Rabbi Elazar said that this is how the matter is to be understood: Indeed, God Himself does not rejoice over the downfall of the wicked, but He causes others to rejoice. The Gemara comments: One can learn from the language of the verse as well, as it is written: “So the Lord will rejoice [kew yasis]” (Deuteronomy 32:7). And it is not written yasis, the grammatical form of the verb meaning: He will rejoice. Rather, it is written yasis. The grammatical form of this verb indicates that one causes another to rejoice. Consequently, these words are understood to mean that God will cause others to rejoice. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from it that this is the case.

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana introduced this passage with an introduction from here. The verse states with regard to God’s reward to the righteous: “He gives to a man that is good in His sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy” (Ecclesiastes 2:26). The Gemara explains that this verse is referring to the righteous Mordecai. With regard to the next part of the verse: “But to the sinner He gives the task of gathering and heaping up,” this is referring to Haman. The conclusion of the verse states: “That he may give it to one who is good before God” (Ecclesiastes 2:26). This is Mordecai and Esther, as it is written: “And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman” (Esther 8:2).

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana introduced this passage with an introduction from here. “And I will set my throne in Elam, and destroy from there the king and the princes, says the Lord” (Jeremiah 49:38). The king who was destroyed; this is referring to Vashti. “And the princes;” this is referring to Haman and his ten sons.

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana introduced this passage with an introduction from here. We went through fire – עפר ומים. The Maharsha explains that “through fire” is referring to the burning of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. “And you brought us out into abundance” is referring to Purim, primarily because the miracle of Purim relates back to a banquet with an abundance of wine, and Purim is celebrated through the drinking of wine (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto; Maharsha).

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana introduced this passage with an introduction from here. The verse states: “You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but You brought us out into abundance” (Psalms 66:12). “Through fire;” this was in the days of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, who cast the righteous into the furnace. “And through water;” this was in the days of Pharaoh, who decreed that all newborn males be cast into the water. “But You brought us out into abundance;” this was in the days of Haman, where abundant feasts played a pivotal role in their peril and salvation.

Rabbi Yoḥanan introduced this passage with an introduction from here: The verse states: “He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness toward the house of Israel: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God” (Psalms 98:3). When did all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God? In the days of Mordecai and Esther, for their peril and salvation became known through the letters sent throughout the empire.
And they never rest like a bear – Persians – consequently, they are said to never rest. As opposed to some animals mentioned in the Gemara whose identification is questionable, it is clear that the animal referenced in the Gemara here is in fact a bear. Although bears are heavy, as the Gemara here says that they are coated with flesh, they are known to be restless and can run quite quickly. Consequently, they are said to never rest.

Reish Lakish introduced this passage with an introduction from here: “As a roaring lion, and a ravenous bear, so is a wicked ruler over a poor people” (Proverbs 28:15). “A roaring lion”; this is the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, as it is written about him: “The lion has come up from his thicket” (Jeremiah 4:7). “A hungry bear”; this is Ahasuerus, as it is written about him: “And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear” (Daniel 7:5). And Rav Yosef taught that these who are referred to as a bear in the verse are the Persians. They are compared to a bear, as they eat and drink in large quantities like a bear; and they are coated with flesh like a bear; and they grow their hair long like a bear; and they never rest like a bear, whose manner it is to move about from place to place.

“An wicked ruler”; this is Haman. “Over a poor people”; this is the Jewish people, who are referred to in this manner because they are poor in their observance of the mitzvot.

Rabbi Elazar introduced this passage with an introduction from here: “Through laziness the rafters [hamekare] sink in [yimakh]; and through idleness of the hands the house leaks” (Ecclesiastes 10:18). Rabbi Elazar interprets the verse homiletically: “Through the laziness of the Jewish people, who did not occupy themselves with Torah study, the enemy of the Holy One, Blessed be He, a euphemism for God Himself, became poor [makh], so that, as it were, He was unable to help them, as makh is nothing other than poor, as it is stated: “But if he be too poor [makh] for the valuation” (Leviticus 27:8). And the word mekare in the verse is referring to no one other than the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: “Who lays the beams [hamekare] of His chambers in the waters” (Psalms 104:3).

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak introduced this passage with an introduction from here: “A song of ascents of David. If not for the Lord Who was with us, let Israel now say; if not for the Lord Who was with us, when a man rose up against us” (Psalms 124:1–2). The verse speaks of “a man” who rose up against us and not a king. This occurred in the days of Haman, as he, and not King Ahasuerus, was the chief enemy of the Jewish people.

Rava introduced this passage with an introduction from here: “When the righteous are on the increase, the people rejoice; but when the wicked man rules, the people mourn” (Proverbs 29:2). “When the righteous are on the increase, the people rejoice”; this is Mordecai and Esther, as it is written: “And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad” (Esther 8:15). “But when the wicked man rules, the people mourn”; this is Haman, as it is written: “But the city of Shushan was perplexed” (Esther 3:15).

A man and not a king –Persians: Several explanations are offered for the significance of the distinction between a king and a man. One idea is that because a king is concerned with the stability of his kingdom, he will usually be cautious and therefore resistant to declining a complete nation from within it. Haman, however, was a regular man, not a king, and therefore he wasn’t concerned with threats to the throne and attempted to destroy all of the Jews within the kingdom (Or Hadasah).
The Hasmonean and his sons – אָשִׂי

Matthew 4:7: As a witness to the great miracles in the days of Mordecai and Esther, Rabbi Ashi said his introduction from here: “The verse states: ‘Or has God ventured’ to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation?’” (Deuteronomy 4:34). As in the times of Esther, God saved the Jewish people who were scattered throughout the Persian Empire.

Rabbi Levi said his introduction from here: “And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God” (Leviticus 26:44). Shmuel explained: “I will not reject them”; this was in the days of the Greeks. “Nor will I abhor them”; this was in the days of Vespasian. “To destroy them utterly”; this was in the days of Haman. “To break My covenant with them”; this was in the days of the Persians. “For I am the Lord their God”; this is in the days of Gog and Magog.

An alternative understanding was taught in a baraita: “I will not reject them”; this was in the days of the Chaldeans, when I appointed them for Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to pray on their behalf. “Nor will I abhor them”; this was in the days of the Greeks, when I appointed Shimon HaTzaddik for them, and the Hasmonean and his sons, and Mattithiah the High Priest. “To destroy them utterly”; this was in the days of Haman, when I appointed for them the righteous leaders Mordecai and Esther. “To break My covenant with them”; this was in the days of the Romans, when I appointed for them the Sages of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and the Sages of other generations. “For I am the Lord their God”; this will be in the future, when no nation or people of a foreign tongue will be able to subjugate them further.

Rabbi Levi said his introduction from here: “But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass, that those whom you allow to remain of them shall be thorns in your eyes” (Numbers 33:55). King Saul’s failure to completely annihilate Amalek allowed for the existence of his descendant Haman, who acted as a thorn in the eyes of Israel during the Purim episode.

Rabbi Hiyya said his introduction from here, the continuation of the previously cited verse: “And it shall come to pass, that as I thought to do unto them, so I shall do unto you” (Numbers 33:56). Prior to the miracle of Purim, the Jewish people were subject to the punishment that the Torah designated for its enemies, because they did not fulfill God’s commandments.

For what nation is there so great – אָשִׂי

Some explain that this homily is indicating that although the Jews are scattered and divided, they still have “God so near to them” (Maharsha). Others explain that the focus of the statement is the conclusion of that same verse: “As the Lord our God is whenever we call upon Him,” for it relates how the Jews called out to God and were answered (Sifra Emor).

Or has God ventured, etc. – אָשִׂי

The meaning is that the Purim redemption was similar to the redemption from Egypt, which is the subject of the verse. Both were redemptions of “a nation from the midst of another nation,” in the sense that both redemptions involved a reversal of fortune for the two nations involved. In Egypt, a body of water that had been the means to drown Jewish babies became the means to drown the Egyptian pursuers of Israel. Similarly, in the case of Purim, lots were cast to pick a day for the destruction of Israel. This day ended up becoming a day of annihilation for many of Israel’s enemies (Maharsha).

And it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus – אָשִׂי

Some understand that this explanation of Rabbi’s served as his introduction to the Megilla, connecting it with the verse in Deuteronomy that he cites (Ture Even). That verse, which says: “And there you shall sell yourselves to your enemies for bondsmen and bondswomen, and no man shall buy you” (Deuteronomy 28:68). The repetitive nature of the verse, indicating that no one will be willing to buy you for servitude, but they will purchase you in order to murder you, indicates a doubly horrible situation, which is symbolized by the dual term wayhi, meaning woe and mourning.

In the days of Vespasian – אָשִׂי

The Hebrew text reads Nebudachnezzar, but the English translation reads Vespasian, in order to reflect the original version of the text. To avoid offending the Romans, the censor removed the phrase: In the days of Vespasian, a Roman emperor, and replaced it with the less provocative Nebudachnezzar.

When I appointed for them Daniel – אָשִׂי

The Gemara is apparently noting individuals in various generations who were not only righteous but also respected by the gentile governments and thereby awarded a certain measure of authority to defend the Jewish people from their enemies (Rd).

In the days of the Romans – אָשִׂי

The Hebrew text reads Persians, but the English translation reads Romans, in order to reflect the original version of the text, which was altered by the censor in order to avoid offending the Romans.

PERSONALITIES

Shimon HaTzaddik – אָשִׂי

There were two High Priests, a grandfather and grandson, who were both named Shimon ben Honyo. It is unclear which one of them is referred to as Shimon HaTzaddik, and it is possible that both shared this epithet. Shimon HaTzaddik was one of the last members of the Great Assembly, and he was the first individual known by name in the chain of transmission of the Oral Law. Many stories of his righteousness appear throughout the Mishna and Talmud. Unique words of praise for him were uttered by his contemporary, Shimon ben Sira, who said that he was: The greatest of his brothers and the splendor of his people; who is concerned for his people and strengthens them in times of trouble. . . How splendid he is as he looks out from the Temple, and as he emerges from the inner chamber behind the curtain, like a star of light between trees, like a full moon during a Festival (Sifer Ben Sira 49).

The Hasmonean and his sons – אָשִׂי

The source and meaning of the name Hasmonean is unclear. And although the entire dynasty is referred to in Jewish sources as the house of Hasmonean, its origin is unknown. The Gemara here appears to differentiate between Hasmonean and Mattithiah, perhaps indicating that Hasmonean is a nickname for Shimon ben Mattithiah, whose descendants were the Hasmonean kings for generations.
Similarly, although King Ahaz was in danger and wishing to retain his throne, he reigned on his own – that he reigned without reference to anyone else. And it is indicated that its purpose is not merely to recount historical events, but to demonstrate that even the name of the king is significant for understanding the unfolding of the story (Or Hadasch).

This is Ahasuerus – שׁמואל: The commentaries note that the Gemara emphasizes that the word הוהי appears in reference to all these wicked individuals indicating that although there is reason to believe that they changed their ways and improved their character, in truth they remained who they were. For instance, although Ahasuerus ultimately protected the Jews, in truth he essentially remained Ahasuerus the wicked.

Similarly, although King Ahaz was in danger and witnessed miracles, he did not change. In a similar vein, the word הוהי used in reference to righteous individuals, such as Abraham, Moses, and David, indicates that they were righteous from beginning to end, as their greatness did not lead them to arrogance (Maharsha).

That everyone became poor in his days – שֶׁמָּלַךְ: Ahasuerus collected an inordinate amount of taxes to finance his wars and to meet the expenses of his vast building projects, as mentioned by Greek historians from that period.

That he reigned on his own – מִבְּרִישָׁתוֹ: If Ahasuerus is indeed the king referred to by the Greeks as Xerxes I, then the Gemara’s intention would seem to be that although he was not the eldest of Darius’s sons, he was nevertheless appointed king in place of his older brother.

From Hodu to Cush – מַגִּילַת: It appears that the dispute here centers on the meaning of the word Cush. The question is whether it refers to the land of Cush, located in Africa, south of Egypt, or to the nation of the Cushite people, which arose at the time in the western section of India.

Abron had Aaron’s name – אֲבִירָם: And the Gemara continues: “This is [hו] Ahasuerus” (Esther 11:1), for the word הוהי is also used to recognize sustained righteousness. “Abraham, this is [hו] Abraham” (1 Chronicles 1:27), this indicates that Abraham didn’t change, as he remained in his righteousness from beginning to end. Similarly, “This is [hו] Aaron and Moses” (Exodus 6:26); they remained in their righteousness from the beginning of their life to the end of their life. Similarly, with respect to David: “And David, this was [hו] the youngest” (1 Samuel 17:14), indicates that he remained in his humility from beginning to end.

The Gemara continues: “The king Ahaz” (1 Chronicles 22:12); he remained in his wickedness from beginning to end.

The Gemara continues with its explanation of the book of Esther, beginning with a discussion of the name Ahasuerus. Rav said: The name should be viewed as a contraction: ‘The brother of the head [shiv shel rosh] and of the same character as the head [ben gilo shel rosh].” Rav explains: The brother of the head, i.e., the brother of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, who is called “head,” as it is stated: “You are the head of gold” (Daniel 2:38). Of the same character as the head, for, he, Nebuchadnezzar, killed the Jews, and he, Ahasuerus, sought to kill them. He destroyed the Temple, and he sought to destroy the foundations for the Temple laid by Zerubbabel, as it is stated: “And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote to him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem” (Ezra 4:6), and he ordered that the construction of the Temple cease.

And Shmuel said: The name Ahasuerus should be understood in the sense of black [shapor], as the face of the Jewish people was blackened in his days like the bottom of a pot. And Rabbi Yohanan said a different explanation: Everyone who recalled him said: “Woe upon his head” [אָהֲרָו]. And Rabbi Hanina said: The name alludes to the fact that everyone became poor [רַשָּׁה] in his days, as it is stated: “And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land” (Esther 10:5).
And the years of the life of Amram – seven. Although, when enumerating the years of the other individuals in the Gemara, the division of years into separate phases could indicate changes that they underwent during different periods in their lives, the Gemara in Shabbat (15b) teaches that Amram was completely righteous throughout his lifetime. Therefore, the Gemara proves from the fact that the years of Amram’s life were divided in that manner that a phased rendering of one’s age is not necessarily indicative of change in the course of one’s life (Haggadah Tiferet LeMoshe).

Rule over the entire world – Nebuchadnezzar. The Gemara mentions the vast empires of these kings to indicate that the rulers who reigned over the Jewish people were not small kings with limited power. The Gemara teaches that they were great rulers whose reign over the Jewish people does not imply a lessening of Israel’s honor. Mentioning the extent of these kings’ empires also indicates that their interactions with Israel not only affected the Jewish people but impacted the entire world (Haram Sofer).

Rule over the entire world (kippa) – Nebuchadnezzar. The term kippa refers to kippa tahomayim, the celestial sphere. In other words, it refers to those who ruled over the parts of the earth that are found under the celestial sphere.

Perek I
Daf 11 Amud b

After mentioning three kings who ruled over the world, the Gemara presents a mnemonic for the names of other kings that will be discussed below: Shin, Solomon, i.e., Shlomo; samekh, Sennacherib; dalet, Darius; kaf, Cyrus, i.e., Koresh. The Gemara asks: But is there no other king besides those previously mentioned who ruled over the entire world? But there is King Solomon who ruled over the world and should be added to the list. The Gemara answers: Solomon did not complete his kingship, as he left the throne during his lifetime, and therefore, his name does not appear on the list.
The Gemara asks: This works out well according to the one who said that Solomon was first a king and then a commoner, never returning to the throne. But according to the one who said he was first a king and then a commoner, and then afterward he returned again to be a king, what can be said to explain why he is not mentioned in the list of kings who ruled over the entire world? The Gemara answers: There was something else about Solomon that makes it impossible to compare him to the others, for he ruled over the inhabitants of the heavenly worlds, i.e., demons and spirits, as well as the human inhabitants of the earthly worlds, as it is stated: “Then Solomon sat upon the throne of the Lord as king” (1 Chronicles 29:23), which indicates that his reign extended even to the heavenly worlds, with King Solomon sitting upon the throne of the Lord, and therefore he cannot be compared to the others, who merely ruled on earth.

The Gemara asks further: But there was Sennacherib, who ruled over the entire world, as it is written: “Who are they among all the gods of these countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?” (Isaiah 36:20). The Gemara answers: There is Jerusalem that he did not conquer, as indicated in the verse.

The Gemara continues to ask: But there is Darius, as it is stated: “Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you” (Daniel 6:26). The Gemara answers: There are the seven provinces over which he did not rule, as it is written: “It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps” (Daniel 6:1). It is apparent from here that Darius did not rule over the entire world, for his son Ahasuerus ruled over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, an additional seven.

The Gemara raises another question: But there is Cyrus, as it is written: “Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia: The Lord, God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth” (Ezra 1:2). The Gemara answers: This is not proof that he ruled the world, for there he was merely boasting about himself, although in fact there was no truth to his words.

The second verse in Esther states: “In those days when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom” (Esther 1:2), implying that the events to follow took place during the first year of his reign; and one verse afterward it is written: “In the third year of his reign” (Esther 1:3), indicating that it was the third year, not the first. Rava said: There is no contradiction. What is the meaning of “when he sat” [keshevet]? It is intended to indicate that he acted not immediately upon his rise to the throne, but rather after his mind was settled [shanit shasheva], and he overcame his anxiety and worry with regard to the redemption of the Jewish people. He said to himself as follows: Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, calculated and erred with regard to the Jewish people’s redemption. I too will calculate, but I will not err.

The Gemara explains: What is this calculation? As it is written with regard to Jeremiah’s prophecy of a return to Eretz Yisrael: “After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon I will remember you and perform My good word toward you, enabling you to return to this place” (Jeremiah 29:10), and elsewhere it is written in a slightly different formulation: “In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, meditated in the books, over the number of the years, which the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years” (Daniel 9:2). He, Belshazzar, calculated as follows: Forty-five years of Nebuchadnezzar, and twenty-three of Evil-merodach, and two of his own, for a total of seventy years that had passed without redemption. He was therefore certain that Jeremiah’s prophecy would no longer be fulfilled, and he therefore said: I will take out the vessels of the Holy Temple and use them.
The Gemara asks: From where do we derive that Nebuchadnezzar reigned for forty-five years? As the Master said: They were exiled in the seventh year; they were exiled in the eighth year; they were exiled in the nineteenth year.

The Gemara explains: They were exiled in the seventh year after Nebuchadnezzar’s subjugation of Jehoiakim, in what was known as the exile of Jehoiachin, which was actually the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Then later they were exiled a second time in the eighteenth year after the subjugation of Jehoiakim, in what was known as the exile of Zedekiah, which was actually in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, as the Master said: In the first year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Nineveh; in his second year he conquered Jehoiakim. And it is written: “And it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin, king of Judea, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that Evil-merodach, king of Babylonia, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin, king of Judea, and brought him out of prison” (Jeremiah 52:31).

The Gemara calculates: Since Evil-merodach acted in the first year of his reign, immediately after coming to power, it turns out that Nebuchadnezzar ruled for eight years before he sent Jehoiachin into exile, and thirty-seven years during which Jehoiachin was in prison. This equals forty-five years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. And the twenty-three years of Evil-merodach are known through tradition. And together with the two years of Belshazzar, this brings the count of the years of exile to seventy. At that point Belshazzar said to himself: Now for sure they will not be redeemed. Therefore, I will take out the vessels of the Holy Temple and use them.

This is that which Daniel said to him with regard to his impending punishment for using the Temple’s vessels: “But you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His House before you” (Daniel 5:23). And it is written further in the chapter: “In that night Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, was slain” (Daniel 5:30). This was the description of Belshazzar’s mistaken calculation. And it states after the fall of Belshazzar: “And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old” (Daniel 6:1).8

Ahaseurus said: He, Belshazzar, ered. I too will calculate, but I will not err, thinking he understood the source of Belshazzar’s mistake. Is it written: “Seventy years for the kingdom of Babylonia”? It is written: “Seventy years for Babylonia.” What is meant by “for Babylonia”? These words are referring to the seventy years for the exile of Babylonia. How many years are still lacking from the seventy years? Eight years. He calculated, and inserted in their stead one year of Belshazzar, and five years of Darius and Cyrus, and two years of his own, bringing the total to seventy. Once he saw that seventy years had been completed, and the Jewish people were still not redeemed, he said: Now for sure they will not be redeemed. Therefore, I will take out the vessels of the Temple and use them. What happened to him? As a punishment for what he did, the Satan came and danced among them, and brought confusion to his celebration until he killed Vashti.

They were exiled in the seventh year – בַּשְּנֵים – כִּבְּלֵיָא. The Maharsha explains that these details are not relevant to the proofs with regard to the period of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Rather, once the Gemara clarifies the number of years of his rule, it also explains other calculations. Some are calculated from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and others from the exile of Jehoiachin, which was concurrent with the conquering of Jehoiakim, as both these incidents took place in the same year.

And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old – מְרוֹדַך יֵבֵיתֵיהוּ. The Ramban explains that the vessels of the Temple were removed twice. At first, some of them were taken out during the exile of Jehoiachin, and these were the vessels that Belshazzar used. Later, after Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to the land to build the Temple, these vessels were returned. Other vessels were taken during the exile of King Zedekiah and remained in the king’s treasury even after Cyrus permitted the Jews to return. It was these vessels that Ahaseurus used, and these same vessels were later given to Ezra the Scribe by the king Artaxerxes, to be returned to the Temple upon his return (see Ezra 7:19).
The Gemara asks: But he calculated properly; why then did this happen? The Gemara answers: He too erred in his calculation, for he should have counted from the destruction of Jerusalem at the time of the exile of Zedekiah and not from the first exile of Jehoiachin.

The Gemara asks: Ultimately, how many years were lacking? Eleven, for the exile of Zedekiah took place eleven years after that of Jehoiachin. How many years did Ahasuerus reign as king? Fourteen. Indeed, in his fourteenth year, then, the Temple should have been built. If so, why is it written: “Then the work of the House of God, which is in Jerusalem, ceased” (Ezra 4:24), which indicates that the Temple was not built during the entire reign of Ahasuerus?

Rava said: The years reckoned were partial years. To complete the seventy years, it was necessary to wait until the second year of the rule of Darius 11, when indeed the Temple was built.

This is also taught in a baraita, as an indication that the years counted were only partial years: And when Belshazzar was killed, there was still another year left for Babylonia before the reckoning of the seventy years was completed. And then Darius arose and completed it. Although seventy years were previously counted according to Belshazzar’s count, from the exile of Jehoiakim, because the years were only partial, there was still one year left in order to complete those seventy years.

Rava said: Daniel also erred in this calculation, as it is written: “In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, meditated in the books over the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years” (Daniel 9:2). From the fact that he said “I meditated,” a term indicating recounting and calculating, it can be inferred that he had previously erred.

The Gemara comments: In any case, the verses contradict each other with regard to how the seventy years should be calculated. In one verse it is written: “After seventy years are accomplished for Babylonia I will remember [qarkod] you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place” (Jeremiah 29:10), which indicates that the seventy years should be counted from the Babylonian exile. And in another verse it is written: “That he would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years” (Daniel 9:2), indicating that the seventy years are calculated from the destruction of Jerusalem.

Rava said in response: The seventy years that “are accomplished for Babylonia” were only for being remembered [lifekida], as mentioned in the verse, allowing the Jews to return to Eretz Yisrael but not to build the Temple. And this is as it is written with regard to Cyrus’s proclamation permitting the Jewish people’s return to Eretz Yisrael, in the seventieth year of the Babylonian exile: “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; And He has charged [pakad] me to build Him a house in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:2). The verse makes use of the same root, peh-kaf-dalet, heralding the return to Jerusalem to build the Temple, but not its actual completion.