Micah Hyman ­– R’ Carmy Mesorah Notes

Seven of Trei Asar (We only did: Yonah, Yoel, Ovadiah and Tzefaniah).

I have every test question that I could find on this document with reasonably brief answers. I don’t have all the material that appears in all the notes, but I try and cover the essentials. (My Ovadiah is bad though, sorry).

**(2008-2) Why did Jonah flee? Discuss views based on chazal, Ibn Ezra, Abarbanel and R’ Eliezer of Beaugance and analyze in light of the books as a whole (including chapter 4)?**

Chazal-he didn’t want to embarrass Bnei Yisrael in front of Ninveh doing Tshuvah (Maharal: Jews don’t do Tshuva bc they are an Am Kshei Oreif.) Ibn Ezra – too annoying, embarrassing to tell that sort of thing to Ninveh + it would be awkward if they didn’t do Tshuvah so nothing happened. Abarbanel – If they didn’t do Tshuvah they would all be killed and so wouldn’t be able to attack Israel. (Rav Carmy doesn’t like that because how does Yonah know that they are going to overturn Malchus Yisroel, plus Hashem could just choose another nation). This does work well for the parallel between Eliyahu and Yonah that Chazal draw – that Yonah was too Makpid on Kavod HaBen (Israel) and Eliyahu was too Makpid on Kavod HaAv (Hashem).

Rav Carmy suggests that Yonah might not even know, he’s just fleeing somewhat impulsively.

Rav Eliezer Beaugance has a ridiculous suggestion that he wasn’t actually fleeing, rather taking a very nice transportation method. In the end, Yonah with his depression, seemingly works well for Chazal or Abarbanel, that even post Tshuvah he is sad because it is bad for Bnei Yisrael. Pashtus, Yonah is sad about the Kikayon even though he has a slight relationship with it, so he should understand that Hashem would’ve been sad about Ninveh because he had even more of a relationship with them.

The end: Calvin says it’s a book of obedience, that Jonah follows God. Luther just focuses on Jews being bad while Goyim repent.

**(2008-1, 2005-2) Discuss Jonah 2: Note order of narration and structure of the prayer. What problems did this raise and how did we resolve them? How does our approach depend on dispute between Rashi and Ibn Ezra regarding last verses of the prayer?**

We noted that Yonah is still in the fish, so it’s strange that his prayer lacks penitence. Instead he seems to just be saying Shevach. A couple of approaches: he is just talking past tense, but really means future. Or Yonah is being classic passive Yonah – he’s happy to just be in the fish because he hasn’t really done Tsuvah and doesn’t really want to go to Ninveh. The Machlokes Ibn Ezra Rashi is whether Yonah is insulting general Goyim that they don’t recognize Hashem (Rashi), or insulting the sailors Tshuvah that they will lose it (metzudas David) or respecting the sailors Tshuvuah (Ibn Ezra). It fits nicely if Yonah is insulting the sailors’ Tshuvah, then he doesn’t want to go to Ninveh because he still isn’t a believer in the Goyim’s Tshuvah. For Ibn Ezra, you have to say perhaps along the lines of the past tense Tehillim.

Scholars say that perhaps this is a generic Tehillim that was inserted here, but Rav Carmy thinks that it wouldn’t be a good fit. Plus, Rashi says that Chasdam is not nice, which doesn’t fit into general Mizmorim which are positive (any negativity is in a Schar V’Oneish wisdom literature sort of way).

(There is also the detail here from Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer that he was originally in a comfy male fish, but then was moved to a female fish where he was squished by the eggs – based on the Pasuk switching from Dag to Dagah (which is technically grammatically insignificant).

**(2005-1) - Is the repentance of the Ninevites authentic? Note all the relevant verses in ch. 3 and the Rabbinic commentaries. Discuss Urbach's thesis; you are not required to examine in detail class analysis.**

Ninveh might not be so bad. They only repent from Chamas, and Ibn Ezra says that they were not Avodah Zara worshippers, that’s what Ir Elokim means. (Radak/Rambam explain Ir Elokim to mean that it is a massive city a 3 day walk (not across, it’s not that big but going door to door). Abarbanel explains that really they were Avodah Zara worshippers, just Hashem wasn’t focused on that, because that wouldn’t destroy them like the Chamas would).

Ninveh seems to believe his message (Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer says that it was strengthened by the sailors showing up). The one sketchy thing is that they put sackcloth on the animals and made them fast. This could be because the king just wanted to add something, but the Yerushalmi says that it was bad Tshuva and they were holding the animals hostage to make Hashem set them all free. The Bavli, however, seems positive because it says that didn’t even avail themselves of Takanas Marish (not returning beams built into the house), but perhaps we could make that negative also and say it was a heat of the moment kind of Tshuvah that wasn’t rational and wouldn’t last.

Urbach argued that the Mishnah was positive (Taanis: “Do Tshuvah like Ninveh”), Tosefta was silent but Yerushalmi was negative because they now had to deal with Christianity. Luke tries to point to Jonah as an idea that Jews don’t repent but Goyim do (indeed, Maharal says that Jews are Am Kshei Oref). R’ Carmy didn’t like it because first of all, the Bavli Takanas Marish might also be bad as we said, plus the fact that the Yerushalmi brings it down and not Bavli could just be because yerushalmi is more Aggadic.

**(2002-2) Discuss salient similarities and differences between texts describing Elijah and Jonah. How does this analysis affect our analysis of the book as a whole?**

Jonah flees and asks for death, both then and in chapter 4. Eliyahu after he kills Nivei Baal and Izevel is going to kill him, he flees to a cave and wants to die because he failed. Hashem asks him why he fled and he claims that the Jews have abandoned the Bris.

Rav Yehoshua Bachrach argues that they are the same personality and both reject Midas HaRachamim – Eliyahu thinks the Jews aren’t worthy and Yonah thinks that about Ninveh. R’ Carmy doesn’t like this for two reasons: firstly, it seems like Eliyahu is a good prophet overall.

Second of all Binyamin Benedict noted that Eliyahu isn’t criticizing Hashem, he is just saying that his personality is a Kanoi so he isn’t a good fit for the good cop approach. Yonah criticizes Hashem’s actions for being kind to the Goyim, and wants to die not because his own failures but because he doesn’t like the way the world is. Hashem rejects Yonah’s worldview entirely, as opposed to Eliyahu where he just needs a different personality right now.

**Discuss the role of the land of Israel and the people of Israel in Jonah both as it is reflected in careful analysis of the text and as refracted through chazal.**

In his Shirah, Yonah keeps mentioning Heichal Kodshecha which some of the Meforshim say is Israel/Mikdash. But in Chazal, they say that Yonah is more preoccupied with Am Yisrael (Makpid on Kavod HaBen). The difference between them, R’ Carmy explained: Regularly a Zionist would love both. But when Am Yisrael is being disappointing, then you focus on the national identity. So Chazal focus on what would be normal to like, but the Pesukim are focused on historically right now when Am Yisrael stinks.

**(2008-5) – Discuss content and structure of Joel 1-2 according to Abarbanel and the other Rishonim. Why are there two separate according to both views? Pay special attention to theme of repentance in chapter 2.**

**(2005-3) Discuss structure of Joel 2: include development of the imagery, the implicit narrative, and the theological (and halakhic significance of the literary structure, in line with our analysis).**

**(2005) 6 – Analyze structure of Joel 1:5-13 detail. Show significance of this analysis for the content of the prophecy.**

**(Note: technically the happy famine stuff answers the second one, and the two Dinim stuff answers the first and second, but they’re connected enough that I’ve just combined them.)**

Abarbanel thinks that they are actually a metaphor for an invading army, everyone else thinks that they are a locust swarm. This solves one problem: that by Egypt it promised that there would never be another grand locust swarm. The battle imagery in Perek 2 also makes sense, except that it has as Chaf HaDimyon, when acc to Abarbenel they are Mamish warriors. Answer: people weren’t accustomed to horseback riders, so they thought it was centaurs or something along those lines. For everyone else it’s just more locusts. For both Shitahs: why the double language of Perek 1 and 2? For Abarbanel – 2 Dinim in army, 1-econmoic destruction, 2-killing. For everyone else: Perek 1 is the problem of the locusts, Perek 2 is that they are like an army – i.e. organized and being led by Hashem. However, we noted that these locusts are not the most terrible thing, because it’s a kind of happy famine (just a loss of joy, not real starving + no use of the word Re’eiv). We suggested that this is perhaps because this isn’t such a sinning people, it’s Bayis Sheni and there isn’t Avodah Zara. This is supposed to just be a return *to* Hashem, not away from other things. This is along the lines of the Rambam in Taanis that tribulations are an opportunity to examine ourselves and grow closer to God, even though we don’t pin the tribulations on a specific sin. (As opposed to Rambam Hilchos Tshuvah where he focuses on Tshuva as an awareness of sin.) And that’s the point of the locusts being led by Hashem, this is all to come recognize Hashem. That’s why in Perek 1 they just cry out with Zaaka (which acc to the Rav is just a basic animal cry), but in Perek 2 they cry out in Tefillah (which acc to the Rav is a more to Hashem). Yoel is the nice Navi!

**(2008) 7 – Note salient features of Gog u-Magog prophecies. How is Joel distinctive? Explain a few of the differences between the imagery in Joel and that of either Zachariah or Ezekiel.**

In Yoel, Gog comes (from Armenia) leading the other nations. They aren’t connected to Israel and aren’t a superpower. In the other two, all the nations come together. The nations are attacking the Jews who have just returned from Galus and should be at peace. In Yoel there is a little earthquake (4), in the other two bigger ones (Zechariya 14, Yechezkel 38). Yechezkel has a Kiddush Hashem idea, of it being a Kiddush Hashem when we beat all the nations. He also talks about how it will take 7 months to burn all the weapons. There is a difference in the water for all of them: in Yoel it flows from Jerusalem to the east, in Yechezkel it flows from the east (and it is so much and purifies the Dead Sea), in Zechariya it flows east and west from Jerusalem.

There is a difference in the descriptions of the war. In Yoel, everything is described pretty gloriously with Hashem triumphing. In Yechezkel, there is more of a fight but still the Jews win. In Zechariya, the Jews actually lose at first and their houses are captured before they manage to win. Zechariya has Rabbi Carmy’s favorite nuclear warfare imagery with the eyes melted in the eye sockets. The point is that in Yoel, the people aren’t sinning, they just need to recognize Hashem’s Hashgacha more, so after Hashem roars and they recognize him, everything that needed to happen has happened. This connects also to the Rambam by everyone becoming Neviim. Rambam normally thinks that only elites become Neviim, so he says here that really they will just have some truer dreams. However, other places he sounds more positive on this. The answer is that it might just mean that they become sensitive to Hashgacha. Rav Carmy believes that all the Nevuot are based on Sanchereiv who boasted of united the nations.

**(2008) 6 – Discuss factors pertinent to the dating of Obadiah, noting both our discussion and the rabbinic material. What historical events are referred to according to Radak and Abarbanel (explain)?**

Midrash identifies Ovadiah with the guy who hid Neviim during the time of Eliyahu, but the problem with that is the Ovadiah seemingly refers to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash by Edom which only happens much later. Or he’s a Geir.

Radak says it’s Churban Bayis Sheini which was destroyed by Edom. But how come he calls them bystanders? Different groups! Abarbanel says it’s Churban Bayis Rishon and Sheini, and so when they are bystanders its Rishon and when they are main guys its Sheini.

**Discuss Rashbam's view on the stories about Edom during Israel's desert period and our literary analysis. Briefly indicate our knowledge of Edom during the First Temple period and its relevance to the appearance of Edom in Zephaniah.**

**(2005) 5 – What features distinguish the "metaphysical Edom" theme in prophecies about**

**Edom? How did we interpret the significance of this theme? Why does it appear where, and when, it does?**

**(Pasted below are two copies of the Mesorah, I didn’t have the time to go through them).**

**Answer**: Many of the nevuos about Edom are about the historical Edom and they are not a particularly important nation. But there is also something beyond the nation, although it’s not clear what the element is. There is a short of “super-Edom” element. There are elements in the 1st Temple Period prophecies, like Ovadiah’s implication that Edom took part. Chazal identify Edom with Rome and see the Churban as galus Edom. This association is based on the Amalek connection that has proof. Edom is given so much attention – even though they seem small – because we conclude they are important. So we must identify with a superpower – Rome. Herod who was an Edomite, became king, of Judea after the Chashmonaim. It could be Chzal saw him as the go between of 1st Temple edomites and Rome, which could be how the connection started.

There are 3 different approached to why the Rishonim said Edom was Rome. **Ibn Ezra** says Edom is not identical to Rome. This doesn’t contradict Chazal, because Ibn Ezra syas that Edom does equal Chirstianity. In Chazal the term Rome was key for Church. Ibn Ezra said Edom equaled church because the early Christians were disproportionally Edomites. In the 4th century the Church takes over Rome. This is after the Chruban, so at the time of the Churban Edom was a minor power. Therefore the posukim in Ovadiah shows that Edom was a minor factor in the Churban – which fits the simple interpretation of the verses. **Radak** says that Edom really is Rome. The posukim in Ovadiah seem to be from 2nd Temple Period, which means Edom is a superpower. However we see they are minor players. The answer could be that they were both Super and Minor powers. Edom became Rome while Edomites were remaining in Edom. Chazal knew this and worked with it. **Abarbanel** says the prophecy about Edom in Ovadiah is about both 1st and 2nd Temple destructions. When Edom is the 2nd player, it’s the 1st churban, when they are the major factor it’s the 2nd churban. He assumes Edom does equal Rome.

In the Torah When B’nei Yisroel wants to pass through Edom, Edom doesn’t let because of their eternal animosity. Melech Edom represents death and evil, and it is impossible for man to eradicate evil. B’nei Yisroel come to Edom and go around, instead of going through. In Devarim, we can’t start up with Edom because Hashem said so. Every nation has their own land. It’s possible that there is a more metaphysical way to look at Edom, not just as a small nation somewhere. The encounter with Edom means there is a totally irrational resistence in the historical realm of Edom. The Edom of Bamidbar is one whose metaphysical pretentions are ones that are greater than some kings with a small nation. The theme of Bamidbar is the metaphysics of evil. In Devarim the Jews were not able to conquer these people and lands because Hashem said so. They really could do it, but Hashem said no. The theme of Devarim is the Jews coming back to Israel there home. In Ovadiah we see a hint to the metaphysical Edom in Parshas Chukkas. We see a lot of metaphysics of death, which is connected to the metaphysics of evil. So if you find the prophecies that treat Edom as a local nation, then you should not be surprised if you see them as a metaphysical Edom.

Amalek has a similar feel of gog u’magog. They have no vested interets in attacking us, they just want to bother us. This fits inot the metaphysical Edom

Also, the Rav said that the Yesod of Parah Aduma is that you need someone else to be Mitaher you, so too Edom needs someone else to fix them.

**Second Mesorah notes:**

In Chukas, the Jews want to go through Edom land and promise not to take anything and pay for everything but are told they cannot enter. The Jews go onward and have the same experience with Sichon and Og but conquer it.

In devarim, the story is repeated, the Jews are told not to conquer the land of edom (or Sayir) because it has been given to them. It is then recounted that they went to Moav (or Ar) and a similar thing happened.

Q: The last thing is this section is the similar story with Amon called Zamzumim. The pesukim specifically say here that Edom is afraid of the Jews while we had only hostility before

A: . Many Rishonim answer that Jew did not enter Edom but Edomites stood on the border and sold them stuff. The simpler approach in the Rishomin developed by the **Rashbam** is that there are different groups of Edomites and there are different interactions with each group. He says the same about Moabites

* . **R’Dovid Zvi Hoffman** says based on this that some parts of Edom may have been weaker and thus were more cooperative with the Jews while other parts are more defensible and so they could afford to be hostile. Part of the reason Moshe is repeating these things in Devarim is because he is telling them why they happened and that you didn’t conquer these territories because Hashem told you not to. The scary nations are not being attacked because Hashem gave them a nachalah and so too Hashem has given you the Jews a nachalah (See Seforno and Ramban).

During bayis rishon, Edom is not a powerful country. The first mentioned we have of him is in Bereshis, then again by yetzias mitzrayim. He plays a very minor role during neviem rishonim and he plays a subservient role to Yehuda. Shmuel II describes a war against Edom where they are completely decimated. In Melachim II they come along with Moab as satellite country to attack Jews and it was not clear they had any say in the matter. In Melachim II 8, they rebelled against Yehuda and satyed that way ad hayom hazeh which could mean until the writing of Melachim (during the time of the churban) or some earlier date. Either way, they are not a major player. If you were a bible critic, this is embarrassing because Edom plays a very significant role in the chumash and has certain ideological roles and do not seem to be that important in Neviem Rishonim. Some nevuot do make Edom seem significant.

**(2008) 3 – Discuss structure of Zephaniah, including our analysis of the place and content of chapter 2. Include also the exegetical questions about the Ethiopia references and our comments on Rashi's approach.**

(Weird question, will just discuss Zefaniah as a whole) Zefaniah is defined by his speaking to the upper class (we see that he is a Ben Chizkiyahu, that’s why his lineage goes back for generations + we see him addressing Beni Sarim), so he speaks about fancy assimilation. This explains why he doesn’t mention Edom in his list of nations that he makes fun of, because they are Bazui so nobody imitates them. Hashem says he will punish the Canaanim, according to Rashi, it fits well, because it means the Jews who are assimilating and acting like Canaanim. Also, the reason we segue into the Goyim parts without an introduction or a separation: because we aren’t really focusing on the Goyim, we are just focusing on the Jews assimilating and acting like the Goyim. Even for Ibn Ezra, who says that it means merchants (based on the Targum by Yehuda), it’s focused on the wealthy merchants.

Questions that I don’t have clear:

**(2008-8) - Discuss in detail the imagery of the "cup" in Jeremiah 25, in Jeremiah 49 and Eikha with special attention to the passage in Obadiah, as interpreted by Rashi, Ibn Ezra and others and implications of this debate for our approach to Edom prophecies.**

Jeremiah 25 – Goyim and Jews drink, Jeremiah 49 – only Goyim. Machlokes Rashi Ibn Ezra which one here.

**(2005-8) - Compare in detail Joel 2:10-11- with the parallel verses in chapter 4: how does the imagery in each chapter fit the content? Also discuss the Yom haShem imagery in Zephaniah 1.**

Good if you did Tshuvah, bad if you didn’t. Also, Zeidel’s law that when we requote something we switch the order explains some of the differences.

**(2005) 4 – Compare Obadiah with Jeremiah 49. Note matters of structure and content, and our chronological and theological inferences.**

**Answer**: We have a prophecy in Jeremiah 49 that is similar to Ovadiah. We have verses in Ovadiah that relate to the Churban that don’t relate in Jeremiah, and we have Verse in Jeremiah that is not in Ovadiah. Ovadiah’s order is more logial because it starts with “shimua shamati,” while Jeremiah has it in a weird order. The difference that is created in Jeremiah going out of order is a few things. I Jeremiah Hashem seems to be the agent of punishment for the Edomite, while in Ovadiah because of the word “umoshi’im,” it seems the Jews (with Hashem) will be the agent. In Jeremiah it says “ani” emphasizing that Hashem will carry it out by him, while in Ovadiah there is no mention of “ani.” The idea of Jeremiah 49:13 also shows Hashem is taking a leading role. Now we understand why the swearing of Hashem is in different places in Jeremiah as opposed to Ovadiah. In Ovadiah it is a call to all the nations, so it is at the beginning, while in Jeremiah there are 2 separate nevuot, and the call for the nations to join against Edom is only in the second prophecy. In the first prophecy Hashem acts alone. A further comparison brings to light these “tziraei hatzon” mentioned in Jeremiah. **Rashi** says it refers to the Jews, who are the most significant nation and are called upon. **Radak** says this term refers to the Persians, who are not particualry important. There is no parallel in Ovadiah. The behavior of Edom in the Churban is not found in Jeremiah. Ovadiah also is not mentioned. The explanation is that in Yirmiyahu, Hashem is the lone actor, with no partner. Also Jeremiah was before the Churban, while Ovadiah was after the Churban. So what Edom did, had not happened yet for Jeremiah. This might explain he progression from Jeremiah to Ovadiah. After Hashem has acted, then there is a call for all of Israel to join him.

**(2002-8) Discuss in detail the word *nahala* in Joel 2. Be sure to include both the literary evidence** **in Joel and relevant passages elsewhere in Tanakh.**

We didn’t even discuss this.