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Avodah Zarah Daf 10

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

There was a document (*which came before Beis Din*) which was dated six years ahead of the present time (*i.e. it was written that the loan occurred in the 506th year of the Greek era, when, in truth, it was only the 500th year*). The rabbinical students who were sitting before Rava were of the opinion that it should be considered a post-dated document, which is to be deferred and not to be used to collect properties (*that the borrower has sold*) until the date recorded on the document. Rav Nachman said: This document must have been written by a scribe who was very precise and took into account the six years of the Greek Reign in Eilam (*the first six years that they ruled*) which we do not count, and the date is therefore correct, for wit was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Yosi said: The Greeks reigned in Eilam for six years and afterwards their dominion extended over the entire world.

Rav Acha bar Yaakov asked: How do we know that documents are dated in connected with the Greek Empire at all? Why not say that it is counted from the Exodus from Egypt (*which took place exactly one thousand years before the beginning of the Greek Empire*), but the scribe omitted the first thousand years (*after the Exodus – for the sake of simplicity*) and gave the years of the next thousand, and therefore, the document is indeed post-dated (*by six years*)!?

Rav Nachman answered: In the Diaspora, the Greek Era alone is how we count.

Rav Acha bar Yaakov thought that Rav Nachman was merely putting him off, but when he went and studied it thoroughly

he discovered that it is indeed taught in a *braisa*: In the Diaspora, the Greek Era alone is how we count.

Ravina said: A *Mishna* would indicate like this as well, for it was taught in a *Mishna*: The first day of Nissan is the New Year for the kings and for the festivals. And the *Gemora* asked: What are the ramifications of this? Rav Chisda answered: It is in order to precisely date a contract. The *Mishna* also stated: The first day of Tishrei is the New Year for reckoning the years and for the *Shemittah* (*a Sabbatical year which occurred every seven years in which farmland had to remain uncultivated*). And the *Gemora* asked: What are the ramifications of this? Rav Chisda answered: It is in order to precisely date a contract. The question was then raised: Aren't these explanations self-contradictory? And the answer given was: One refers to Jewish kings, and the other to kings of idolatrous nations - the year of idolatrous kings being counted from Tishrei, and of Jewish kings from Nissan. Now, in the present time, we count the years from Tishrei; if it were enter your mind that we count from the Exodus, it is surely from Nissan that we should count! Does this not prove that our counting is based on the reign of the Greek kings (*and not from the Exodus*)? This indeed proves it.

The *Mishna* had stated: The *Ginusya* day of their kings (*is also a festival*).

The *Gemora* asks: What is meant by the *Ginusya* day of their kings?



Rav Yehudah said: It is the day on which the king is inaugurated.

The *Gemora* asks: But has it not been taught in a *braisa*: he *Ginusya* day of their kings and the day of the king's inauguration!?

The *Gemora* answers: There is no difficulty, for one term indicates the king's own inauguration, and the other refers to that of his son.

The *Gemora* asks: But do the Romans ever appoint a king's son as king? Didn't Rav Yosef apply [the following verse to Rome]: Behold I made you small among the nations — in that they do not place the son of a king on the royal throne, — you are greatly despised — in that they do not possess a tongue or script?

What then does *Ginusya* mean? — [The King's] birthday. But we learned [elsewhere]: 'The *Ginusya* and the birthday.' That, too, is no contradiction. The one refers to the king's own birthday, the other to that of his son. But we have also the wording: 'The king's *Ginusya* and his son's *Ginusya*, his own birthday and his son's birthday!' Then [as said previously] *Ginusya* means indeed the day of the King's accession. but there is no difficulty [raised by the mention of both terms], the one applying to his own accession, the other to that of his son; and as to your question about their not appointing a king's son as king, such appointment would be made at the [king's] request, as was the case with Asverus the son of Antoninus who reigned [in his father's place].

Antoninus once said to Rebbe: It is my desire that my son Asverus should reign instead of me and that Tiberias should be declared a Colony. Were I to ask one of these things it would be granted while both would not be granted. Rebbe thereupon brought a man, and having made him ride on the shoulders of another, handed him a dove bidding the one who carried him to order the one on his shoulders to

liberate it. The Emperor perceived this to mean that he was advised to ask [of the Senate] to appoint his son Asverus to reign in his stead, and that subsequently he might get Asverus to make Tiberias a free Colony.

[On another occasion] Antoninus mentioned to him that some prominent Romans were annoying him. Rebbe thereupon took him into the garden and, in his presence, picked some radishes, one at a time. Said [the Emperor to himself] his advice to me is: Do away with them one at a time, but do not attack all of them at once.

The *Gemora* asks: But why didn't he speak explicitly? — He thought his words might reach the ears of those prominent Romans who would persecute him. Why then did he not say it in a whisper? — Because it is written: For a bird of the air shall carry the voice.

The Emperor had a daughter named Gira who committed a sin, so he sent to Rebbe a rocket-herb, and Rebbe in return sent him coriander. The Emperor then sent some leeks and he sent lettuce in return.

Every day Antoninus would send Rebbe gold-dust in a leather bag filled with wheat at the top, saying [to his servants]: "Carry the wheat to Rebbe!" Rebbe sent word to say, "I do not need it, I have quite enough of my own," and Antoninus answered: "Leave it then to those who will come after you that they might give it to those who will come after me, for your descendants and those who will follow them will hand it over to them."

Antoninus had a cave which led from his house to the house of Rebbe. Every time [he visited Rebbe] he brought two slaves, one of whom he slew at the door of Rebbe's house and the other [who had been left behind] was killed at the door of his own house. Said Antoninus to Rebbe: When I call let none be found with you. One day he found Rabbi Chanina bar Chama sitting there, so he said: "Did I not tell you that no man should be found with you at the time when

I call?" And Rebbe replied. "This is not an [ordinary] human being." "Then", said Antoninus, "let him tell that servant who is sleeping outside the door to rise and come in." Rabbi Chanina bar Chama thereupon went out but found that the man had been slain. He thought, "How shall I act now? Shall I call and say that the man is dead? — but one should not bring a sad report; shall I leave him and walk away? — that would be slighting the king." So he prayed for mercy for the man and he was restored to life. He then sent him in. Antoninus said: "I am well aware that the least one among you can bring the dead to life, still when I call let no one be found with you." Every time [he called] he used to attend on Rebbe and wait on him with food or drink. When Rebbe wanted to get on his bed Antoninus crouched in front of it saying, "Get on to your bed by stepping on me." Rebbe, however, said, "It is not the proper thing to treat a king so slightly." Whereupon Antoninus said: "Would that I served as a mattress unto you in the world to come!" Once he asked him: "Shall I enter the world to come?" "Yes!" said Rebbe. "But," said Antoninus, "is it not written: There will be no remnant to the house of Esav?" "That," he replied. "applies only to those whose evil deeds are like to those of Esav." We have learned likewise: There will be no remnant to the House of Esav, might have been taken to apply to all, therefore Scripture says distinctly — To the house of Esav, so as to make it apply only to those who act as Esav did. "But", said Antoninus, is it not also written: There [in the nether world] is Edom, her kings, and all her princes." "There, too," Rebbe explained, "[it says:] 'her kings,' it does not say all her kings; 'all her princes,' but not all her officers!

This is indeed what has been taught: 'Her kings' but not all her kings; 'all her princes,' but not all her officers; 'Her kings.' but not all her kings — excludes Antoninus the son of Asverus; 'all her princes,' but not all her officers — excludes Ketiah the son of Shalom.

What about this Ketiah b. Shalom? — There was once a Caesar who hated the Jews. One day he said to the

prominent members of the government, "If one has a wart on his foot, shall he cut it away and live [in comfort] or leave it on and suffer discomfort?" To which they replied: "He should cut it away and live in comfort." Then Ketiah bar Shalom addressed them thus: "In the first place, you cannot do away with all of them, for it is written: For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven. Now, what does this verse indicate? Were it to mean that [Israel] was to be scattered to the four corners of the world, then instead of saying, as the four winds, the verse would have said, to the four winds? It can only mean that just as the world cannot exist without winds, so the world cannot exist without Israel. And what is more, your kingdom will be called a crippled kingdom." To this the king replied: "You have spoken very well; however, he who contradicts the king is to be cast into a circular furnace." On his being held and led away, a Roman matron said of him: "Pity the ship that sails [towards the harbor] without paying the tax." Then, throwing himself on his foreskin he cut it away exclaiming: "You have paid the tax you wilt pass and enter [paradise]." As he was being cast [into the furnace] he said: "All my possessions [are to go to] Rabbi Akiva and his friends." This, Rabbi Akiva interpreted according to the verse: And it shall be unto Aaron and his sons [which is taken to mean that] one half is Aaron's and one half his sons." A bas-kol then exclaimed: "Ketiah bar Shalom is destined for [eternal] life in the world to come!" Rebbe [on hearing of it] wept saying: "One may acquire eternity in a single hour, another may acquire it after many years!"

Antoninus attended on Rebbe: Artaban attended on Rav. When Antoninus died, Rebbe exclaimed: The bundle is unraveled! [So also] when Artaban died, Rav exclaimed: The bundle is unraveled!