

Megilla Daf 11

I: Words

- Some say it to praise (11a, 13 lines up) – אִמְרֵי לָהּ לְשִׁבַּח (1)
- Some say it to denigrate (11a, 13 lines up) – אִמְרֵי לָהּ לְגַנְאֵי (2)
- A mnemonic: ShSDK (Shlomo, Sancheriv, Daryevesh, Koresh) (11b top line) – סִימָן שִׁסְדִּ"ךְ (3)
- The upper [realms] (Heavens) (11b, 5th line) – עֲלִיוֹנִים (4)
- The lower [realms] (Earth) (11b, 5th line) – תַּחְתּוֹנִים (5)
- The number 3 (Aramaic switches shin and tav, so it's like shalosh) (11b, 24th line) – תְּלַת (6)
- 30 (Aramaic switches shin and tav, so it's like sh'loshim. It also switches final mem to final nun in plurals) = תְּלַתִּין (7)
(11b, 17th line up)
- The number 8 (Aramaic switches shin and tav, so like sh'mona) (11b, 17th line up) – תְּמַנִּי (8)
- The number 2 (11b, 25th line) = תְּרַתִּי (9)
- The number 60 (Aramaic switches shin and tav, so it's like shishim. It also switches final mem to final nun in plurals) (11b, 9 lines up) = שְׁתֵּין (10)

XI: Gemara phrases

- It is different here (explains why one case cannot be compared to another) (11a, 6 lines up) – שְׂאֵנִי הֶכָּא (1)
- An extraneous word/verse (since it is redundant or not absolutely necessary to understanding the verse, it must only be there for adding a drasha) (11a, 6 lines up) – קָרָא יִתִּירָא (2)
- As we have [already] said (11a, last line) – הָא דְאֶמְרֵן (3)
- But are there not more? (“leika” is the same as “ein”) – וְתוּ לֵיכָּא (4)
- But isn't there (follows previous phrase; “eeka” is the same as “yesh”) – וְהָא אֵיכָּא (5)

III: Arguments

(1) **Timeline of 70 years of Babylonian Exile**

According to both Jewish sources (Yirmiya, Zecharya, Daniel) and historical sources, the Babylonian Exile between the first and second batei mikdash was 70 years. This would mean approximately 586 BCE to 515 BCE. However, there are different ways of counting the 70 years (see below). According to the rabbinic timeline (see below), it seems to come out that the BHM was rebuilt in 511-510 BCE - the discrepancy may be explainable due to “regnal years”, that is, a king who reigned less than full year is given the whole year; thus some single years can be counted twice, one for each king. Thus, we count 1 year for Darius the Mede and 4 for Cyrus, but the first year of Cyrus overlapped so it was really only a total of around 4 years, not 5.

Yirmiya 29:10

כִּי־כֹה אָמַר ה' כִּי לִפְנֵי מְלֹאֵת לְבַבְלָא שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה אֶפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהִקְמַתִי עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־דְּבַר־הַטּוֹב לְהַשִּׁיב אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה:

For so says Hashem, when according to the fulfillment of 70 years, I shall remember you and I will establish for you my good words to return you to this place. (also, see Zecharya 1:12)

Daniel 9:2

בְּשָׁנָת אַחַת לְמַלְכוֹ אֲנִי דָנִיֵּאל בִּינֹתִי בְּסִפְרִים מְסֻפְרִים הַשָּׁנִים אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־הָאֵל־יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא לְמַלְאוֹת לְחַרְבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה:

In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, delved into the books [to calculate] the number of years that were the words of Hashem to Yirmiya the Prophet to fulfill since the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 years.

Timeline (according to our gemara and Seder Olam Rabba)

Babylonians (Nevuchadnezzar) conquer the Assyrians (Esarhadon)

Nevuchadnezzar reigns 45 years - 606-561 BCE

- in his 2nd year, conquers Yehoyakim 605 BCE

- in his 8th year, exiles Yehoyachin (Yehoyakim's son) - **GALUT YEHOYACHIN** 597 BCE

- in his 19th year, he destroys the BM (and exiles Tzidkiyahu) **GALUT TZIDKIYAHU** 586 BCE

Evel Merodach reigns 23 years - 560-537 BCE

Kasdians (Belshazzar) conquer the Babylonians

Belshazzar reigns 3 years 536-533 BCE

The Persians-Medeans conquer the Assyrians

Darius the Mede rules for 1 year and Cyrus I for 4 years 532-527 BCE

- in his first year, Cyrus I proclaims the Jews can rebuild the Temple

Achashverosh - rules 14 years 526-512 BCE

- Haman casts lots in the 12th year

- The war is fought in the 13th year

Darius - rules 36 years (Rabbis assume he is the son of Achashverosh and Esther and that he is also called

Artachshasta and Cyrus (II)) (Nehemia 12:13, latest date in Tanach is his 32nd year) 511-475 BCE

- in his 2nd year, construction begins on Beit ha-Mikdash 509 BCE

- in his 6th year, it is completed (Ezra 6:15) 505 BCE

- in his 7th year, Ezra arrives (Ezra 7:7)

- in his 20th year, Nechemia arrives

Alexander the Great conquers the Persians (125 years total) - 474 BCE

This timeline compresses the actual flow of history, in which this time period has an additional 165 years. (e.g. Alexander the Great came to power in 332 BCE) For a discussion of the internal logic here, see <https://sabbahillel.blogspot.com/2015/05/rabbi-leibtag-shiurim-hebrew-calendar.html>.

I: Belshazzar's count (70) - counts from beginning of Nevuchadnezzar's reign

Nevuchadnezzar - 45

Evel Merodach - 23

Belshazzar - 2

II: Achashverosh's Count (70) - counts from Galut Yehoyachin (8th year of NVN)

Nevuchadnezzar - 37

Evel Merodach - 23

Belshazzar - 3

Darius the Mede and Cyrus - 5

Achashverosh - 2

III: The Real Count (70) - from destruction of the BHM (Galut Tzidkiyahu) (19th year of NVN)

Nevuchadnezzar - 26

Evel Merodach - 22

Belshazzar - 3

Darius the Mede and Cyrus - 4

Achashverosh - 14

Darius - 1

The conclusion of the gemara (on 12a) seems to be that there are two different sets of 70 years:

a) Pekida (God remembering the Jews) - from beginning of NVN's reign to Cyrus's Proclamation (his 1st year)

b) Ge'ula (God rebuilding the BHM) - same as III above (from churban to 2nd year of Daryevesh)