followed the day, so that “Pesach night” belonged to the *fourteenth* that preceded it. As such, our parsha which refers back to the following morning when they left Egypt – the fifteenth of Nissan – calls it “the morrow of the Pesach.”
- ▷ In Sefer Yehoshua, after the Torah was given, “Pesach night” was the beginning of the *fifteenth*. Therefore, the sixteenth of Nissan, when the new crop was permitted, is referred to there as “the Morrow of the Pesach.”

A major chiddush from one of the great Acharonim!⁸

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS: IN THE GEMARA

Numerous later commentators point out that there is support for this chiddush from the Gemara. In Chumash Vayikra,⁹ the Torah describes Yom Kippur as beginning “בַּתְּשֻׁעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּעֶרְבֹ – *On the ninth of the month in the evening.*” The Gemara¹⁰ objects that the evening in question is no longer part of the ninth, but the tenth! Based on this question, the Gemara derives halachic lessons, such as the mitzvah of eating on the ninth of Tishrei, or the mitzvah of bringing in Yom Kippur early.

Now, Tosafos¹¹ point out that there is a similar verse in Parshas Bo,¹² which refers to the time for eating matzah as “בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּעֶרְבֹ – *on the fourteenth of the month in the evening.*” Now, seemingly, we have exactly the same issue with this verse as the one with Yom Kippur, as the evening which follows the fourteenth is *no longer part of the fourteenth*, yet the Gemara does not make any comment! Why is the Gemara so vocal regarding Yom Kippur and so silent over the same issue regarding Pesach?

6 Bereishis 8:22.

7 R’Yosef Nechemiah Kornitzer, cited by Rabbi Isaac Bernstein.

8 The Makneh’s idea is also found in the Malbim to Shemos 12: 34 and discussed at length by R’Yaakov Kamenetzky, Emes le’Yaakov to ibid. 12:10. See also commentary of Rashbam to Bereishis 1:5.

9 23:22.

10 Berachos 8b, Rosh Hashanah 9a

11 Berachos ibid. s.v. *ke’ilu*

12 Shemos 12:18.

However, according to the principle set forward by the Sefer Hamakneh, the matter is well understood, since the verse in Chumash Shemos is dealing with *prior to Matan Torah*, at which time the evening actually did belong to the fourteenth! Therefore, the Gemara only raises this objection in the verse dealing with Yom Kippur, which pertained after Matan Torah.¹³

חזק חזק ונתחזק

13 R' Shlomo Gantzfried, author of *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*), in his commentary *Pnei Shlomo* to *Berachos* 8b, *Malbim* and *Emes le'Yaakov* loc. cit. [See, however, *Rosh Hashanah* 20b where both the above verses are cited as effectively expressing the same idea about the order of the day.]