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Rosh Hashanah
Daf 19

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Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

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MORE ON MEGILLAS TAANIS

➤ Rav Tovi bar Masnah asks (on the opinion that holds that Megillas Taanis was abrogated) from an incident that occurred on the twenty-eighth of Adar in the times after the second Beis Hamikdosh was destroyed. The Romans had decreed that the Jews could not study Torah, perform circumcisions or keep Shabbos. Yehudah ben Shamua took advice from a Roman noblewoman and the Jews went out into the streets at night to protest. They cried out that we are brothers (the Jews and the Romans), and we are children from the same father and mother. Why are you (the Romans) issuing such harsh decrees on us? The Romans listened and revoked the decree. This day was pronounced as a festival. The Gemora asks: If Megillas Taanis was not in effect any longer, is it logical to assume that they would add a new festival?

The Gemora suggests and rejects a possible answer: And should you reply that this also was in the time when the Temple was still standing, this cannot be, because Yehudah ben Shamua was the disciple of Rabbi Meir, and Rabbi Meir was after the destruction of the Temple. We know that (Yehudah

ben Shamua was R' Meir's disciple) because it has been taught in a braisa: If glass vessels are perforated and molten lead is poured into them, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: Yehudah ben Shamua said that Rabbi Meir declares them *tamei*, while the Sages declare them *tahor*. [*The perforated glass vessel is supported by the lead, i.e., it can be used only through the lead; therefore, according to R' Meir, it is a metal, which can be purified in a mikvah, and not a glass vessel.*]

The Gemora concludes that it is a Tannaic dispute if the halachos from the Megillas Taanis still apply. This is proven from a braisa which states: These days which are mentioned in the Megillas Taanis are prohibited (to fast upon them), whether in the period when the Temple is standing or in the period when the Temple is not standing; these are the words of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yosi says: In the period when the Temple is standing they are prohibited, because it is a time of happiness; in the period when the Temple is not standing they are permitted, because it is a time for mourning.

The Gemora rules: The law is that Megillas Taanis is abrogated and the law is that they are not.



The Gemora asks: There is a contradiction, is there not, between these two laws?

The Gemora answers: There is no contradiction, as one ruling relates to Chanukah and Purim (where they were not abrogated), whereas the other to the other days. (19a – 19b)

MESSENGERS FOR TISHREI

➤ The Mishna stated that at the beginning of certain months, messengers would be sent out to notify the Jewish communities as to which day was determined to be the first of the month. Messengers were sent in the month of Elul on the account of Rosh Hashanah. They were sent out during Tishrei because of the festivals (Yom Kippur and Sukkos).

The Gemora questions the necessity for sending out messengers in Tishrei since they were already sent out in Elul.

The Gemora suggests and rejects a possible answer: And should you reply that the messengers were sent out because of the possibility that they (Beis Din) made Elul full (thirty days); that cannot be, for Rabbi Chinana bar Kahana said in the name of Rav: From the time of Ezra and on, we never found Elul to be full!

The Gemora answers that even though, since the times of Ezra, Elul always had twenty-nine days but the possibility existed, that if necessary, they would have to make Elul thirty days. The

messengers were sent out to notify the public if Elul had twenty-nine days like usual or thirty days.

The Gemora asks: But if they made Elul full, it would emerge that Rosh Hashanah would be interfered with (for the people who lived far away)?

The Gemora answers: It is better that Rosh Hashanah should be interfered with (for some people) and the observance of all other festivals would not be interfered with.

Proof to this (that we were concerned about the other festivals) is from the Mishna which states: They were sent out during Tishrei because of the festivals.(19b)

SECOND ADAR

➤ The Mishna stated that at the beginning of certain months, messengers would be sent out to notify the Jewish communities as to which day was determined to be the first of the month. Messengers were sent out during Kislev because of Chanukah and during Adar because of Purim.

The Gemora notes that the Mishna does not mention that they would send messengers in the second Adar (if there was a leap year) on account of Purim. This would be inconsistent with Rebbe who maintains that messengers would be sent in the beginning of the second Adar on account of Purim.



The Gemora initially thinks that their dispute would be based on the argument regarding one who performed the mitzvos during the first Adar which should have been done in the second Adar, if he has fulfilled his obligation or not. If one maintains that he has fulfilled the mitzvos, there is no necessity to send messengers for the second Adar.

The Gemora presents an alternative explanation. In truth, everyone holds that mitzvos that are applicable in the second Adar are not applicable in the first Adar (and if Purim was celebrated in the first Adar, it must be celebrated again in the second one), and the argument is regarding the amount of days that there are in the month of (the first) Adar when they intercalated the year. The Mishna can hold that the first Adar is always thirty days and therefore there is no necessity to send out messengers for the second Adar. Rebbe can hold like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel who maintains that the first Adar could be twenty-nine days or thirty and therefore we would be compelled to send messengers at the beginning of the second Adar.

The Gemora cites other opinions regarding the two months of Adar. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi testified in the name of the Holy Assembly that was in Yerushalayim that both months of Adar are always twenty-nine days. Rav Nachman bar Chisda said that Rabbi Simai testified in the name of the Prophets, Chagai, Zecharya and Malachi that the two months of Adar can both consist of thirty days, twenty-nine days or one can be thirty and one

twenty-nine. It was stated in the name of Rebbe that it should always be assumed that the first Adar will have thirty days and the second Adar will have twenty-nine days until you hear from Eretz Yisroel explicitly that the first Adar only had twenty-nine days. (19b)

TWENTY-NINE DAYS OF ADAR

➤ They sent to Mar Ukva that the Adar which is next to Nissan will always be twenty-nine days. Rav Nachman asked from a Mishna on daf 21. The Mishna states that the witnesses coming to Beis Din to offer testimony regarding Nissan and Tishrei are permitted to desecrate the Shabbos (by traveling further than their techum boundary). Rav Nachman asks that why were they allowed to desecrate Shabbos since even if they wouldn't come, Beis Din will sanctify the thirtieth day as Rosh Chodesh. The Gemora answers that there is a mitzva for Beis Din to sanctify the new moon through witnesses testifying that they saw the moon.

Rav Kahana asked from the Mishna on daf 21 which states that in the times of the Beis Hamikdash, the witnesses could desecrate Shabbos in order to testify in Beis Din by all months. This was because of the korban mussaf that needed to be offered on Rosh Chodesh. It emerges from this Mishna that the reason to desecrate the Shabbos is not because of the mitzva of sanctifying the new month through witnesses and yet after the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, they only desecrated Shabbos for

Nissan and Tishrei. If Adar always had twenty-nine days, there would be no necessity to desecrate Shabbos. The Gemora concludes that this is a legitimate refutation of that opinion. (19b – 20a)

DAILY MASHAL

A True Ruler

The Gemora (18b) relates that the Greeks had decreed that the Jews could not mention Hashem's name. After the Greeks were defeated by the Kingdom of the Chashmanoim, 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 in Shabbos which relates the story of Chanukah refers to the Chashmanoim in the same manner as our Gemora – the Kingdom of the Chashmanoim. A question is asked that at that time they were not the kings yet. It was only after the victory that the Chashmanoim assumed the throne but not before.

The commentators ask on the Rashi in Breishis. The chief cupbearer is relating to Pharaoh of an incident that transpired when he was in prison. The verse states "And there with us was a Hebrew lad, a slave of the chief slaughterer, and we told him,

and he interpreted our dreams for us." Rashi cites from a Medrash "A slave and in the statutes of Egypt it is written that a slave may neither reign nor wear princely raiment." (Judaica Press)

What compelled the sar hamashkim to state that in the Egyptian constitution it is written that a slave cannot ascend the throne. What made him think that by Yosef interpreting the dreams, this would lead him to become a ruler in Egypt?

The answer is that a true ruler does not have to don a crown or wear princely raiment or sit on a throne. A ruler is one who can rule over himself, someone who is capable of control his desires. The Medrash states that Shlomo Hamelech was a king over seven different kingdoms but the highest level was that he ruled over himself.

The chief cupbearer recognized this in Yosef even when he was in prison. Yosef was clearly destined for leadership and that is what compelled the chief cupbearer to tell Pharaoh as to what was written in the Egyptian statutes.

This can be the explanation of the Gemora. It was true that the Chashmanoim did not ascend the throne until after they were victorious over the Greeks but they were kings beforehand as well. While some of the other Jews could not hold themselves back from joining the Greek culture and shunned the Torah and mitzvos, the Chashmanoim were steadfast and strong. They were kings over their desires and this was the characteristic which they possessed which ultimately led them to victory.