

I Have Only These Festivals

Source Sheet by Benjamin Sigal

Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 2:8

(8) **Rabban Gamliel** had a diagram of the different **forms of the moon** drawn **on a tablet** that hung **on the wall of his attic, which he would show to the laymen** who came to testify about the new moon but were unable to describe adequately what they had seen. **And he would say** to them: **Did you see a form like this or like this?** There was **an incident in which two** witnesses **came** to testify about the new moon, **and they said:** **We saw the waning moon in the morning in the east, and** that same day we saw the new moon **in the evening in the west.** **Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri** said: **They are false witnesses,** as it is impossible to see the new moon so soon after the last sighting of the waning moon. However, **when they arrived in Yavne, Rabban Gamliel accepted them** as witnesses without concern. **And** there was **another** incident in which **two** witnesses **came and said:** **We saw the new moon at its anticipated time,** i.e., on the night of the thirtieth day of the previous month; however, **on the following night,**

משנה ראש השנה ב:ח

(ח) **דמות צורות לבנות היה לו לרבן גמליאל בטבלא ובכתרל בעלייתו, שהן מראות את החדירות ואומר, הכה ראית או כזה. מעשה שבאו שניים ואמרו, ראיינו שחרית במנוח וערבית במערב. אמר רבי יוחנן בן נורי, עדי שקר הם. כשהוא ליבנה קבלו רבנן גמליאל. ועוד באו שניים ואמרו, ראיינו בזמנו, ובליל עברו לא נראה, וקיבלו רבנן גמליאל. אמר רבי דוסא בן הרקינס, עדי שקר הוא, כי איך מעידין על האשה שזיהה, ולמהר כרסתה בינו שניה. אמר לו רבי יהושע, רואה אני את דבריך:**

i.e., the start of the thirty-first, which is often the determinant of a **full, thirty-day month, it was not seen. And** nevertheless **Rabban Gamliel accepted their** testimony and established the New Moon on the thirtieth day. **Rabbi Dosa ben Horkinas** disagreed and **said: They are false witnesses; how can witnesses testify that a woman gave birth and the next day her belly is between her teeth**, i.e., she is obviously still pregnant? If the new moon was already visible at its anticipated time, how could it not be seen a day later? **Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: I see the logic of your statement; the New Moon must be established a day later.**

- What's going on here?

Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 2:9

(9) Upon hearing that Rabbi Yehoshua had challenged his ruling, **Rabban Gamliel sent a message to him: I decree against you that you must appear before me with your staff and with your money on the day on which Yom Kippur occurs according to your calculation; according to my calculation, that day is the eleventh of Tishrei, the day after Yom Kippur. Rabbi Akiva**

משנה ראש השנה ב':ט

(ט) **שלח לו רבנן גמליאל, גוזני**
עליה שתבא אצל במקלה
ובמעותיך ביום הפטורים שחול
להיות בחשbonה. הלה ומצאו רבבי
עקבא מצר, אמר לו, יש לי למדוד
שכל מה שעשה רבנן גמליאל עשו,
שנאמר (ויקרא כג), אלה מועדי יי
מקראי קדש, אשר תקרו אתם,

went and found Rabbi Yehoshua **distressed** that the head of the Great Sanhedrin was forcing him to desecrate the day that he maintained was Yom Kippur. In an attempt to console him, Rabbi Akiva **said to** Rabbi Yehoshua: **I can learn from a verse that everything that Rabban Gamliel did in sanctifying the month is done**, i.e., it is valid. **As it is stated:** “**These are the appointed seasons of the Lord, sacred convocations, which you shall proclaim in their season**” (Leviticus 23:4). This verse indicates that **whether** you have proclaimed them **at their proper time** or **whether** you have declared them **not at their proper time, I have only these Festivals** as established by the representatives of the Jewish people. Rabbi Yehoshua then **came to Rabbi Dosa ben Horkinas**, who **said to him:** **If we come to debate and question the rulings of the court of Rabban Gamliel, we must debate and question the rulings of every court that has stood from the days of Moses until now.** As it is stated: “**Then Moses went up, and Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel**” (Exodus 24:9). **But why were the names of these seventy Elders not specified? Rather, this comes to teach that every set of three judges**

בֵין בָּזְמָנוֹ בֵין שֶׁלָא בָזְמָנוֹ, אֵין לִי מַעֲדּוֹת אֶלָא אֵלּוּ. בָא לוּ אֶצְלַ רַבִי דָוָסָ בָן הַרְכִּינָס, אָמַר לוּ, אִם בָּאיַן אָנוּ לְדוֹן אַחֲרַ בֵית דִינּוֹ שֶׁל רַבְנוּ גַמְלִיאֵל, צָרִיכִין אָנוּ לְדוֹן אַחֲרַ כָל בֵית דִין וּבֵית דִין שָׁעַם מִימּוֹת מֹשֶׁה וְעַד עַכְשִׁיו, שֶׁנָּאָמַר (שְׁמוֹת כְד), וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן נְדָב וְאַבְיָהוּא וְשְׁבָעִים מִזְקָנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְלֹמַד לֹא נַתְפְּרֵשׁוּ שְׁמוֹתָן שֶׁל זְקָנִים, אֶלָא לְלִימָד, שֶׁכָל שֶׁלֶשׁ וּשְׁלֶשׁ שָׁעַמְדוּ בֵית דִין עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַרְיָה הוּא כְבֵית דִינּוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה.

that stands as a court over the Jewish people has the same status as the court of Moses. Since it is not revealed who sat on that court, apparently it is enough that they were official judges in a Jewish court.

- What was Rabbi Yehoshua asked to do? What are the stakes involved?
- What advice is Rabbi Yehoshua given?
- What would you do in this case?

Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 2:9

When Rabbi Yehoshua heard that even Rabbi Dosa ben Horkinas maintained that they must submit to Rabban Gamliel's decision, **he took his staff and his money in his hand, and went to Yavne to Rabban Gamliel on the day on which Yom Kippur occurred according to his own calculation**. Upon seeing him, **Rabban Gamliel stood up and kissed him on his head. He said to him: Come in peace, my teacher and my student. You are my teacher in wisdom**, as Rabbi Yehoshua was wiser than anyone else in his generation, **and you are my student, as you accepted my statement**, despite your disagreement.

משנה ראש השנה ב':ט'

נָטַל מְקָלוֹ וּמַעֲוָתָיו בַּיּוֹם וְהַלֵּה
לִיְבָגֵה אֶצְלָ רַבּוֹ גַּמְלִיאֵל בַּיּוֹם שְׁחַל
יּוֹם הַכְּפֹרִים לְהִיּוֹת בְּחַשְׁבּוֹנוּ. עָמַד
רַבּוֹ גַּמְלִיאֵל וַיַּשְׁקוּ עַל רָאשׁוֹ, אָמַר
לֹז, בָּא בְּשָׁלוּם, רַבִּי וְתַלְמִידִי, רַבִּי
בְּחִכְמָה, וְתַלְמִידִי שְׁקַבְּלָתִ דְּבָרִי:

- What do you get out of this story?
- What does it teach us about apologies?

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