

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Calculating the seventy years of exile (cont.)

A Baraisa is cited that supports the earlier assertion that some of the years used to count the seventy years of exile overlapped.

Rava notes that Daniel also erred in the calculation of the seventy years.

Rava resolves the apparent contradiction between two related pesukim.

2) Cyrus

R' Nachman bar Rava mentions the unique role Cyrus was to play in Jewish history.

3) Exposition of the megilla (cont.)

The exposition of the Megilla continues.

A discussion between R' Shimon ben Yochai and his students regarding the sin that made the Jews of that generation deserving of destruction, is recorded.

The Gemara continues to analyze the words and phrases of the Megilla. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Why was Koresh criticized for allowing the Jews to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash?
2. Who were the bartenders at Achashveirosh's party?
3. What made Achashveirosh get so angry when Vashti refused to come to his party?
4. Was Mordechai from Shevet Yehudah or Shevet Binyamin?

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l'ilui nishmas Shmuel ben Moshe Yaakov
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ר' ישראל זלמן בן ר' יוסף חיים
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לרפואה שלמה
חיים גרשון הכהן בן נחמה ליבא

Distinctive INSIGHT

The power of Tefilla and Purim

שהאיר עיניהם של ישראל בתפילה

One lesson of Purim is to teach us the great power of prayer - the service of the heart which we can utilize even now, when we do not have the Beis HaMikdash (Berachos 26b).

From where is this apparent in the story of Purim? Mordechai showed us the way. Mordechai is likened to Moshe Rabbeinu in that his prayers are what saved Klal Yisrael (Esther Raba 6:2,7:18). The Gemara (Megilla 12b) tells us more about Mordechai by asking this question: If the Megilla wanted to list Mordechai's genealogy, why didn't it trace his roots back to Binyamin? It is therefore apparent that the Megilla wanted to teach us a lesson with the names it does list, and not simply to tell us his genealogy. The name Yair, meaning "light", teaches us that Mordechai enlightened the eyes of Yisrael to tefilla. Shimi, meaning "I listened", indicates that his prayers were heard. Finally, Kish, meaning "knock", is understood to show that he knocked on the "Gates of Mercy", which were locked, and they were opened. Mordechai continuously davened. He davened from the onset of Haman's announcement to annihilate the Jews through the time when he thought Haman was coming to kill him near the end of the Megilla. Furthermore, he did so knowing that all the events that had already transpired and those that were about to occur were all a facade, and the Jews' salvation was certain (Esther Raba 7:13-18).

Beginning with Parashas Terumah and continuing through Parashas Shemini, the Torah speaks in one way or another about the avodah-service in the Mishkan. Purim always occurs during these weeks when these parashas are read. We also note that the story of Purim takes place in exile where there is no Beis HaMikdash and therefore no avodah. There is a lesson we can learn from this.

In the times of the Mishkan and the Beis HaMikdash, the offerings helped bring us close to Hashem. Now that they are gone, we have tefilla to take their place. If we take our tefillos seriously and understand that we have that ability to pierce the "Gates of Mercy" as did Mordechai, perhaps we can help deliver ourselves, our community, and all of Klal Yisrael from the hardships that trouble us. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Spelling the name Yehudah

קרי ליה יהודי אלמא מיהודה קאתי... ואמאי קרי ליה יהודי על שומם שכפר בע"ז שכל הכופר בע"ז נקרא יהודי כדכתיב איתי גברין יהודאין

He was called "Yehudi" thus we see he came from [the Shevet of] Yehudah ... and why was he called "Yehudi?" because he rejected idolatry and anyone who rejects idolatry is called a "Yehudi" as the pasuk states, "There are Yehudites..."

Poskim discuss at length the correct spelling of the name Yehudah. The Taz¹ rules that there is no universal way to spell the name Yehudah and it will depend on how the person signs his name. Those who sign their name with an "א" should have their name spelled on official documents with an "א" and those who sign their name with a "ה" should have their name spelled on official documents with an "ה".

Teshuvos Kenesses Yechezkel² agrees with this ruling unless the person is nicknamed Leib. The reason for this distinction is that the two possible spellings for Yehudah are dependent on the two reasons given in our Gemara for why Mordechai was referred to as איש יהודי. One reason is that he was a descendant of Shevet Yehudah but the second reason is that anyone who denies the validity

of idolatry is called a יהודי. The basis of this nickname is a pasuk in Sefer Daniel which states, איתי גברין יהודאין. Since this second explanation spells the word Yehudah with an "א" it is logical to assume that a person who is named Yehudah for this reason will spell their name with an "א". If, however, a person is nicknamed Leib it is clear that his name is based on the pasuk³, "גור אריה" (Leib is Yiddish for a lion) rather than based on the pasuk in Sefer Daniel, and as such his name is spelled with a "ה".

Teshuvos Shev Yaakov⁴ disagrees with Kenesses Yechezkel's qualification. The reason is that in the same place that Taz writes that the spelling of Yehudah is dependent on the way the person signs his name he writes that the correct spelling of Gedaliah also depends on how the person signs his name. Although there is no place in Tanach that Gedaliah is spelled with an "א," nonetheless he writes that the spelling depends on how the person signs his name. It is therefore logical to assume that the same is true regarding Yehudah, and that it depends on how a person signs his name regardless of how it spelled in Tanach. ■

1. ט"ז ומובא דבריו בשו"ת כנסת יחזקאל דלקמן
2. שו"ת כנסת יחזקאל סי' ס"ט
3. בראשית מט: ט
4. דברי השב יעקב מובא בשו"ת כנסת יחזקאל הנ"ל ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Bowing to Haman

אלא מפני שהשתחוו לצלם

The Kotzker Rebbe, zt"l, once asked his son-in-law, the Avnei Nezer, zt"l, "The Gemara in Megillah 12a says that the students of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai asked him why the 'enemies of Israel' (a euphemism) were liable for death? He answered that it was because they had partaken of the meal of Achashverosh. The students then asked why all of the Jews of the kingdom were held accountable when only the residents of Shu-

shan had actually eaten? Rabbi Shimon told them that the underlying reason was because the Jewish people had bowed to the idol of Nevuchadnezzar. Now, according to the first reason, it makes sense that their teshuvah had to consist of three days of fasting. However, if the real reason was that the Jewish people had been guilty of some form of idolatry, why would fasting be the appropriate type of teshuva for bowing to an image?"

The Avnei Nezer explained, "Had the Jewish people been willing to humble themselves and bow to Haman as they had bowed to the statue in the days of Nevuchadnezzar, they

could have saved themselves in accordance with the laws of nature, by sending a delegation to Haman to plead for their lives the moment they heard about the decree. Instead, they rejected this simple effort and chose instead to associate themselves with Mordechai HaTzaddik. By resisting the temptation to prostrate themselves before the 'image' of Haman, they achieved their proper teshuva. Through fasting and prayer, they were able to have the decree nullified, and they merited the direct intervention of Hashem Yisborach—a much higher salvation than mere bowing and scraping could have ever achieved!" ■