

Tsav5. ברשות מורי ורבותי.

Last week we have studied the chronology of the inauguration of the Mishkan and more generally of sefer Vaykra. We have seen that there is almost unanimity among the Hakhmei ha Talmud and almost all the Commentators accept that the seven days of inauguration began on 23 Adar and therefore the 8th day, when Aharon and his sons effectively began to officiate was 1 Nissan of the second year of the Exodus.

I want now to show that there is another possible chronology of these events, which presents many advantages. The Torah tells us in Ba'alotkha that after that benei Yisrael were ordered to keep Pessah and to bring the Paschal lamb in the afternoon of the 14th of Nissan of the second year of Exodus, some people were defiled by a strong impurity (טומאה חמורה דהיינו) and could not bring the Paschal lamb on this day but they could have brought it if Pessah fell one day later. ויהי אנשים אשר היו טמאים לנפש אדם ולא יכלו לעשות הפסח ביום ההוא. This means that the seventh day of the purification process, consisting in the second projection of the purification water of the burnt red cow fell on Erev Pessah and that they became impure not later than on 8 Nissan. In Sifrei 19 the Braitah (this Braitah is reproduced in Sukkah 25a) examines who were these people who were impure and could not bring the Korban Pessah on this day, 14 Nissan but apparently on the following day, they could have brought it. The braitah is as follows:

ויהי אנשים אשר היו טמאים לנפש אדם, מי היו? נושאי ארונו של יוסף היו, דברי רבי ישמעאל. רבי עקיבא אומר מישאל ואלצפן היו שנטמאו לנדב ואביהו. רבי יצחק אומר אם נושאי ארונו של יוסף היו יכולים לטהר ואם מישאל ואלצפן היו, יכולים ליטהר. מי היו? למת מצווה נטמאו שנאמר ולא יכלו לעשות הפסח ביום ההוא, לא היו יכולים לעשות בו ביום אבל היו יכולים לעשות ביום שלאחריו. נמצינו למדין שחל שביעי שלהם להיות בערב פסח.

In order to understand completely the discussion we must explain, according to Malbim, and it makes sense and belongs to the pshat, that the basis assumption of this Braitah is that no adult male of the Benei Yisrael above 20 died during the period of less than 7 months between motsa'e yom Kippur (11 Tishri of the first year, the date of the first census prescribed in the beginning of Ki Tissa) and 1 Iyar of the second year, the date of the second census prescribed at the beginning of Bamidbar. The complete discussion of this statement is a complete subject in itself and we will not elaborate today. We merely point out that according to Malbim ad locum in Ba'alotkha and Ramban in Shemot 30:16, Rashi assumes that no adult died between these two censuses and this is also certainly true for Bamidbar Rabbah chap 1, § 10. the reference of Rashi. Therefore if we consider that it was the basis assumption of the Braitah of Sifrei, the question asked by the Braitah makes sense: if no one died during all this period, who could well be those impure people?

The Braitah offers different answers to the initial question: those carrying the coffin of Yosseef, Michael and Elsafan or those burying proselytes, who were not included in the census. Let us analyse the Braitah. Rabbi Yishmael proposes the people of the tribe of Menashe who were carrying the coffin of Yosseef and were impure, טמאי מת by carrying the coffin. But this proposition is rejected because the benei yossef could, not only according to Rabbi Ytshak but even according to Rabbi Akiba, become pure before Tishri 14 and they could thus participate in the Korban Pessah. Rabbi Akiba differs and ascertains that those impure people were Michael and Elzafan whose 7th day of purification was 14 Nissan. Their first day was thus on $14 - 6 = 8$ Nissan. They became impure on 8 Nissan when Nadav and Avihu were struck down in the Kodesh ha Kodashim. Thus Rabbi Akiba states that shemini shel milou'im was 8 Nissan and therefore that the ימי המלוואים began on 1 Nissan and therefore the chap 40 in Pekudey were G'd ordered to erect the Mishkan on 1 Nissan refers to the first day of ימי המלוואים and the first erection of the Mishkan. Thus already on the first day of the ימי המלוואים the spirit of G'd was filling the Mishkan and the Mishkan was thus definitively build. The generally accepted principle that Moshe was on each of these 7 days erecting and dismantling the Mishkan, becomes null and void. The building of the Mishkan was definitive from the

first day onward. Therefore according to Rabbi Akiba it was already possible to burn the פרה during the ימי המלוואים

Indeed from Hukat chap 19 verse 5: ולקח אלעזר הכהן מדמה בעצבעו והזהר אל נוכח פני אהל מועד מדמה: 5 they deduced that as soon as the Tabernacle was definitively erected the פרה אדומה could be burnt; thus as early as 2 Nissan and the people of Menashe could be pure as soon as Nissan 7. Therefore Rabbi Akiba proposes instead of the Benei Menashe, Michael and Elsafan, who became impure after the death of Nadav and Avihou, which happened on 8 Nissan and their seventh day of purification was indeed 14 Nissan.

Rabbi Yitshak, who is according to the book of Rabbi Aharon Heyman, a Babylonian Tana, a fiend of Rabbi Nathan, represents the position of Hakhamim; he considers that the ימי המלוואים were from 23 Adar until 1 Nissan and for him the only possibility to have impure people whose second sprinkling was on the eve of Pessah, was people busy with מת מצווה, meaning people not included in the censuses like the ערב רב but I think that it could also be people busy with young people under 20 or with women, who were not included in the censuses and could have died. But I did not see such a remark.

We see thus that Rabbi Akiba considers that the ימי המלוואים began on 1 Nissan and the 8th day was 8 Nissan and the פרה אדומה could be burnt as soon as 2 Nissan or even 1 Nissan. The consequences of this difference with regard of the understanding of the Torah are huge. Let us recapitulate: In chapter 40 of Shemot, Moshe was ordered to erect the Mishkan on 1 Nissan. This was the first of the seven ימי המלוואים which lasted from 1 Nissan until 7 Nissan and the inauguration of Aaron was on 8 Nissan. On this first day, thus 1 Nissan, the spirit of G'd rested on the Mishkan and filled the Ohel Moed. Therefore there is no more question of dismantling the Mishkan before the next moving of 20 Iyar as described in Ba'alotkha chap 10 verse 11.

The whole sidra Vayikra and the whole sidra Tsav were told on 1 Nissan and only in Parashat Shemini we jump to 8 Nissan. As the inauguration of Aaron was on 8 Nissan the goat which was burnt could not be the שעיר של ראש הודש; it must necessarily be the שעיר המלוואים. The whole narration is smoother and does not present the drawbacks that we mentioned last week. The understanding of Rabbi Akiba seems to better agree with the plain meaning of the text. This is certainly the reason why R. Abraham ibn Ezra and Abarbanel preferred it. This is the chronology resulting from the opinion of Rabbi Akiba in the Braita of Sifrei.

Now it is interesting to note that Abarbanel goes a step farther than the theory of Rabbi Akiba championed by ibn Ezra. From the verse Bamidbar 7: 2

ויקריבו נשיאי ישראל, ראשי בית אבותם, הם נשיאי המטות העומדים על הפקודים.

He deduces that the gifts of the nesi'im and the sacrifices of inauguration were brought after the census of 1 Iyar and he understands the preceding sentence:

ויהי ביום כלות משה להקים את המשכן וימשך אותו ויקדש אותו ואת כל כליו ואת המזבחה ואת כל כליו וימשכן ויקדש אותם.

On the day after he had erected the Mishkan and **after** he had performed the sanctification and the unction of all the kelim and the mizbéah and its kelim... All this process took apparently the rest of Nissan.

This allows a still better agreement with the Pshat and the order of the biblical narration, the sacrifices of inauguration of the altar was after the census of the beginning of Bamidbar, following the order of the Torah and it eliminates the last objection that I made about עירוב שעיר ראש שמחה as the three goats brought on 1 Nissan according to rabbanan, שעיר ראש (שמחה בשמחה) (שמיני) ושעיר הנוכת המזבחה (בשאר) were now brought on three different days, on Rosh Hodesh, on 8 Nissan and after 1 Iyar according to the order of the narration.

Now at the end of this not so short lecture I remain with two unsolved difficulties, which I am not ashamed to confess.

The first difficulty is the following. In all the references quoted from the Talmud were it establishes that the burnt goat that Moshe was looking for was the goat of Rosh Hodesh, the opinion of Rabbi Akiva is never mentioned and furthermore the Talmud doesn't worry about his opinion. For example it never asks a justification according to the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, as it is nevertheless the דרך הגמרא after any אוקימתא to analyse the contradictory opinions. It never asks מאי איכא למימר? as the Talmud is accustomed to ask for the opinion of much less important personalities.

A second difficulty concerns the commentary of Rashi. In Bamidbar 7: 2, on the words הם שעמדו עם משה ואהרן כשמנו את ישראל שנאמר Rashi explains הם נשיאי המטות העומדים על הפקודים" ...ואתכם יהיו... thus those are the princes of the tribes, those who participated (in the past tense) in the organization of the census of 1 Iyar. Therefore apparently the sacrifices of inauguration were offered after the census. It is difficult to understand how Rashi could champion the theory of Hakhamim according which the Nesi'im brought their inauguration sacrifices from 1 Nissan onwards when the text refers to their importance because of their participation to the census of 1 Iyar. Rashi according to his understanding should have explained, and it would be a great דוחק, in the understanding of the text, הם or הם שיעמדו עם משה ואהרן כשימנו את ישראל, דוחק, in the understanding of the text, הם or הם הממונים לעמוד עם משה ואהרן על הפקודים כשנצטרך לכך.

If someone in this room has satisfactory answers, please inform me.

In the meantime Shabbat Shalom and don't allow my koushiot disturbing your Shabbat and don't loose sleep over them.