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קול תורה

Parashat Lech Lecha

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Echad Hayah Avraham

by Rabbi Michael Hoenig

At the outset of Parashat Lech Lecha, Hashem informs Avraham Avinu: "*Lech Lecha MeiArtzecha UMiMoladtecha...El HaAretz Asher Ar'eca; Ve'Esecha LeGoi Gadol, VaAvarecheka, VaAgadelah Shimcha, VeHeyeh Berachah*", "Go for yourself from your land, from your birthplace...to the land I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing" (BeReishit 12:1). Ramban (ibid. s.v. VeHeyeh Berachah) asks: why is Avraham selected to be the recipient of such lofty and exalted blessings, when the Torah provides very minimal background information. Who was this man Avraham and what did he represent?

In Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Avodah Zarah VeChukot HaGoyim (1:3), Rambam describes the great spiritual and geographical journey of Avraham. Avraham finds himself in a world steeped in idolatry, and yet he takes a step back and starts to ask: How is the sphere of the earth revolving without anyone controlling it? Who is causing it to revolve? He therefore realizes that there must be one God who controls everything, and he firmly believes that the rest of the world is terribly mistaken. Therefore, he begins to debate with the people of Ur Kasdim, challenges all of their beliefs and ideologies, and pleads with them to exclusively worship Hashem. Avraham was even bold enough to decimate their idols in an effort to forcibly steer them away from their polytheism. Once Avraham Avinu begins to overcome the people with his arguments, the king wants his head and he escapes miraculously to Charan. He continues on his path, going from city to city, country to country until Kana'an, screaming that there is one God in the world; ultimately, through his enormous efforts, he amasses a tremendous following.

The Torah often describes Avraham as "Avraham HaIvri" (cf. 14:13); Rav S.R. Hirsch (ibid.) based on BeReishit Rabbah (42:8) explains this to mean that Avraham stood on the other side, i.e. in opposition to the entire world. The legacy of Avraham was his isolation in his own distinctive character.

In a similar vein, the Navi Yechezkeil tells us that "*Echad Hayah Avraham*", "Avraham was one" (33:24), but what does that mean? Rebbe Nachman (Likutei Moharan 2:1) explains that Avraham saw himself as the only person in the world serving Hashem. He ignored all the people who were on the wrong track and were putting obstacles in his way, including his own father. Avraham conducted himself as if he was the only one in the world, and Rebbe Nachman explains that this is a great starting point in our Avodat Hashem. We must take the outlook that there is no one else in the world, and never pay attention to any mockery that could preclude us from executing our greatest Avodat Hashem.

The Chatam Sofer, in the introduction to his She'eilot VeTeshuvot on Yoreh Deah, explains the absolute greatness of Avraham Avinu and what made him so unique. There were spiritual giants who preceded Avraham: Chanoch, who preceded Avraham by several generations, was so great that he ascended to heaven without dying and became a senior angel (cf. Mesechet Derech Eretz Zuta 1). Why was Avraham, however, "only" given the title "Ohavi", "the one who loves me" (Yishayahu 48:1), never reaching Chanoch's exalted status? If Avraham wanted to, he could have achieved the same level as Chanoch. Had he gone into isolation,

and spent time meditating and contemplating, he also would have risen up to Shamayim without dying. He went out to the public, however, to increase the recognition of the Malchut Shamayim among the nations and to spread the word of Hashem throughout society. Avraham Avinu truly was the "Ohavi"; he loved Hashem so much and desperately desired to spread belief in Hashem to everyone in sight.

This understanding now takes us full circle in terms of why Avraham was worthy to be the recipient of such blessings. The Ramban (op. cit.) explains that Hashem told Avraham to go to Canaan and continue his monumental work in the Holy Land. It would be a much more ideal place to spread the wisdom and knowledge of Hashem. The place of Hashem's heightened Shechinah is the most opportune place to speak of Hashem. Additionally, His name would be great there, and many nations would bless each other using his name. Through Avraham Avinu's great reputation and renown, he would be further enabled to successfully and productively continue his incredible mission in the land of Canaan.

This is our legacy as B'nei Avraham. We must be willing to stand in opposition to the whole world, and our commitment to Hashem should be unwavering, for He is the source of our joy, pride, and blessings. We should take all steps to constantly increase the Kavod Shamayim in the world. Then, BeEzrat Hashem, we can all reach greater heights.

AVRAHAM AVINU—ICONOCLAST PAR EXCELLENCE!

by Ephraim Helfgot ('20)

Most children in Yeshiva learn the Parashah of Lech Lecha in the third grade or thereabouts, and almost all are taught a famous Midrashic narrative about Avraham's background. This Midrash, found in BeReishit Rabbah (38:13), recounts:

Avraham's father, Terach, owned an idol shop. When customers would come by, Avraham would embarrass them by asking them why an adult should worship something made just the day before. One day, Avraham was working alone in the store when a woman came to offer a plate of flour to the idols. Once she left, Avraham took a club, smashed the idols, and placed the club in the hand of the biggest one. When Terach returned and asked why the idols were destroyed, Avraham replied, "They were arguing over who would eat from the flour first; the biggest one thereupon broke all the others with this club." Terach protested that the inanimate idols could not perform such an action; Avraham then argued that, if they were incapable of fighting for themselves, surely idols could not protect people.

Terach, unconvinced, brought Avraham to King Nimrod.

"Let us worship fire," Nimrod said.

"If so, let us worship water, which puts out fire," was Avraham's response.

"Fine, let us worship water," said Nimrod.

"If so, let us worship the clouds, which carry water," was Avraham's response.

"Fine, let us worship the clouds," said Nimrod.

"If so, let us worship the wind, which scatters the clouds," was Avraham's response.

"Fine, let us worship the wind" said Nimrod.

"If so, let us worship man, who can stand in the wind," was Avraham's response.

"You are just playing words games," Nimrod finally said.

"Instead, I'll throw you into the fire, which I worship; we'll see if your G-d saves you."

Avraham was then cast into a fiery furnace and miraculously saved by Hashem. Haran, Avraham's brother, saw this and decided

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Goldman, who perished in 1941 in the Warsaw Ghetto.

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to follow Avraham's belief in an incorporeal, metaphysical G-d; however, his faith was insincere, and when Nimrod had him thrown into the furnace, Haran died.

The ostensible impetus for Chazal's creation of this narrative was the early death of Haran (BeReishit 11:28), and indeed, this is the source that is quoted at the start of the Midrash. However, a deeper analysis of the qualities of Avraham expressed in this story reveals that, beyond adding detail to Haran's death, this Midrash is intended to express all of the traits which define Avraham in the Torah.

In the words of my father, Rabbi Nathaniel Helfgot, the Midrash tells us that Avraham Avinu is an iconoclast -- both in the sense of the original Greek (icon, meaning idol and clast, meaning to destroy) and in that of the modern meaning that we give this word. Firstly, we see Avraham's strong moral compass; he intrinsically knows that idolatry is wrong. This flows into his second defining trait, that of action: Avraham cannot passively stand by when the situation needs to be fixed. As the narrative of the Midrash continues, Avraham engages Nimrod in a theological Socratic seminar of sorts, acting in the role of a teacher despite being a subject before his king, the would-be student. Just as Avraham Avinu must act when there is evil in the world, he must teach when there is folly in the minds of men, no matter the consequences. This imperative to educate others is Avraham's third characteristic. Avraham's fourth and final trait is what allows him to act and teach no matter the dangers: his unshakable faith in, and devotion to, G-d. These four traits can be found throughout the different stories of Avraham's life recounted in the Torah.

Avraham's two greatest tests in life-- his childlessness and Akeidat Yitzchak-- both showcase his fidelity to Hashem. Regarding G-d's promise that Avraham, an old man, would have a child, the Torah writes, "And he believed in G-d" (BeReishit 15:6), while the angel who stops Avraham from offering his son as an offering states, "For now I know that you are one who reveres G-d" (ibid. 22:12).

Avraham's educational efforts, while not expressed explicitly in the Pesukim, are alluded to in many places. When Avraham and Sarah left Charan, they took with them "the souls which they made;" (ibid. 12:5) as slaves were already included earlier in the Pasuk, Rashi, Onkelos, and Targum Yerushalmi on the Pasuk all take this as a reference to converts which Avraham and Sarah had amassed. The Ramban (12:8 s.v. VaYikra BeShem Hashem) also interprets Avraham's "calling out in the Name of G-d" (ibid. 12:8) at the Mizbei'ach that he built in Ai as a reference to teaching about G-d. The closest corroboration of Avraham Avinu's educational outreach to strangers mentioned in the Torah itself is the statement of the Bnei Cheit, natives of the land of Kena'an, who recognize Avraham as "a prince of G-d of among us" (Bereishit 23:6). This is evidence that Avraham had indeed taught the people of Kena'an about Hashem and that his message was well-received.

Avraham's moral sense and tendency toward action are usually found together, as the first leads to the second. When Lot is captured by the armies of five kings, Avraham senses his obligation to save his nephew and quickly chases his enemy at the head of a small strike force (ibid. 14:14). Similarly, Avraham cannot abide the fact that his shepherds and those of Lot are quarreling (ibid. 13:8); to solve this problem, he proposes a proactive solution of separating in two directions.

We see, then, that all of the traits which this Midrash ascribes to Avraham are well rooted in the Torah. Indeed, the Torah comes close to writing a summary of Avraham's legacy with G-d's description of him (ibid. 18:19): "*Ki Yedativ, Lema'an Asher Yetzaveh Et Banav V'et Beito Acharav LiShmor Et Derech Hashem VeLa'asot Tzedakah U'Mishpat*", "For I know him, that he will command (trait of teaching) his children and household after him to keep the way of G-d (trait of faith), to do (trait of action) righteousness and justice (trait of morality) in the land." May we all leave such a legacy in this world.

UR CASDIM VS. CHARAN: WHERE DID AVRAM LIVE?

by Tani Greengart ('18)

The first Pasuk of Lech Lecha seems fairly straightforward: "*VaYomer Hashem El Avram, 'Lech Lecha MeiArtzecha UMiMoladtecha UMiBeit Avicha El HaAretz Asher Ar'eca,*" "God said to Avram, 'Go from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house to the land I will show you'" (BeReishit 12:1). God tells Avram to travel from his homeland to an unnamed place, which turns out to be the Land of Canaan.

But there is one problem: Where is Avram's homeland? At the end of Parashat Noach, Avram's father Terach took Avram on a trip from Ur Casdim to Canaan, but they stopped in Charan for unknown reasons (ibid. 11:31). Was Avram born in Ur Casdim, as the Pesukim imply? If he was, why does God tell him while he is presumably in Charan to leave his birthplace? After all, didn't Avram already leave his birthplace with his father?

Rashi (12:1 s.v. MeiArtzecha) presents a simple answer: Avram was born in Ur Casdim, but when God spoke to him in Charan, God was merely commanding Avram to distance himself farther from his homeland by journeying to Canaan.

Ibn Ezra (ibid. s.v. Lech Lecha) is bothered that Rashi's explanation does not fit perfectly with the words of the Pasuk--the words "*Lech Lecha MeiArtzecha UMiMoladtecha*" imply that Avram was living in his land of birth when God gave him this command. Ibn Ezra instead theorizes that Avram was born in Ur Casdim and received the command to move to Canaan when he was still living there. According to Ibn Ezra, the Pasuk about Terach and Avram moving from Ur Casdim to Canaan but settling in Charan is written out of order, as Avram and Terach only left Ur Casdim after God commanded Avram to do so.

Ramban (12:1 s.v. MeiArtzecha UMiMoladtecha), however, takes issue with Ibn Ezra's approach as well. First, writes Ramban, if Avram and Terach only journeyed out of Ur Casdim because Hashem commanded Avram to do so, the Torah should have written something along the lines of "Avram left Ur Casdim to go to Canaan, and Terach tagged along," as opposed to the actual language of the Torah, "Terach took Avram, and they left Ur Casdim to go to Canaan" (cf. 11:31). The latter formulation implies that Terach was the impetus for the trip, not God's command to Avram.

Second, a Pasuk in Sefer Yehoshua states "*BeEiver HaNahar Yashvu Avoteichem MeiOlam--Terach Avi Avraham,*" "In Eiver HaNahar (literally "beyond the river"), your ancestors--Terach, the father of Avraham--always lived" (Yehoshua 24:2). According to Ramban, the phrase "Eiver HaNahar" proves that Avraham's ancestral land was *not* Ur Casdim, as Ibn Ezra argues, because if it was Ur Casdim, Yehoshua would have said "Your ancestors always lived in Ur Casdim." According to Ramban, Avraham was actually born in Eiver HaNahar. Through the juxtaposition of several Pesukim elsewhere in Tanach,¹ Ramban deciphers that Eiver HaNahar refers to Charan in the land of Aram, over 500 miles northwest of Ur Casdim. Therefore, Ramban concludes, Avram's birthplace is Charan, and he is in Charan when God commands him to leave for Canaan.

But if Avram's homeland is Charan, why does Terach take him *from* Ur Casdim *to* Charan in the end of Parashat Noach? Shouldn't Terach and Avram have already been in Charan, their ancestral homeland?

Ramban answers that Avram and his brother Nachor were born in Charan, Terach's homeland, but then Terach and Avram moved to Ur in the land of Casdim, where Terach fathered Avraham's younger brother Haran. The rest of the story follows the widely-known Midrash (BeReishit Rabbah 38:13): One day in Casdim, Avram smashes all of Terach's idols, and in response, Terach brings Avram before the monarch of Casdim, King Nimrod. When Avram remains

¹ In Shmuel Bet 10:17, the phrase "Eiver HaNahar," "beyond the river," is used to describe the land of Aram. In BeReishit 24:10, Avraham's servant travels to the city of Nachor, which is in the land of Aram. In BeReishit 29:4-5, Yaakov Avinu travels to Charan and finds the family of Nachor. Thus, Eiver HaNahar = Aram = city of Nachor = Charan.

unrepentant, Nimrod decrees that he be thrown into a fiery furnace.² But God performs a miracle and Avram is saved. Upon seeing the awe-inspiring salvation of his older brother, Haran declares himself to be with Avram. He too is thrown into the furnace, but he is devoured by the flames.

The Midrash ends there, but Ramban (11:28 s.v. Al Penei Terach Aviv BeEretz Moladeto) continues the story: Terach and Avram, consumed with grief for Haran and fearing the wrath of King Nimrod, decide to leave Casdim and journey to Canaan, where they will be safe from Nimrod because the language of Casdim, Aramaic, is not spoken there. However, upon reaching his homeland of Charan, halfway to Canaan, Terach stops. Though Aramaic is spoken in Charan, Terach loses the will to complete his goal. He never makes it to Canaan.

It is at this point that Avram is commanded by God to finish the mission he and his father began: to leave his homeland and venture forth into the land of the unknown.

It is fascinating that the first of our ancestors to enter the Holy Land was nearly the idolatrous Terach! We know that Lech Lecha is included in the Asarah Nisyonot, the Ten Tests, that Avraham Avinu was tested with (Mishna Avot 5:3). If Terach nearly travelled to Canaan, why is it considered such a challenge for Avram to do so? What special difficulty does this task have to merit its inclusion in Avram's Ten Tests?

I believe the answer lies in the details. Terach *almost* made it to Israel, but he was seduced by the familiarity of Charan and chose to stop. Avram, on the other hand, overcame the "easy way out" to complete the mission of travelling to the Holy Land.

This Ramban teaches us a valuable lesson. The greatness of Avraham Avinu is not that he began to accomplish the tasks assigned to him; the greatness of Avraham is that he never did anything halfway. Once he commenced a task, he would always complete it, regardless of how much more difficult it became along the way.³ May we be blessed with the grit and perseverance to complete all tasks we begin, as Avraham Avinu did before us.

LANDER COLLEGE MODEL BEIT DIN 2017: HALACHAH AND THE INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE— TABC'S FOURTH CONSECUTIVE VICTORY, PART TWO

by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Introduction: An Intense Three-Way Debate

Last week, we introduced the topic of the 2017 Lander College Model Beit Din Competition, the intense debate regarding the location of the Halachic date line. The victorious TABC students were expected to master the opinions of the three major opinions: the Chazon Ish, who believes that the date line lies 90 degrees east of Jerusalem; Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky, who argues that it lies 180 degrees from Jerusalem; and Rav Zvi Pesach Frank, who believes that Halachah accepts the international community's designation of 180 degrees from Greenwich, England as the date line.

The Chazon Ish's Response to Rav Tukachinsky's Arguments

Last week, we summarized the major arguments put forth by Rav Tukachinsky. This week, we present the very extensive and very intense response of the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish counters that while there is a need for a date line, there is no need for a "center" or prime meridian 180 degrees from the date line. He explains that he does not divide the world into parts of 90 and 270 degrees, as Rav

Tukachinsky claims he does. Since there is no "center" (i.e. no prime meridian), we do not speak of east or west.

The Chazon Ish blends the Yesod Olam with the Ba'al HaMaor/Kuzari approach, arguing that all agree that the date line begins from the "Ketzei HaMizrach" (literally "eastern edge," meaning 90 degrees east of Jerusalem) and runs along the coasts of the Asian and Australian continents (applying the Halachic concept of Gereirah). This way, the date line does not run through the middle of a community (a possibility that was roundly rejected by the Yesod Olam).⁴

The Chazon Ish views the border between land and sea as a reasonable place for the date line, as opposed to the middle of the sea, where people on one boat may be located in different days.⁵ He argues that Rav Tukachinsky's interpretation of the Yesod Olam's phrase "Ketzei HaMizrach" as referring to the middle of the Pacific Ocean, is baseless and unreasonable. The Ketzei HaMizrach, the Chazon Ish insists, refers to the eastern edge of the Asian continent, which may be seen as an extension of Jerusalem (it lies in the same continent).

The Chazon Ish argues that the idea of the date line lying 90 degrees east of Jerusalem does not emerge from Rosh HaShanah 20b but rather reflects an ancient tradition (Kabalah) to which all Rishonim agree and which the Baal HaMa'or and Sefer HaKuzari use to explain Rosh HaShanah 20b.

Rashi and the Rishonim who interpret Rosh Hashanah 20b differently than the Ba'al HaMaor all agree that the date line lies 90 degrees east of Yerushalayim, but they simply do not apply this idea to interpret Rosh HaShanah 20b. Moreover, the Ritva and Ran to Rosh HaShanah 20b explicitly agree with the Ba'al HaMa'or, and the Ra'avad also interprets Rosh HaShanah 20b in accordance with the Ba'al HaMa'or. The Chazon Ish argues that not one Rishon rejects the idea of the date line lying 90 degrees east of Yerushalayim.

The Chazon Ish clarifies that the significance of the 90-degree line from Jerusalem stems from the fact that the Creation of the world began there, as stated by the Yesod Olam. He also notes an advantage of his approach: Unlike the opinion of Rav Tukachinsky, Alaska poses no problem, as it lies squarely west of the Chazon Ish's date line.

The View of Rav Zvi Pesach Frank

Rav Zvi Pesach Frank (Teshuvot Har Zvi Orach Chaim 1:138) rules that Halachah recognizes the international community's designation of 180 degrees from Greenwich, England as the date line. Although this sounds shocking for Halachah to embrace a foreign idea that is not rooted in classical Torah sources, Rav Frank is not the only major Halachic authority to subscribe to this view. Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer (in his letter of approbation to Rav Menachem Mendel Kasher's Kav HaTa'arich HaYisraeli) and Rav Moshe Feinstein (recorded in Rav Baruch Simon's Imrei Baruch, HaMinhag BeHalachah page 236) agree with Rav Frank's ruling.

The view of Rav Frank, Rav Isser Zalman, and Rav Moshe is based on the Radbaz (Teshuvot HaRadbaz 1:76), who states "Shabbat is given to every Jew to observe, as the Pasuk states 'Ot Hi Beini UVeineichem' (Shemot 31:13). Because Shabbat serves as an Ot for every individual Jew, wherever he is, he counts six days and observes the Shabbat on the seventh day." Radbaz is supported by Shabbat 69a, where the Gemara describes the case of a person who is traveling in a Midbar

² "Ur" means "fire" in Hebrew. According to Rambam, "Ur Casdim" refers to the furnace into which Avram was thrown, not necessarily the name of a city.

³ Many of Avraham's Ten Tests follow this pattern: they seem relatively easy at first but turn out to be much more difficult than expected. For example, Avram is told to live in Canaan, but then a famine strikes. He descends to Egypt to buy food, but then his wife is taken. Each test becomes harder along the way. His greatness is that he persists and passes the tests despite the increasing challenges.

⁴ Some Poskim, though, including the Brisker Rav and Rav Aharon Kotler, hold to the strict 90-degree-east-of-Jerusalem date line, without the Chazon Ish's modification of "Ein Mechalkim HaYabeshet," we do not divide a continent.

⁵ Fascinatingly, Rav Hershel Schachter limits the Chazon Ish's extension of the 90-degree line to the ground and does not apply it to the air. Thus, according to this view, if one who is located in Eastern Australia takes off on an airplane he immediately enters Shabbat.



(desert) and forgets which day is Shabbat. The Gemara rules that one counts six days and observes the seventh day as Shabbat.

Rav Frank notes that the Gemara, Rambam, and Shulchan Aruch never mention a date line, proving (in his opinion) that the Halachah does not have a concept of a date line! Rather, one follows the practice of the community in which he finds himself for Shabbat. Thus, if the international community accepts the assignment of days in a certain manner, this is acceptable to Torah Jews as well, even in regard to Shabbat. As support for the Rav Frank-Rav Meltzer-Rav Feinstein approach, we cite Rav Yaakov Emden (Mor UKetz'ah Or HaChaim 344), who writes that a traveler should abide by the community he left until he reaches a community that regards the days differently.

A Lesser-Known but Cogent Opinion: Rav Teumim-Rabinowitz

Rav Binyamin Teumim-Rabinowitz (father-in-law of Rav Elazar Meyer Teitz and father of Rabbanit Elishava Teitz, a distinguished editor of the Encyclopedia Talmudit) rules based on the Yesod Olam that we should start the date line with the Ketzei HaMizrach—the northeastern edge of the Asian continent, the Siberian coast bordering the Bering Straits—and extend the date line straight south (instead of along the Asian coast as argued by the Chazon Ish).^{6,7}

Opinions of Contemporary Halachic Authorities

I heard Rav Hershel Schachter advise that one should make every effort to avoid spending Shabbat in countries that lie in the “Safeik (uncertain) zone,” from the eastern Asian coast to the 180-degree line from Eretz Yisrael.⁸ These locations include Japan, Hawaii, American Samoa and New Zealand. However, this view does not seem to be practical anymore, as travel to these countries has become commonplace. In fact, Rav Moshe Heinemann does not advocate such a stance even as an ideal.⁹ Moreover, Rav David Pahmer, a Talmid of Rav Schachter, presents the Chazon Ish as constituting the majority view,¹⁰ whereas Rav Heinemann (see footnote 6) does not present the Chazon Ish as the dominant view.

Rav Elazar Meyer Teitz told me that he views the Chazon Ish as a “Da’at Yachid” (minority view), noting that all of the great Rabbanei Yerushalayim rejected the Chazon Ish’s opinion when they issued their response to the Mirrer Talmidim in September 1941. Interestingly, Rav Herzog, the Ashkenazic chief rabbi at the time, instructed the Talmidim to eat less than a Shiur (the amount of food that would cause one to violate Yom Kippur) on the day on which Yom Kippur fell according to the opinion of Chazon Ish, whereas the Chazon Ish told them to fully eat on the day on which Yom Kippur fell according to the Rabbanei Yerushalayim (cited in Encyclopedia Talmudit 22:680 footnote 55).

⁶ An advantage of Rav Teumim Rabinowitz’s approach is that it avoids the issue regarding Alaska which vexes Rav Tukachinsky.

⁷ My iy”H soon-to-be-son-in-law Yisroel Perton notes that Rav Teumim-Rabinowitz’s argument is reminiscent of and perhaps supported by the Gemara (Gittin 8a, codified by Rambam Hilchot Terumot 1:7) that determines the status of islands to the west of Eretz Yisrael by drawing an imaginary line southward from the northwestern tip of Eretz Yisrael to its southwestern tip. Islands that lie east of this imaginary line are considered to be part of Eretz Yisrael. It is reasonable to argue that just as this imaginary line is drawn straight south from the northwestern tip of Israel to include islands within Israel, so too, the date line is drawn straight south from the northeastern edge of the Asian continent to include islands such as Japan and New Zealand within Asia and hence, included in the same day.

⁸ The Star-K posts a very helpful map that clearly delineates the areas of doubt, which may be accessed at <https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/493/a-travelers-guide-to-the-international-date-line/>.

⁹ Rav Heinemann’s view is presented in an essay posted on the Star K website: <https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/493/a-travelers-guide-to-the-international-date-line/>

¹⁰ Rav Pahmer’s states this in his article that appears in the Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society number XXI.

Varieties of Pesakim LeMa’aseh Given by Contemporary Poskim for those in the “Safeik Zones” (such as Japan) for Shabbat

As is apparent from our discussions, it is difficult to arrive at a definitive resolution of these issues, as all of the opinions present compelling arguments. Contemporary Poskim offer a variety of means to blend the opinions and arrive at a sort of compromise view between the various opinions.

Rav Chaim Kanivesky: Meilkar HaDin (essentially), advises following the Chazon Ish, but recommends refraining from all Melachah (work) when it is Shabbat according to Rav Tukachinsky.

Rav Mordechai Willig: Meilkar HaDin, follow Rav Tukachinsky, but avoid all Melachah when it is on Shabbat according to the Chazon Ish.

Rav Heinemann: Meilkar HaDin, follow majority opinion,¹¹ but refrain from Melachah DeOraita (Torah-level prohibited activity) according to the minority opinion.

Rav Baruch Simon: Meilkar HaDin, follow Rav Rabinowitz-Teumim, but Lechatchilah (ab initio), refrain from Melachah on days when it is Shabbat according to the other opinions.

Postscript: A Sephardic Approach in the Absence of a Ruling from Rav Ovadia Yosef

As the rabbi of a Sephardic congregation, I have often wondered how Sephardim should approach this issue, since to my knowledge, Hacham Ovadia Yosef did not address this issue in any of his voluminous writings. Rav Shmuel Khoshkermann of Atlanta told me that Sephardic Jews essentially follow the ruling of Rav Zvi Pesach Frank to follow the practice of the local observant community. According to Rav Khoshkermann, it is best to be strict for the opinion of the Chazon Ish (in Japan or New Zealand) and Rav Tukachinsky (in Hawaii), but those who wish to completely adhere to Rav Frank have a legitimate source upon which to rely. Rav Khoshkermann noted that he would issue this exact ruling to an Ashkenazic Jew as well.

When we had the privilege of hosting Rav Shlomo Amar at Congregation Shaarei Orah in Teaneck, New Jersey, (in August 2017) I asked him how he rules regarding the international date line. He responded that the approach of Rav Zvi Pesach Frank has been accepted worldwide, thereby affirming the ruling of Rav Khoshkermann.

Conclusion

Kudos once again to the Torah Academy of Bergen County student members of the Model Beit Din team, who mastered all the opinions and approaches that we presented in these past issues. May the Talmidim continue to grow and merit to master the entire corpus of Halachah.

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¹¹ This essentially accepts Rav Frank’s opinion as the determining factor. West of the international date line, Rav Tukachinsky combines with Rav Frank to constitute the majority opinion, while east of the international date line, Rav Frank combines with the Chazon Ish to constitute the majority opinion.