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Leap Year

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: We do not intercalate a month into a year when it is a year of hunger (*for there is a shortage of grain, and we cannot eat from the new crop until the Omer offering is brought on the sixteenth of Nissan; we do not want to extend the suffering another month*).

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which supports the aforementioned *halachah*: Rebbe said: It is written: *A man came from Baal Shalishah and brought to the man of God (the prophet Elisha) first bread (from grain that had just recently ripened), twenty loaves of barley, etc.* Now, there was no other place in *Eretz Yisroel* where the fruit ripened earlier than in Baal Shalishah; yet, only one species had ripened there (*by Pesach*). It cannot be referring to wheat (*which ripens late*), for it is written ‘barley.’ It cannot be referring to the time before the bringing of the Omer, for it is written: Give to the people and they will eat (which, if he is allowing them to eat, it must have been after the bringing of the Omer when the prohibition from eating of the new grain We may conclude therefore that the year should have been intercalated (for most of the grained crop ripened late). But why did Elisha not do so? — For the reason that it was a year of famine and all were running to the threshing floor [to procure food].

Our Rabbis taught in a *braisa*: The year may not be intercalated before Rosh Hashanah, and if it be intercalated, the intercalation is invalid. In case of emergency, however, a year may be intercalated immediately after Rosh Hashanah; yet even so, only a [second] Adar is added (and not any other month).

The *Gemora* asks: But is this really so? Was not a message once sent to Rava: A pair [of scholars] have arrived from Rakkas who had been captured by an eagle while in possession of articles manufactured at Luz. And what were these things? *Techeiles* (threads used for *tzitzis*). Yet through Divine mercy and their own merits, they escaped safely.

[The second part of the message:] Further, the offspring of Nachshon wished to appoint an officer, but a certain Edomite would not permit it. The members of the assembly (Torah scholars), however, met and appointed an officer (i.e., they intercalated a month) in the month in which Aaron the Priest dies (in the month of Av)?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes, the calculations were indeed made, but not published [until after Rosh Hashanah].



The Gemora asks: How was it implied that the term 'netziv' (officer) [mentioned in the message] connoted 'month'?

The Gemora answers: Because it is written: Now Solomon had twelve officers [netzivim] over all Israel who provided food for the king and his household; each man one month per year.

The Gemora asks: But is it not written: And one officer [netziv] that was in the land?

Rav Yehudah and Rav Nachman — one holds that one single officer was appointed over all [the other officers]; the other is of the opinion that this refers to the [special officer in charge of the provisions during] the intercalated month.)

Our Rabbis taught in a braisa: We may not, in the current year, intercalate the following year, nor intercalate three years in succession. Rabbi Shimon said: It once happened that Rabbi Akiva, when kept in prison, intercalated three years in succession. The Rabbis, however, said to him: Is that your proof? The court sat and intercalated each year at its proper time. [R' Akiva only made the calculation of the next three leap years, since he was the accepted authority on the computation of the calendar and the Rabbis always employed his aid in this matter, but the leap years were not in three successive years.]

Our Rabbis taught in a braisa: We may not intercalate a Shemittah year, nor the year following a Shemittah year. But which year was it usual to intercalate? That preceding the Shemittah year. Those of the court of

Rabban Gamliel, however, used to intercalate the year following the Shemittah year.

The Gemora explains: And this enters into the dispute of the following Tannaim. For it has been taught in a braisa: Herbs may not be imported from outside the Land [of Israel]. But our Rabbis permitted it. [The Tanna Kamma did not apprehend a shortage of grain during the Shemittah year, since importation from outside Eretz Yisroel was forbidden; as we did not want to prolong the grain shortage, the year was not extended.]

The Gemora asks: Wherein do they differ (in the second braisa)?

Rabbi Yirmiyah said: They differ as to whether we apprehend lest clods of earth attached to them [should also be imported] (and this would spread tumah in Eretz Yisroel).

Our Rabbis taught in a braisa: We may not intercalate a year because of tumah. [Even if it should involve the risk of offering the Pesach sacrifice in tumah; e.g., if the Nasi were dangerously ill, and it was judged that he would die less than a week before Pesach, in which case the community, by attending the funeral in his honor, would become tamei.] Rabbi Yehudah said: We may intercalate. Rabbi Yehudah observed: It once happened that Chizkiyah king of Yehudah declared a leap year because of tumah, and then prayed for mercy, for it is written: For the multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Menasheh, Issachar and Zevulun had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Pesach sacrifice otherwise than it

is written: for Chizkiyah had prayed for them, saying: May the Lord in His goodness pardon everyone.

Rabbi Shimon said: If the intercalation was actually on the ground of tumah, it is effective. Why then did Chizkiyah implore Divine mercy? — Because only an Adar can be intercalated and he intercalated a Nissan in Nissan.

Rabbi Shimon ben Yehudah said on behalf of Rabbi Shimon, that it was because he had persuaded Israel to celebrate a Second Pesach [unduly].

The master has said: Rabbi Yehudah said: We may intercalate [on the ground of tumah]. Apparently, Rabbi Yehudah holds that [the law of] tumah, in the case of an entire community, is only pushed aside [and not abrogated, for otherwise, there would be no reason to extend the year].

The Gemora asks: But has it not been taught in a braisa: The tzitz, whether it is on his [the Kohen Gadol's] forehead or not (when a sacrifice became tamei), makes (the sacrifice) acceptable (to God); these are the words of Rabbi Shimon. Rabbi Yehudah said: Only when it (the tzitz) is on his forehead does it make it (the sacrifice) acceptable, but not otherwise. Rabbi Shimon thereupon said to him: The case of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur (where the tzitz is not worn) affords proof, seeing that it makes (the sacrifice) acceptable even when it is not worn on his forehead. And Rabbi Yehudah answered him: Leave Yom Kippur aside, for the [laws concerning] impurity are entirely abrogated in the case of a whole community?

The Gemora asks: But even according to this reasoning, is there not a contradiction within the passage itself? Rabbi Yehudah said: We may intercalate [on account of tumah]; and then he himself relates what happened in the case of Chizkiyah, king of Yehudah, who intercalated a year because of tumah, but implored Divine mercy on himself [for his action]?

The Gemora answers: Rather, (it is as if) the text (of the braisa) is missing words, and should read as follows: We may not intercalate a year on account of tumah, but if it has been intercalated, the decision is effective. Rabbi Yehudah maintained that the intercalation is not valid, and Rabbi Yehudah observed: It once happened with Chizkiyah etc.

The Gemora asks: But if so, [when] Rabbi Shimon says: If the year is intercalated for the sake of [avoiding] tumah, the decision is effective, this is the same opinion as the first Tanna!?

Rava said: They differ as to whether [it may be intercalated] at the outset.

It has been taught in a braisa likewise: A year may not be intercalated at the outset because of tumah. Rabbi Shimon said: It may be intercalated. Why then did he [Chizkiyah] pray for mercy? — Because only an Adar can be intercalated, whereas he intercalated a Nissan in Nissan.

The master has said: Because only an Adar can be intercalated, whereas he intercalated a Nissan in Nissan.

The Gemora asks: But didn't Chizkiyah agree [that the verse] This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, [implies], only this month can be Nissan [once proclaimed], and no other?

The Gemora answers: He erred on a ruling of Shmuel, for Shmuel said: The year is not to be intercalated on the thirtieth day of Adar, since it is eligible to be designated as [the first day of] Nissan. He [Chizkiyah] however thought that we do not consider its eligibility [to belong to Nissan].

It has been taught likewise in a braisa: The year may not be intercalated on the thirtieth day of Adar, since it is eligible to be designated as [the first day] of Nissan.

[It was stated above:] Rabbi Shimon ben Rabbi Yehudah said on behalf of Rabbi Shimon that it was because he had [wrongfully] persuaded the people to celebrate a Second Pesach [that Chizkiyah prayed to be forgiven]. How did it happen? Rav Ashi said: E.g., half of Israel were tahor and half tamei, but the women made up the number of the tahor and turned it into a majority. Now, at first he held that women too are bound [to offer the sacrifice] on the first [Pesach], so that only a minority was tamei; and a minority is relegated to the Second Pesach. But later he adopted the view [that the participation of] women in the First [Pesach celebration] is only voluntary, so that the tamei people were in a majority, and a majority is not relegated to the Second Pesach.

The text [states]: Shmuel said: The year is not to be intercalated on the thirtieth day of Adar, since it is eligible to be appointed [the first day of] Nissan.

The Gemora asks: But what if it were intercalated?

Ulla said: The month must not be sanctified.

The Gemora asks: But what if it were sanctified?

Rava said: Then the intercalation is invalid. Rav Nachman said: Both the intercalation and the sanctification are valid.

Rava said to Rav Nachman: Let us consider! Between Purim and Pesach there are thirty days, and from Purim we begin to lecture on the laws of Pesach, as has been taught: People must begin to inquire into the Pesach laws thirty days before the Festival. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: Two weeks before (is sufficient). Now, if, then, it [Nissan] is postponed at the beginning of the month [of Nissan], people will be liable to disregard the law regarding (eating) chametz [on Pesach].

He [Rav Nachman] answered him: It is well-known that the intercalation of a year depends on [minute] calculations, hence they would say that [the declaration was not made until the thirtieth day] because the Rabbis had not completed their calculation until then.