

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) New Year for kings (cont.)

The Gemara concludes demonstrating that Aharon Ha-Kohen passed away before Moshe Rabbeinu. This serves as the basis for the proof that the New Year for kings is from Nisan.

It is suggested that perhaps the New Year begins with Iyar.

This suggestion is rejected.

It is suggested that perhaps the New Year begins with Sivan.

This suggestion is rejected.

It is suggested that perhaps the New Year begins with Tamuz,

Av or Elul and these suggestions could not be refuted.

R' Elazar offers an alternative source that the New Year begins with Nisan.

R' Elazar's source is unsuccessfully challenged.

A Baraisa is cited that is consistent with R' Yochanan and R' Elazar

2) Non-Jewish kings

R' Chisda states that the Mishnah's ruling concerning the beginning of the New Year for kings applies only for Jewish kings but the New Year for non-Jewish kings begins in Tishrei.

Two unsuccessful challenges are presented against R' Chisda's assertion.

R' Yosef's objection is refuted by citing R' Avahu's statement that Koresh was an upright king and the years of

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Distinctive INSIGHT

Rabbi Yochanan counts Jewish kings from Nisan

תניא כוותיה דר' יוחנן

The Gemara cites Rabbi Yochanan who presents an elaborate, yet systematic proof to show that the year for a Jewish king begins anew with the month of Nisan. The proof begins with demonstrating how Aharon's death during the fortieth year of the Jews' sojourn in the desert in the month of Av was followed by the speech of Moshe, in the beginning of the month of Shevat of that same year. This proves that the calendar did not change years between Av and Shevat. The Gemara also shows that the year does not begin with Iyar, nor does it start with Sivan. When the approach of Rabbi Yochanan falls short of eliminating the possibility of the year beginning with Tamuz, Av or Adar, the Gemara is forced to use a different proof altogether. We use a one-step proof of Rabbi Eliezer, who shows that Nisan is the first month, based upon a verse in Divrei HaYamim, and a גזירה שוה.

A Baraisa is brought to show that the proof of Rabbi Yochanan is authentic. It quotes all his sources in order, and concludes with the verse from which we learn the lesson of Rabbi Eliezer. Tosafos (ד"ה תניא כוותיה דר' יוחנן) wonders why the Baraisa has to bring the verses of Rabbi Yochanan at all. His proof was shown to be inadequate, and the proof which demonstrates Nisan as the start of the year came exclusively from Rabbi Eliezer. What does the presentation of Rabbi Yochanan contribute to the words of the Baraisa?

Tosafos points out that the words of Rabbi Eliezer only establish their point based upon the backdrop of the words of Rabbi Yochanan. On its own merit, the verse of Rabbi Eliezer would be understood as counting Iyar as the second month of Shlomo HaMelech, and not of all Jewish kings. He, indeed, began his rule in Nisan, but we would not have known that Nisan would be counted as the first month of the year as a universal rule for all Jewish kings. The rule of Rabbi Yochanan, who traces this pattern back to the exodus from Egypt helps to establish this as a general rule for all Jewish kings. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Why is R' Yochanan's explanation ultimately rejected?

2. How does R' Chisda prove that non-Jewish kings are dated from Tishrei?

3. What was R' Yosef's challenge to R' Chisda's assertion?

4. What is the significance of the three names of Koresh?

Today's Daf Digest is dedicated
In memory of my grandfather
Yoseph Chaim Ben Dov Baer Halevi
by his grandson, Richard Ehrlich

HALACHAH Highlight

The offspring of a mixed marriage

כורש מלך כשר היה לפיכך מנו לו כמלכי ישראל

Koresh was an upright king, therefore, they counted his reign like a Jewish king.

According to Tosafos¹ who writes that Koresh was the son of Esther and Achashverosh, one could ask why the Gemara states that Koresh's reign was counted from Nisan "because he was upright," when the Gemara could have offered a stronger answer, namely, that Koresh was Jewish. Although there is a dispute whether the child of a Jewish mother and non-Jewish father is kosher, the Gemara's conclusion is that the child is kosher². Thus, since Koresh was Jewish it is expected that his reign would be counted from Nisan.

Maharit Algazi³ writes that the Gemara's conclusion that the child of a Jewish mother and non-Jewish father is kosher applies only if the baby's mother raised the child but not if the non-Jewish father raised the child. When the Jewish mother raises the child it becomes retroactively revealed (איגלאי מילתא למפרע) that the child was conceived and delivered in a state of sanctity. If, however, the child is raised by the non-Jewish father we consider the child to be non-Jewish and we would require a conversion if the child desired to marry a Jew. Accordingly, one could explain⁴ that

his reign were calculated from Nisan.

A challenge against this assertion leads the Gemara to note that Koresh was upright only initially, but eventually he became dissolute. ■

it is likely that Achashverosh was in charge of raising Koresh rather than Esther, and thus Koresh is considered a non-Jew. Hence, the Gemara needed another explanation as to why his reign was calculated as if he was a Jewish king.

Rav Ovadyah Yosef⁵ demonstrates that the position of Maharit Algazi is not followed by a majority of Poskim and thus Koresh is considered a Jew. Consequently, an alternative resolution to the question is required and he offers a simple straightforward approach. The question of how a king's reign is calculated does not relate to the king but to the people. Since the people under Koresh's reign were non-Jews his reign would be calculated according to the methods used for non-Jewish kings. However, due to the fact that he was upright, he merited to have his reign calculated as if he was king over Jewish citizen. ■

1. תוס' ג' ד"ה שנת עשרים
2. ע' תוס' יבמות טז ד"ה אמוראי נינהו וע' מהרש"ל בחכמת שלמה ומהרש"א שם דפליגי בעוד פרט בזה
3. מהרי"ט אלגאזי בהל' יו"ט פ"ח דבכורות אות ס"ה דקע"ג ע"ד והלאה וכן מובא במאור ישראל דלקמן
4. כן פירש הרה"ג ראשון לציון הר' עובדיה יוסף במאור ישראל למס' ר"ה ג ד"ה כורש
5. שם ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The King of Arad

וישמע הכנעני מלך ערד

On today's daf, the Baalei Tosafos quote the Midrash Tanchuma that states that the king of Arad mentioned in Bamidbar 21:1 was actually Amalek. The Radak, zt"l, comments on the phrase, "The כנענים who are near to צרפת," (Ovadia 1:20) that the כנענים mentioned there refers to Germany which adjoins France.

In Jerusalem, everyone had been awaiting the arrival of His Royal Majesty, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, and when he and his vast entourage finally

came everyone went out to see the mighty ruler. The holy residents of Jerusalem were not mere curiosity-seekers—they were avidly awaiting the opportunity to recite the blessing over a non-Jewish king. People prepared themselves by studying the relevant halachos from the source in the Gemara, and when the time came, everyone turned out for the extravagant reception in honor of the visiting monarch.

Those who were close to Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l, noticed that he was not preparing himself to join in the gala event. This was strange, especially since the Rav was always the first to join in any mitzvah. And how much more confusing it was in this case, when the opportunity to fulfill this particular

mitzvah might never present itself again. When those close to him questioned his unusual behavior—unusual in the sense of being too usual—the Rav answered, "You are correct. I am not planning to attend the reception at all."

When asked why, he explained, "I have received a tradition from my teachers that the Germans are descendants of Amalek. There is no mitzvah to make a blessing on a king from the line of Amalek!"

Those present did not comprehend how such a thing could be so, since the Germans were universally considered the most civilized and cultured people in all of Europe. After the Holocaust they understood all too well the truth of Rav Yosef Chaim's prescient words! ■