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Rosh Hashanah
Daf 18

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

OVERTURNING A DECREE

➤ The Gemora states that it is actually a dispute among the Tannaim if an individual’s decree can be reversed through repentance or prayer. Rabbi Meir used to say that if there were two people that were sick with an indistinguishable illness and one patient recovered and the other did not, or similarly, if there were two people who came before a judge with the identical case and one was saved (from capital punished) and the other was not, how can this be explained? He answered that one prayed a complete prayer (with a proper concentration) and was therefore answered and the other did not. Rabbi Elozar answers that one case was before the decree was issued and the other was afterwards. Rabbi Yitzchak states that calling out to Hashem will always be helpful even after the decree was issued. (18a)

DECREE ON A COMMUNITY

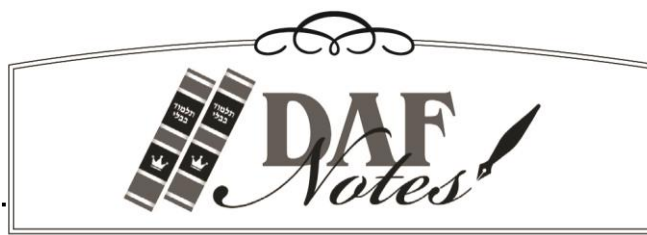
➤ The Gemora states that a decree against a community cannot be overturned if it is accompanied with an oath, but a decree that does not have an oath with it can be overturned. The Gemora cites Scriptural references to this.

Rava states that if one studies Torah, the decree can be annulled somewhat. Abaye says that it can be annulled somewhat if one studies Torah and performs acts of kindness.

Rabbah and Abaye were from the House of Eli. Rabbah who devoted himself to Torah study lived forty years; Abaye who devoted himself both to Torah study and to acts of kindness lived sixty years.

The Gemora cites a braisa: There was a family in Jerusalem whose members used to die at the age of eighteen. They came and told Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai. He said to them, “Perhaps you are of the family of Eli, to whom it was said, and all those raised in your house shall die young men? Go and study the Torah and you may live.” They went and studied the Torah and lived, and they used to call that family the family of Rabban Yochanan after his name.

Rav Shmuel bar Inia said in the name of Rav: From where do we know that the final sentence on a community, even if it was sealed, may be torn up? Because it says: as is Hashem, our God, whenever we call upon him.



The Gemora asks: But it is written: Seek Hashem while he may be found (indicating that there are times when He cannot be found to overturn a decree)?

The Gemora answers: This verse speaks of an individual, whereas the other refers to a community.

The Gemora asks: When can an individual find God?

Rabbah bar Avuha says that during the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Hashem is always available to listen to an individual crying out to Him and will overturn an evil decree previously issued.

And it came to pass after the ten days that Hashem smote Naval. The Gemora asks: What is the significance of these ten days here? Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: They (the ten day delay of his punishment) correspond to the ten morsels of food which Naval gave to the servants of David.

Rav Nachman said in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha: These are the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. (18a)

JUDGED SINGLE FILE

➤ The Mishna had stated that on Rosh Hashanah, the entire world passes in front of Hashem to be judged like “bnei maron.” The Gemora cites three opinions for the meaning of “bnei maron.” One explanation is that the people being judged are compared to sheep passing through a narrow gate as they are being counted for the tithing. Rish Lakish states that the analogy is to people traveling down a narrow path that has a sharp drop on both sides. Rav Yehudah says in the name of Shmuel that they are compared to the soldiers of Dovid as they were being counted single file as they prepared for battle. The Gemora concludes that even though they pass before Hashem in single file, they are judged simultaneously. (18a)

MESSENGERS SENT OUT

➤ The Mishna states that at the beginning of six months, messengers would be sent out to notify the Jewish communities as to which day was determined to be the first of the month. They were sent out in the month of Nissan because of the festival of Pesach. At the beginning of Av, they were sent out because of the fast. Messengers were sent in the month of Elul on the account of Rosh Hashanah. They were sent out during Tishrei because of Yom Kippur and Sukkos. Messengers were sent out during Kislev because of Chanukah and during Adar because of Purim. During the times that the

Beis Hamikdosh was standing, they would send out messengers because of Pesach Sheini (for those that were not able to bring the Korban Pesach on Pesach). (18a)

VOLUNTARY FASTS

➤ The Gemora asks: Why were there no messengers sent out for Tammuz and Teves due to the fast days contained in those months? The Gemora quotes Rav Chana bar Bizna in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida who cites a verse in Zecharya, “The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth will be to the House of Yehudah for joy and for happiness.” It is called a fast and it is called joy and happiness! [Which one is it?] Rather, at a time when there is peace (when the Beis HaMikdash was standing), they will be for joy and happiness, but when there is no peace (when it is not standing), they will be fast days.

Rav Pappa said (explaining the verse differently): At a time when there is peace (when the idolaters are not ruling over the Jewish people), they will be for joy and happiness, but at a time when there is a governmental decree (of persecution against the Jewish people), they will be fast days. And if there is no governmental decree and there is no peace, if they want to fast they can, and if they want, they are not required to fast. [Accordingly, there was no need for messengers to be sent out, for the fasts were not obligatory.]

The Gemora asks: If so, the same should apply by the Ninth of Av as well!?

Rav Pappa answers that the fast of the Ninth of Av was different, for calamities were repeated on it, for the master said: On the ninth of Av, the Temple was destroyed the first time and the second time, and Beitar was taken, and the city (Yerushalayim) was plowed up. (18a – 18b)

FOUR FASTS

➤ The Gemora cites a braisa: Rabbi Shimon said: There were four verses that Rabbi Akiva would expound, but I would not expound like him: The verse in Zecharya states: “The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth will be to the House of Yehudah for joy and for happiness.” Rabbi Akiva understands the verse as follows: “The fast of the fourth” is referring to the ninth of Tammuz, since on that day the city of Yerushalayim was breached, and it is called the “fourth” since Tammuz is the fourth month from Nissan. “The fast of the fifth” is referring to the Ninth of Av, since on that day the Beis Hamikdosh was destroyed, and it is called the “fifth” since Av is the fifth month from Nissan. “The fast of the seventh” is referring to the Third of Tishrei, since on that day Gedalya was murdered, and it is called the “seventh” since Tishrei is the seventh month from Nissan. “The fast of the tenth” is referring to the Tenth of

Teves, since on that day the Babylonian King began to surround Yerushalayim, and it is called the “tenth” since Teves is the tenth month from Nissan.

Rabbi Shimon, however, says: I do not say like this; rather, “The fast of the tenth” is referring to the fifth of Teves, since on that day the news came to the exile that the city of Yerushalayim was sacked, and they made that day of ‘hearing’ like the day of the actual burning.

The braisa continues: And my words seem more reasonable than the words of Rabbi Akiva, for I make the first (fast mentioned by the prophet) first (chronologically) and the last (fast mentioned by the prophet) last, whereas he makes the first last and the last first. He, however, counts according to the order of months, whereas I count according to the order of the calamities. (18b)

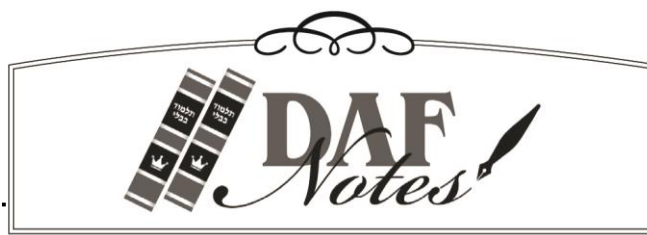
MEGILLAS TAANIS

➤ [Megillas Taanis is a scroll that was written by Chananya close to end of the second Beis Hamikdosh. It contains in it a compilation of dates that were regarded to be festivals and therefore fasting was prohibited on those days. There is a dispute in the Gemora if those halachos still apply.]

It was stated: Rav and Rabbi Chanina hold that the Megillas Taanis has been abrogated, whereas Rabbi Yochanan and Rish Lakish hold that the Megillas Taanis has not been abrogated.

Rav and Rabbi Chanina hold that the Megillas Taanis has been abrogated, interpreting the words of the prophet as follows: When there is peace, these days shall be for joy and happiness, but when there is no peace, they shall be fasts, and the days mentioned in the Megillas Taanis are to be treated the same as those days. Rabbi Yochanan and Rish Lakish hold that the Megillas Taanis has not been abrogated, maintaining that it was those others (mentioned by the prophet) that the Merciful One made dependent on the existence of the Temple, but these (mentioned in Megillas Taanis) remain unaffected.

Rav Kahana asks from a braisa: There was an incident in Lod and they were compelled to decree a fast during the days of Chanukah. Rabbi Eliezer went and took a bath and Rabbi Yehoshua went to get a haircut, indicating publicly that people shouldn’t fast. They announced that anyone who fasted on that day is required to fast again in order to repent for fasting on Chanukah. The Gemora is attempting to prove from this incident that Megillas Taanis is still in effect since Chanukah is one of the days listed there.



Rav Yosef answers that Chanukah is different since there is a mitzvah (of lighting the Menorah) connected to it.

Abaya asked: Let Chanukah be abrogated, and its mitzvah will then be abrogated as well!?

Rather, Rav Yosef answers: Chanukah is different, for the miracle is publicized to all based on the mitzvah of lighting the menorah, and therefore it would be improper to abolish it.

Rav Acha bar Huna asks by citing another incident: The Greeks had decreed that the Jews could not mention Hashem's name. After the Greeks were defeated by the Chashmanaim, they established that Hashem's name should be written on all contracts. The Chachamim heard about this and stopped this because they were concerned that when the borrower will repay the debt, the unnecessary document will be thrown in the garbage. It was the third day of Tishrei when the Chachamim abolished this enactment and they made that day into a festival. The Gemora asks that if Megillas Taanis was not in effect any longer, is it logical to assume that they would add a new festival.

The Gemora answers that this incident occurred in the times when the Beis Hamikdash was still standing and everyone agrees that the Megillas Taanis still applied.

The Gemora questions the necessity of making a festival on this day since the third of Tishrei was the day Gedalya was murdered and we learned previously that all the days of calamity became days of joy during the second Beis Hamikdash.

Rav answers that it was necessary to establish the third of Tishrei as a festival in order to prohibit fasting the day before. (This was done in order to prevent people from fasting on the festival itself.)

The Gemora asks that it is prohibited to fast on the second of Tishrei anyway since it is the day after Rosh Chodesh.

The Gemora answers that Rosh Chodesh being Biblical does not need any strengthening and therefore the day afterwards would not be prohibited if not for the fact that it is the day before the festival of the third.

The Gemora cites proof that the Rabbinical festivals require strengthening and not the Biblical ones.

The Gemora asks that the second of Tishrei should be forbidden from fasting anyway since it is the day before Gedalya was murdered.

The Gemora answers that since the fast of Gedalya was written in the Prophets, it is similar



to a Biblical decree that does not need to be strengthened. (18b – 19a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

NINE DAYS OF CHANUKAH

➤ The Mishna states that at the beginning of six months, messengers would be sent out to notify the Jewish communities as to which day was determined to be the first of the month. They were sent out in the month of Nissan because of the festival of Pesach. At the beginning of Av, they were sent out because of the fast. Messengers were sent in the month of Elul on the account of Rosh Hashanah. They were sent out during Tishrei because of Yom Kippur and Sukkos. Messengers were sent out during Kislev because of Chanukah and during Adar because of Purim.

A question is brought down in the sefer Poseach Shaar. If messengers were required in the months of Kislev and Adar because of Chanukah and Purim, shouldn't there be a halacha that in the faraway places, where the messengers cannot reach in due time, that there should be an extra day of Chanukah and Purim because of the doubt as to the correct day? this is indeed the reason why the other festivals have an extra day. It would emerge that there should be nine days of Chanukah and two days of Purim nowadays in the Diaspora.

Abudraham writes that this is only required on the Biblical festivals but we do not have this stringency on Chanukah and Purim which is only Rabbinic.

The Mordechai states that in the Meggilah it is written "V'lo yaavor," the meggilah should not be recited on any other day but the fourteenth of Adar. Sefer Dovev Meisharim (1:15) asks on this that the verse would only answer why the meggilah is not recited on any other day but there should be an extra day for all the other obligations of Purim.

Minchas Chinuch writes that in the days that Rosh Chodesh was determined through the witnesses and Beis Din, there actually was nine days of Chanukah in the faraway places. He states further that in the future when the Beis Hamikdosh will be built, there will also be nine days. Nowadays, that we are experts in the correct days of the month, there is no necessity to institute an extra day since it is only Rabbinic.

We can answer the famous question of the Beis Yosef according to the Minchas Chinuch. He asks that there should be seven days of Chanukah and not eight because the miracle of the oil was only for seven days. We can answer that the reason there is an eighth day is because of the doubt as to when Rosh Chodesh was.

INFORMING THE PUBLIC

➤ The Mishna states that at the beginning of six months, messengers would be sent out to notify the Jewish communities as to which day was determined to be the first of the month. They were sent out in the month of Nissan because of the festival of Pesach. At the beginning of Av, they were sent out because of the fast. Messengers were sent in the month of Elul on the account of Rosh Hashanah. They were sent out during Tishrei because of Yom Kippur and Sukkos. Messengers were sent out during Kislev because of Chanukah and during Adar because of Purim.

Pnei Yehoshua questions the necessity of the messengers at all according to the opinion of those Tanaim who maintain that there is always a four day difference between the day that the festival falls out in one year and the day that the festival occurs in the following year. Since it is known which month will be thirty days and which month will be twenty-nine days, what is the purpose of the messengers? He answers that even according to that viewpoint, there are times that Beis Din will be forced to deviate from the regular cycle and change the amount of days in the month due to the seasons or because of a leap year. It is therefore still necessary to send out the messengers in the beginning of every month.

Reb Leib Malin answers this question differently with a novel approach. There is a halacha based on pesukim in the Torah that Rosh Chodesh can only be established through Beis Din. There is a secondary halacha, based on that, which teaches us that informing the public when Rosh Chodesh was also must be accomplished through Beis Din. He learns this from the language of the Rambam in Hilchos Kiddush Hachodesh (1:7). It emerges that even if it is known precisely when Rosh Chodesh was, there is nevertheless an obligation for Beis Din to notify the public.

Question from Michael Post

➤ The Mishnah lists six months for which messengers were sent out – for reasons ranging from “major holidays” like Pesach & Sukkos to “minor holidays” like Chanukah. The Gemara then asks about Tammuz & Teves since they have minor fasts, and the conclusion is that during the times of the Beis HaMikdash, those were only optional. But what about Shevat? We learned not that long ago that Tu B’Shevat is the New Year for the trees (for maaser purposes, I believe). So wouldn’t people need to know exactly when Tu B’Shevat is so that they handle their trees properly? Tithing the crops is a Biblical obligation, so I would think that this would take even higher precedence than say Kislev.