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IS THERE A NEED FOR A PREPARATION DAY BEFORE HOLY DAYS?

The Jewish calendar, besides getting the calculation of the new moons wrong (i.e. the molad calculations do NOT give the correct new moon times), also postpones the theoretical new moon dates when they happen to fall on inconvenient days of the week.

Now one of the justifications used for postponing the Day of Trumpets is the claim that Friday is the preparation day, and it would be a hardship to not have Friday available for preparing for the weekly Sabbath days. Thus, it would supposedly be a hardship to have the Day of Atonement on a Friday, thereby eliminating the opportunity to use that Friday to prepare for the Sabbath. It would supposedly be a similar hardship to have Atonement fall on a Sunday, because then there would be no day to prepare in advance for the meal after the day of Atonement has ended.

Really?

First of all, it is not as if preparing for the Sabbath is the only purpose that a Friday has! Friday is a day in its own right, with work and activities like the other weekdays. A PORTION of a Friday is devoted to preparing for the Sabbath; but there should be more to a Friday than just preparing for another day. It is not as if eating is all there is to life and that therefore the preparation of food is the most important activity of the day. Do you remember what Jesus Christ said to Martha, who was so totally involved in the preparation of food (see Luke 10:38-42)? Is there not a lesson in these verses?

Next, what is the problem with using THURSDAY to prepare for the weekly Sabbath in a week where Friday happens to be a Holy Day? Does God have to spell it out in every little detail, like you would to a small child, before we can understand that on occasions where we can't prepare one day in advance we should simply plan to prepare TWO days in advance?

It is really no more work at all to prepare TWO days ahead of an activity than it is to prepare one day in advance. And after all, people should ALWAYS do that on the Friday before Pentecost, preparing on the Friday the things they plan to eat on the Saturday and also on the Sunday. The same applies to when the first or seventh Day of Unleavened Bread forms a double Sabbath in combination with a weekly Sabbath, which happens fairly frequently.

For us today, with our fridges and freezers and all our electrical appliances it is no hardship at all to have food prepared for several days in advance. It is very easy to take something out of the fridge and then to serve it directly.

But let's consider the situation in biblical times!

Keep in mind that the Levitical priests REGULARLY were to eat bread that was ONE WEEK OLD! It was only after the bread had been used as shewbread for one whole week that it was then given to the priests to eat. Remember also that Jesse sent his son David with ten loaves and some cheeses (see 1 Sam 17:17-18) for his (David's) brothers in the army. Those loaves of bread were also several days old before they ever reached the people they were intended for.

So could people in biblical times prepare food for the Sabbath on a Thursday or not?

There certainly would not have been any problems with baking bread on a Thursday and keeping it until Saturday. At that time people REGULARLY ate bread that was two or more days old. They didn't buy their bread from commercial bakeries. A woman would bake a large batch of bread and then not bake again until that was all eaten up.

What about cheeses, like the ones Jesse told David to take with him? There was no problem with keeping a cheese from a Thursday to a Saturday, was there? What about fresh fruits and honey? What about dried fruits and nuts? What about hard-boiled eggs? They can easily keep for two days.

What about the large range of vegetables that can be eaten raw, like carrots, tomatoes, mushrooms, cauliflower, onions, lettuce, cabbage, etc.?

What about raw oats, where you simply pour the milk over them before eating? And what about potatoes baked in their jackets and then eaten cold a day or two later? What about foods that have been pickled in brine? What about olives, a favourite in the Middle East?

Keep in mind that in biblical times whatever foods were prepared on the Friday for the Sabbath were then EATEN COLD on the Sabbath! Preparing foods for the Sabbath in those days did NOT mean that on the next day those foods were quickly heated up (as we do today). Those foods were all things that were then eaten COLD!

So if you are preparing foods that are going to be eaten cold anyway, what's the problem with preparing those foods two days in advance, instead of just one day in advance? Remember also that meat was NOT a part of their DAILY diet! They only ate meat when they slaughtered an animal and after that they didn't have any meat for another week or two or more until they again slaughtered an animal. This is the way it was for the vast majority of people. Only the very rich people had meat more frequently than that.

Historically most people have had a staple food which provided the greatest part of their regular food intake. That could be wheat or maize (corn) or rice or potatoes, etc.. And there are ways in which these staple foods can all be prepared ahead of time on occasions.

So what REALLY was the problem with using the Thursday as a preparation day for the Sabbath on those rare occasions where the Day of Atonement fell on a Friday?

Well, the problem was all the rituals and traditions which the Pharisees had built up around the Sabbath!

To use a Thursday before Atonement in order to prepare for the weekly Sabbath day simply did not fit in with THE TRADITIONS which the Pharisees held in such high esteem! Look again at what Jesus Christ said in Matthew 15:3,6 and in Mark 7:9,13. On half a dozen or more other occasions in the year the Pharisees were quite willing to observe a day on a Friday or on a Sunday, and in some cases even for TWO DAYS either before or after a weekly Sabbath; but when God clearly spelled out that the Day of Atonement is to be observed on a certain day of the month, THEN they are quite willing to shift that month around in order to avoid days that will be "INCONVENIENT".

Let's face the facts openly and realistically.

The Jews themselves invented the concept of "a Sabbath Day's journey". That is not an injunction from God. Yet, once they had invented this concept of "a Sabbath Day's journey", THEN they also thought up any number of ways to get around this restriction.

For example, on a Friday a man could prepare a small bucket of soil which he took from his own garden. Then, if he really wanted to travel a longer distance on the Sabbath, he would simply take this small

bucket with him on his trip. And every "Sabbath's Day's journey" he would simply scatter a teaspoon full of that soil in front of him. This represented that he was again at his own home, since the soil came from his own garden. So, in order to travel 20 times the distance of "a Sabbath Day's journey" a man needed no more than 19 or 20 teaspoons full of soil from his own garden. Isn't that a clever way to get around the "Sabbath Day's journey" restriction?

If you think that this reasoning is extremely carnal, then you are quite right! But that is the way all of the traditions which are preserved in the Talmud basically go. For example, in the Talmud (published by Soncino) in the book "Bezah", in chapter 1, a 20-page section is devoted to whether a chicken-egg that is laid on a festival day before a Sabbath day (i.e. including ALL of the Jewish festivals in this term "festival day") may be eaten on the same day or only on the following day. For 20 pages the argument goes back and forth: the motivation for keeping the hen is examined, whether it will be eaten raw or cooked is examined; etc., etc.. Some authorities said 'yes' to eating it but only on the Sabbath day, while others said 'yes' but only to eating it on the first day. In the end, you can do what you want to do, and you will have approval from someone. It is total carnal confusion. I know, I took the time to read it for myself.

It is like the thoughts about the time when God created Adam and Eve. In the Talmud section entitled "Synopsis of Subjects of TRACT ROSH HASHANA" it states:

> "R. Eliezer says, that the world was created in Tishri. R. Joshua says, that the world was created in Nissan [spelling]." [Comment: Tishri is in the autumn and Nisan is in the spring.]

So people who tell you that the Talmud says that God created Adam in the autumn are only telling you half the story. The Talmud ALSO says that God created Adam in the spring; you just have to search until you find WHERE this is said.

If you ever have 6 or 8 hours to spare, why don't you go to the nearest university library, where you might be able to find a copy of the Talmud, and just read and read? The total exclusion of what GOD actually wants us human beings to do almost shouts at you from every page of the Talmud! The discussion about this chicken-egg is by no means an isolated case, not at all.

Understand that what the Jewish religious authorities have done with "a Sabbath Day's journey", they have also done with the annual Holy Days of Leviticus chapter 23. If a certain day is not convenient to us, then let's shift it to another day! And we just drop a teaspoon of soil from our front garden along the way every now and then, and that then makes it okay.

God has clearly spelled out which days of the month we are to keep; so we can't really change them. BUT God didn't say that we can't shift THE WHOLE YEAR, did He? So let's just do THAT, and then we'll still get it the way WE want it! That is the underlying thinking behind the postponement rules of the Jewish calendar. And the appeal to "a preparation day" is just the convenient excuse.

The facts are:

1) The justification that a Friday Atonement Day prevents people from properly preparing for the weekly Sabbath immediately after Atonement is shallow and without any substance! There is absolutely nothing that would prevent people in such situations from using the Thursday to prepare for the weekly Sabbath meals.

2) There is no justification at all for postponing Atonement away from a Sunday. Since people are not supposed to eat anything on the Day of Atonement anyway, therefore there is in such circumstances no need to prepare anything for the Sunday ... it will be a fast day. And there is no justification for wanting a

day to prepare for the Monday, the day following a Sunday Atonement Day, since after Atonement has concluded people can easily eat the things they prepared on the Friday, about 50 hours earlier. It was a very common thing in biblical times for people to eat foods that had been prepared several days previously ... the priests did it all their lives with eating "old bread", as did also the soldiers who depended on family members bringing them some food supplies. Sailors always ate "old food" on their long voyages. So what's supposed to be the big deal in expecting people to eat food that was two days old after Atonement had fallen on a Sunday?

3) The Talmud makes quite clear that in New Testament times the Day of Atonement regularly fell on Fridays and on Sundays. So during the ministry of Jesus Christ and of the early apostles the Jews did NOT feel they needed a special "preparation day" for the Sabbath, and that therefore Atonement should never be on a Friday.

So is there really a need for a special preparation day? No, there is not! Does God want us to avoid ever having the Day of Atonement involved in a "double Sabbath"? No, nowhere has God ever indicated that it would be wrong for the Day of Atonement to form a double Sabbath together with a weekly Sabbath day.

The appeal to a preparation day is just a weak excuse to justify an ungodly human tradition.

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