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JUDGMENT DAYS

The Mishnah says the world is judged four times a year:

Time	Judgment
Pesach	Grain
Shavuos	Fruits
Rosh Hashanah	All creatures pass before Hashem, who understands all their thoughts and actions
Sukkos	Rainfall

GRAIN JUDGMENT

Which grain is referred to? Shall I say, the grain which is already grown? If so, then when were the hardships decreed which it has already suffered? It must be then the grain which is to be sown later. You assume then that only one judgment is passed. But it was taught in a Baraisa: If some calamity or misfortune happens to grain before Pesach, it was decided by the past Pesach's judgment, while anything that occurs afterwards was decided the next year [i.e., it is from this Pesach's judgment]. Similarly, if some calamity or misfortune happens to a person before Yom Kippur, it was decided by the past Yom Kippur's judgment, while anything that occurs afterwards was decided the next year [i.e., it is from this Yom Kippur's judgment]. Rava said: We see that grain is judged

twice (first on the Pesach before it's planted, and once on the Pesach after it's been planted). Therefore, Abaye says that if one sees that the crops planted early in the season are growing well, he should quickly plant the later crops earlier, to let them grow substantially during this favorably judged year. (16a1)

THE AUTHOR OF THE MISHNAH

The Gemora says the Mishnah's enumeration of judgment times seems inconsistent with the four opinions cited in a Baraisa:

1. Rabbi Meir says that Rosh Hashanah is the judgment day, and Yom Kippur the final seal of judgment, for all aspects of the year.
2. Rabbi Yehudah says that everything is judged on Rosh Hashanah, but the final seal is done for each aspect in its appropriate time: Pesach for grain, Shavuos for fruit, Yom Kippur for people, and Sukkos for rainfall.
3. Rabbi Yosi says that a person is judged every day, as the verse says: and You inspect him each morning.
4. Rabbi Nassan says a person is judged every moment, as the verse says: at moments, You will examine him.

The Gemora notes: Even if the Mishnah is referring to the time of the final seal, like Rabbi Yehudah, it still is not consistent with his position, since it lists Rosh Hashanah as the judgment for the creatures, and not Yom Kippur.

Rava answers that the Mishnah follows the Tanna of Rabbi Yishmael's academy, for it was taught in the academy of Rabbi Yishmael: At four times judgment is passed on the world, on Pesach in respect of grain, on Shavuos in respect of fruit, on Sukkos judgment is passed in respect of rain, and

man is judged on Rosh Hashanah and his decree is sealed on Yom Kippur. The statements of the Mishnah must then be taken to refer to the preliminary judgment. (16a1 – 16a2)

Rav Chisda asks: Why does Rabbi Yosi say that judgment is each day? – Did he not say his reason? [It is written:] You inspect him each morning! We meant as follows: Why did he not say like Rabbi Nassan? Because ‘examine’ may mean a superficial investigation (and not a judgment); accordingly, ‘inspection’ may mean a superficial investigation as well? Rather, Rav Chisda said: Rabbi Yosi’s reason is from here: [Shlomo says that] Hashem does the judgment of His servant (Shlomo) and His nation Israel, the matter of each day in its day.

And Rav Chisda said: If a king and a community are being judged, the king is judged first, as it is stated: Hashem does the judgment of His servant and His nation Israel. What is the reason? Either because it isn't proper to leave the king waiting outside, or because it is preferable for the king to be judged before the wrath has been incurred from judging the community. (16a2)

Rav Yosef says: We, who pray each day for the sick and weak, seem to follow Rabbi Yosi, who says that Hashem judges each day.

Alternatively, the Gemara says that it may be independent of this dispute, as Rabbi Yitzchak says that it is always fitting for a person to cry out to Hashem, before or after a judgment is rendered. (16a3)

MITZVOS ON JUDGMENT DAYS

The Gemora cites a Baraisa in which Rabbi Yehudah explains in the name of Rabbi Akiva why the Torah commanded various activities throughout the year, based on the judgments made:

Why did the Torah say: Bring the omer sacrifice (from grain) on Pesach? Because Pesach is the judgment time for grain. Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said, Bring before Me an ‘omer’ on Pesach so that your produce in the fields may be blessed. Why did the Torah say: Bring the two loaves on Shavuot? Because Shavuot is the judgment time for fruits on

the tree. Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Bring before Me two loaves on Shavuot so that the fruit of your trees may be blessed. Why did the Torah say: Offer a water libation on Sukkot? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Libate water before Me on Sukkot, so that your rains this year may be blessed. Pray on Rosh Hashanah with mention of kingdom, remembrance and shofar. ‘Kingdom’ is to accept My sovereignty over yourselves; ‘remembrance’ is to bring your remembrance to Me favorably, and with what? It is with the ‘shofar’. (16a3 – 16a4)

Rabbi Avahu said: Why do we blow with a shofar of a ram? – The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Blow before Me using a shofar of a ram, so that I will remember for you the binding of Yitzchak the son of Avraham (who was replaced by a ram), and I will consider it for you as if you had bound yourselves before Me. (16a4)

RABBI YITZCHAK

The Gemora cites statements of Rabbi Yitzchak:

1. Why do we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah? The Gemora challenges this question, as the Torah mandates that we blow the shofar, and therefore emends the question to be: Why we sound a *teru'ah* blast? The Gemora challenges this as well, as the Torah mandates this form of blowing as well, and therefore emends the question to be: Why do we blow the shofar once sitting (before mussaf) and once while standing (during mussaf)? Rabbi Yitzchak explains that we do this to confuse the Satan.
2. Any year in which the shofar was not blown at the start, will end off with troubles, since the Satan was not confused.
3. Any year which begins lowly will end off with wealth, as the verse refers to Hashem judging the land of Israel *meraishis* – from the start of the year until *acharis* – the end of the year, which can also be read as from *rashis* – the lowliness (humility) at the start will come *acharis* – a [good] ending.
4. A person is always judged only on his current actions,

and not his future actions, as we see from the angel who told Hagar that Hashem has heard the cries of Yishmael as he is (now), regardless of the evil that would come later.

5. Three things bring up a person's sins: a shaky wall over a person, deep concentration in prayer (leading him to assume it will be accepted), and one who hands his claim against someone to Hashem (as these cause his situation to be more closely investigated by the heavenly court). The Gemora supports this from Rabbi Chanan, who says that whoever hands his claim against someone to Hashem is punished first, as it is stated: Sarai said to Avram: My injustice is upon you [let Hashem should judge between me and you], and it is written: And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to cry on her [i.e., Sarah ultimately died before Avraham].

6. Four things tear up a negative decree against a person: charity, crying out to Hashem, changing a name, and changing actions.

The Gemora cites a verse for each one:

1. Charity: Charity will save from death.
2. Crying to Hashem: They cried out to Hashem when they were oppressed, and Hashem saved them from their straits.
3. Changing a name: After Sarai's name was changed to Sarah, Hashem said he will bless her with a son.
4. Changing actions: When Hashem saw that the people of Ninveh changed their actions to repent, he recanted the decree to destroy them.

Charity, as it is written: And charity delivers from death. Crying out, as it is written: Then they cried to Hashem in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. Change of name, as it is written: As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be; and it continues: And I will bless her and moreover I will give you a son through her. Change of conduct, as it is written: And God saw their deeds, and it continues: and God relented of the evil which He said He would do to them and He did not do it. Some include 'change of place,' as we see that Hashem promised Avraham that he would make him into a large

nation after he left his land and went to Eretz Yisrael. Others say that the blessing was a result of the merit of Eretz Yisrael, not 'moving' per se.

7. One must greet his teacher on Yom Tov, as we see that when the Shunamis's husband asked her why she was going to Elisha, he said, "It isn't Rosh Chodesh or Shabbos," implying that going on those days would be understood.

8. One must purify himself for Yom Tov, as the verse says that you should not touch the carcasses of non-kosher animals.

The Gemora supports this with a Baraisa, which cites the same verse: 'And their carcasses you shall not touch'. I might think that [ordinary] Israelites are cautioned not to touch carcasses. Therefore, it says: Say to the Kohanim the sons of Aaron; [which shows that] the sons of Aaron are cautioned but ordinary Israelites are not cautioned. May we not then argue a kal vachomer: Seeing that in the case of a serious tumah, while the Kohanim are cautioned Israelites are not cautioned, how much less [are they likely to be cautioned] in the case of a light tumah! What then am I to make of the words: 'and their carcasses you shall not touch'? — On the festival. (16b1 – 16b3)

THREE BOOKS ON ROSH HASHANAH

Rav Kruspeda'i cites Rabbi Yochanan who says that three books are opened on Rosh Hashanah: one for the absolute wicked, one for the absolute righteous, and one for the average people. The righteous are immediately signed and sealed for life, the wicked are immediately signed and sealed for death, while the average people's judgment is pending from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. If they merit, they are written for life, but otherwise they are written for death.

Rabbi Avin says the source for this is the verse which says that "they will be erased from a book of life, and with the righteous they will not be written," which can be read as: They will be erased from a book: the wicked; of life: the righteous; with the righteous they will not be written: the average people.

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says the source is the verse in



which Moshe says “and if not, please erase me from Your book, that You wrote,” which can be read as: Please erase me: the wicked; from Your book: the righteous; that You wrote: the average people. (16b3)

ULTIMATE JUDGMENT

The Gemora cites a Baraisa regarding the ultimate judgment. Bais Shammai says that there are three groups on the Day of Judgment: the absolute wicked, the absolute righteous, and the average people. The absolute righteous are signed and sealed immediately for eternal life, the absolute wicked are signed and sealed immediately to Gehinnom, as the verse says that many of those sleeping in the ground (i.e., the dead) will awaken, these for eternal life, and these for eternal shame. The average people go to Gehinnom, and then cry out and come up, as the verse says that “I will bring the third group in fire, and purify them like purifying silver, and like purifying gold, he will call in My name, and I will answer him.” Chanah referred to this group in her poem when she said that Hashem causes death and gives life, He brings down to the depths and brings up. (16b4 – 17a1)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

ROSH HASHANAH IN TISHREI

Why is man judged on the first of Tishrei? The Ran explains that people are judged on Rosh Hashanah since that is the day that the world was created according to Rabbi Eliezer. He offers a different reason according to Rabbi Yehoshua who maintains that the world was created in Nissan. Hashem wanted that Klal Yisroel should be judged favorably and therefore the first of Tishrei was chosen as the Day of Judgment since it is close to Yom Kippur which is the day that has been designated for forgiveness and atonement for all future generations.

The Maharsha asks that the Ran didn’t explain completely why the judgment begins ten days prior to Yom Kippur. The Maharsha writes that since we learned previously that

Hashem decreed that Sarah, Rochel and Leah will bear children and this was the day that Yosef was released from prison, it is fitting that Rosh Hashanah was designated to be the Day of Judgment.

The Tzlach answers that Rabbi Yehoshua maintains that Hashem thought about creating the world in Tishrei but He didn’t actually create it until Nissan. The reason the first of Tishrei was chosen over Nissan is because the first of Tishrei is close to Yom Kippur which is the day designated for forgiveness.

Abudraham writes in the name of the Rambam that Hashem is not like a regular king. A human king judges his friends when he is in a good mood and judges his enemy when he is angry. Hashem judges the entire world in the month of Tishrei which is a time of appeasement due to all the mitzvos and festivals contained in that month.

Meshech Chochmah in Parshas Emor cites a Medrash that Rosh Hashanah is immediately after the harvest season, indicating that it is in the merit of the mitzvos of sustaining and providing the poor from one's grain even without checking the poor person’s credentials (they didn't need a green card), Hashem provides life to all even if they might not deserve it.

SO MANY JUDGMENTS

The Mishnah states that there are four occasions in the year that the world is judged. On Pesach for the grain, on Shavuot for the fruits of the tree, on Rosh Hashanah all the people pass before Hashem and on Sukkos there is a judgment on water.

The commentators ask: If man is judged on Rosh Hashanah, it would be assumed that the judgment includes anything which affects him. What is the necessity to have other days to judge how much rain will fall on his field or how well his grain will grow when the judgment for this was issued on Rosh Hashanah?

The Ran answers that on the other three junctures of the year, the world as a whole is judged as to how much rain will fall in the entire world and how much grain will all field produce. On Rosh Hashanah, each person is judged individually as to what percentage of the world's rain or grain will affect him.

We recite in the tefilos on Rosh Hashanah: "Who will have a year of famine and who will merit a plentiful year?" This prayer would seem to indicate that there is a specific judgment regarding grain or rain to every person.

The Ritva writes in the name of Rabbeinu Tam that this tefillah can be referring to the hunger pangs that a person can feel when he would eat and remain unsatisfied. We are praying that the food with which we have should be able to sustain us.

VISITING THE TEACHER

The Gemora states that Rabbi Yitzchak said that one is obligated to visit his teacher during the festival. This is derived from the verse that states "Why are you going to him today? It is neither a New Moon nor a Shabbos!" This verse was said regarding the woman from Shuneim, who Elisha had blessed with a child and then the child became ill and died. When the woman told her husband that she was returning to Elisha to inform him of the child's demise, her husband, unaware of what had occurred, inquired why she was going to Elisha. The Gemora states that the verse implies that on the New Moon and on Shabbos one is obligated to visit his teacher.

A question is asked as to why the halachah of visiting one's Rebbe on a Yom Tov is not brought down in Shulchan Aruch. The Noda Beyehudah answers that this was only in the times of the Beis Hamikdosh when there was a mitzvah of aliyah l'regel, however after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh, the mitzvah of going to your Rebbe also became nullified. He explains that the Sages did not want that the honor of the

student (Talmid chochom) should be greater than that of the Rav (Shechinah).

There are those that ask on the Noda Beyehudah from the Gemora in Sukkah 27 and other Gemoros where we see that they went to the Reish Gilusa on Yom Tov, and Rashi states it was to fulfill the mitzvah of going to a Rebbe on Yom Tov. The Beis Hamikdosh had already been destroyed by then and nevertheless they went!?

My brother, Reb Ben, cited a Maharitz Chayos (which I have not been able to locate as of yet) that quotes a Medrash that states explicitly that they fulfilled this mitzvah even after the Beis Hamikdosh was destroyed.

DAILY MASHAL

Prayer

The Gemora cites different opinions on the frequency of Hashem's judgment of the world, and Rav Yosef suggests that our praying every day for the sick and weak indicates that we rule like Rabbi Yosi, who says that Hashem judges the world every day.

Tosfos (16a keman) asks: How would the other opinions explain the fact that we all pray for healing and sustenance in Shemoneh Esrai?

Tosfos cites two answers:

1. Rabbeinu Tam answers that the discussion of the Gemora about judgment refers to if and when someone will become sick or how much rain will fall. However, our prayers are for resolution of existing judgments. When we pray for the sick, we aren't praying that someone should not get sick, but that the sick will be healed. When we pray for rain, we aren't praying for the amount of rain, but that the rain that has been decreed for this year be distributed most effectively. Rav Yosef's conclusion was from the fact that we pray for the weak to not get sick, which is decided in the judgment only.

When a community prays, it can alter an existing judgment.