

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Calculating dates from the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash

The Gemara unsuccessfully challenges the earlier assertion that the Romans ruled for 180 years before the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

R' Pappa gives different ways to determine the specific number of years since the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash or the number year to put into a document.

Tanna D'Vei Eliyahu presents a Baraisa that discusses the six-thousand years of the world.

The Gemara discusses when the era of 2000 years of Torah began.

R' Pappa offers two methods of calculating how many years of the era of Moshiach have transpired.

R' Huna the son of R' Yehoshua offers a method of calculating what year of the shemittah cycle one is in.

R' Chanina offered business advice based on his perception of when the exile would end.

A Baraisa echoes the same concept.

The Gemara explains the difference between these two teachings. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. How does a scribe determine the correct year for documents?

2. When did the two-thousand years of Torah begin?

3. How does one calculate the year of the shemittah cycle?

4. At what point did the Tanna deem it unwise to spend money on the purchase of land?

Distinctive INSIGHT

When did Avraham depart from Charan?

וגמירי דאברהם בההיא שעתא בר חמשין ותרתי הוה

The Gemara cites a Baraisa taught by D'vei Eliyahu. Who is the Eliyahu who taught this Baraisa? שו"ת writes that this does not refer to Eliyahu, the Prophet, but rather one of the Tannaim whose name was Eliyahu. As a proof, he notes that in the introduction to his Commentary to Zeraim, Rambam mentions that there was a Tanna named Eliyahu.

שם הגדולים contends that it is clear to him that the reference here is to Eliyahu, the Prophet, as we find (Kesubos 106a) that Eliyahu appeared to Rav Anan and taught him Beraisos, which were called Seder Eliyahu. Sefer HaTeruma also explains that our Baraisa from Dvei Eliyahu was authored by Eliyahu, the Prophet.

The Baraisa teaches that the world will last for six thousand years. The first two thousand were years lacking purpose and meaning (תוהו). The next two thousand were planned to be years of Torah, and the final two thousand are to be days of Moshiach. The Baraisa concludes that although the final two thousand have commenced, our sins have caused Moshiach to be delayed.

Regarding the second two thousand years of Torah, the Gemara realizes that the Torah was given at Sinai in the year 2448, which leaves a period of only 1552 years of Torah until the year 4000. Nevertheless, the Gemara points out that the era of Torah actually began from the events described in the verse (Bereshis 12:5), when Avraham and Sarah spread the message of monotheism among the residents of Charan. We know, based upon a careful analysis of the verses at the end of Parashas Bereshis and Noach that Avraham was born in the year 1948. We also have a tradition that at the time Avraham and Sarah influenced the people of Charan in Bereshis (ibid.) that Avraham was 52 years old. This means that the era of Torah began precisely in the year 2000 from creation.

Tosafos (ד"ה וגמירי) wonders about the Gemara's claim that Avraham was only 52 years old in the verse of his and Sarah's teaching in Charan, as the verse which immediately precedes this one fixes the age of Avraham

HALACHAH Highlight

The era of Moshiach

שני אלפים ימות המשיח

Two thousand years are the era of Moshiach

Our Gemara relates that the era that we presently find ourselves in is the era of Moshiach – ימות המשיח. Accordingly, Teshuvos Devar Yehoshua¹ raises an interesting point regarding the הרחמן said at the end of Birkas HaMazon. The standard text reads: הרחמן הוא יזכנו לימות המשיח – The Merciful One, He should cause us to merit the era of Moshiach. However, there is an alternative text which reads: הרחמן הוא יזכנו לביאת המשיח – The Merciful One should cause us to merit the arrival of Moshiach. This, alternative text, writes Teshuvos Devar Yehoshua, is the preferred text since we are already in the midst of the era of Moshiach and our prayers now are for his arrival rather than for the era to begin. It is also reported² that when this change in the wording was suggested to the author of Teshuvos Minchas Elazar it found favor in his eyes and from that moment forward he would say לביאת המשיח rather than לימות המשיח.

Sefer Moadim Uzemanim³ cites the Mishnah in Berachos (1:5) that expounds the words (Devarim 16:3) כל להביא to teach that one must recall the exodus לימות המשיח – to include the era of Moshiach. He wondered what the phrase actually means, since we already

(Insight...continued from page 1)

at seventy-five when he left Charan.

Tosafos explains that it must be that Avraham departed from Charan twice. We find that Avraham was seventy years old at the Bris Bein HaBesarim which took place in the land of Canaan, after which Avraham returned to Charan for five years (see Seder Olam Ch.1). It must be that when he originally left Charan Avraham was fifty two, and it is in reference to that move that the verse tells us that he and Sarah taught monotheism to their disciples of Charan (Bereshis 14:5). Later, Avraham returned to Charan and stayed there for five years, and at age seventy-five he departed to go to the promised land (ibid., v.4). ■

find ourselves in the era of Moshiach. Additionally, in the earlier part of the Mishnah when Ben Zoma expounded the same verse he concluded with the word הלילות – the night, without the word להביא. He also notes that there have been those who wrote that it is preferable for one to say לביאת המשיח rather than לימות המשיח, as mentioned before. The answer, he suggests, is that an important concept is being emphasized with this language. One must recall the exodus for all the days of the era of Moshiach, even during the part of the era where we continue to suffer in exile to the point where we can no longer discern the benefit of the exodus from Egypt. ■

1. עי מוריה צ"ג ניסן תשמ"ט עמי נ"ט.
2. עי ספר תולדות קול אריה ס"י ק"ל אות ב'.
3. מועדים וזמנים ח"ג ס"י רנ"ד. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Primordial Chaos

"ששת אלפים שנה הוי עלמא..."

The Chessed L'Avraham, zt"l, answers a very pointed question presented by today's daf. "Our sages teach in Avodah Zara 3 that if we had not accepted the Torah the world would have reverted to primordial chaos. But does this literally mean that the world would have been utterly destroyed if we had not received the Torah? The answer is no. Our sages teach that Torah is one of the three pillars that sus-

tain the world. This is the meaning of Hashem saying that if we do not accept the Torah He will revert the world to chaos. Just as we find in Avodah Zarah 9 that the first two thousand years of the world represent chaos, so too, if we had not accepted Torah, the second set of two thousand years would also not have been of greater spiritual magnitude than the first. This is because the years do not have intrinsic value until the Jewish people accepts the Torah.

"This is alluded to in the remark of the Midrash that the phrase, 'טוב מאד' that describes creation alludes to man, since the word מא"ד is the same letters as the word אד"ם. This teaches that

Hashem considers the world very good only if man does as he should and accepts the Torah.¹

"But even after we accepted the Torah, we will not be redeemed until we fulfill our spiritual mission here on earth. This is because our sages teach that we will only merit redemption after all the souls leave the body. But that is only if we do as we should and rectify what must be rectified. If not, we must continue to return until we finally fulfill our mission. This delays Moshiach, who can only come when we have done our tasks."² ■

1. חסד לאברהם, שבועות
2. זקני שארית הפליטה, ליקוטים ■