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Rosh Hashanah
Daf 21

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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

LEVI IN BAVEL

➤ The Gemora relates that Levi visited Bavel on the eleventh of Tishrei. Levi notified the people residing there that it was actually the tenth of Tishrei since Beis Din made Elul thirty days instead of the usual twenty-nine. They asked Levi to testify that Beis Din had made Elul thirty days and then they would be willing to fast again on the correct day. Levi responded that since he didn't actually hear Beis Din proclaim the thirty-first day to begin the new month, he is unable to testify in this regard. The messengers were not permitted to go out in the months of Nissan and Tishrei until they heard Beis Din announce that the day has been sanctified as Rosh Chodesh. (21a)

MESSENGERS

➤ Rabbi Yochanan announced that anyplace where the messengers of Nissan can reach but the messengers of Tishrei cannot reach (due to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) should observe two days of Pesach as a decree because of a possible blunder that might occur in Tishrei. (21a)

TWO DAYS OF YOM KIPPUR

➤ Rava was accustomed to observe two days of Yom Kippur (and fast for two consecutive days)

since he was concerned that Beis Din might make Elul thirty days even though this was highly unlikely to happen. There was one time that it happened that his second day was actually Yom Kippur. (21a)

SOLAR SEASON

➤ Rav Huna bar Avin sent a message to Rava that when the solar season of Teves is extending until the sixteenth of Nissan, he should add a month to that year. He cites a Scriptural verse proving that the spring season should begin during the first fourteen days of Nissan, a time when the moon is becoming more visible. If the season would stretch to the fifteenth of Nissan, there is no necessity to add a month to the year; an extra day can be added onto Adar and that will be sufficient. (21a)

DESECRATING SHABBOS

➤ The Mishna states that the witnesses who are coming to testify regarding the new moon of Nissan and Tishrei may desecrate Shabbos in order to arrive by Beis Din in a timely fashion. The permission was limited to these months since these were the months that messengers were sent out to Surya and we needed to determine

the dates for the Biblical festivals. During the time that the Beis Hamikdosh was in existence, they would be permitted to desecrate Shabbos for every month since there were sacrifices that needed to be offered on Rosh Chodesh. (21b)

MESSENGERS DEPARTING

➤ The Gemora asks a contradiction by citing a Mishna learned previously that messengers were sent out on six months of the year and our Mishna states that they were sent out on Nissan and Tishrei. The Gemora answers that on Nissan and Tishrei there was a special halacha that the messengers could not depart Beis Din and inform the public regarding Rosh Chodesh until they actually heard Beis Din proclaiming that the new month has been sanctified. Regarding the other months, they were allowed to go as soon as they knew which day would be Rosh Chodesh. (21b)

WHO CAN DESECRATE?

➤ The Gemora cites a Scriptural verse proving that the witnesses are permitted to desecrate Shabbos in order to testify regarding the sighting of the new moon but the messengers are not allowed to desecrate Shabbos. (21b)

DISPUTE REGARDING THE VISIBILITY OF THE MOON

➤ The Mishna cites a dispute regarding the circumstances that the witnesses would be permitted to desecrate the Shabbos. Rabbi Yosi

maintains that the witnesses are only permitted to desecrate the Shabbos if the moon was not clearly visible to all since then the Beis Din will need these witnesses. The Chachamim hold that even if the moon is clearly visible, they are still permitted to desecrate the Shabbos and travel to Beis Din. The Mishna cites an incident where there were more than forty pairs of witnesses traveling to Beis Din and Rabbi Akiva held them in Lod since he figured that there were probably many more witnesses that saw the moon. Rabban Gamliel disagreed with Rabbi Akiva and stated that if these witnesses will not be allowed to travel to Beis Din this time, they will not even bother to come testify in the future. (21b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

YOM KIPPUR IN DOUBT

➤ The Gemora relates that Levi visited Bavel on the eleventh of Tishrei. Levi notified the people residing there that it was actually the tenth of Tishrei since Beis Din made Elul thirty days instead of the usual twenty-nine. They asked Levi to testify that Beis Din had made Elul thirty days and then they would be willing to fast again on the correct day. Levi responded that since he didn't actually hear Beis Din proclaim the thirty-first day to begin the new month, he is unable to testify in this regard. The messengers were not permitted to go out in the months of Nissan and Tishrei until they heard Beis Din announce that the day has been sanctified as Rosh Chodesh.

Tosfos asks that while it is true that Levi did not actually hear Beis Din proclaim the sanctity of the new month, how was he able to allow the Babylonians to ignore the fact that Yom Kippur is actually a day later. Tosafos answers based on the Scriptural verse “These are Hashem’s appointed [holy days] that you shall designate them as holy occasions,” and it is learned from there that Beis Din’s declaration of the new month is valid even if they choose the incorrect day through a mistake or even deliberately. Tosfos indicates that this is not only limited to the Beis din in Yerushalayim but even to a Beis Din in Bavel. If they rule that Rosh Chodesh is a certain day, it is indeed binding.

Turei Even asks many questions on Tosfos. His primary question is that it is illogical to assume that each Beis Din throughout the world can independently establish when Rosh Chodesh should be. This is only reserved to the Beis din in Yerushalayim.

The Turei Even learns different than Tosfos and states that Levi could not be believed since he is only one witness and one witness is not believed against a majority. Most of the time, Elul has only twenty-nine days and Levi couldn't testify that the Beis Din made it thirty days. If Levi would have actually heard Beis Din proclaim that the thirty-first day is Rosh Chodesh, they would have acted stringently (above the letter of the law) and

they would have fasted again on the tenth of Tishrei.

Rav Elyashiv points out that the Turei Even's explanation is not consistent with the Rambam's viewpoint where he states in Hilchos Kiddush Hachodesh (3:14) that one witness is believed even in relevance to a Biblical matter, providing that it is something that will eventually be made public.

The Turei Even cites a Shiltos who relates the incident a little different than in our Gemora. The Shiltos states that Reb Ivo and Reb Chiya went to Bavel and remarked that Beis Din had made Elul thirty days. According to this, they would be believed since they are two witnesses.

Chazon Ish learns that any place that is too far away from Yerushalayim and will not hear that Beis Din announced the sanctity of Rosh Chodesh, they establish the new months according to the calculation and not through witnesses. According to the Chazon Ish, I am not sure why it would make a difference if Levi heard the Beis Din establishing Rosh Chodesh.

Looking at the Chazon Ish again, he does answer this and states that they can only go by calculation if they didn't hear what Beis Din in Eretz Yisroel did, but if they heard, then they must go according to them and next month they can revert back to the calculations.