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Brachos Daf 43

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Sitting and Reclining

The *Mishna* had stated: If those at the table are sitting (*and not reclining*), each one [*recites the blessing for himself. If they are reclining (which is then regarded as a group), one recites the blessing for all of them.*]

The *Gemora* notes that the *Mishna* states that if they are reclining, he may (*recite the blessing for the others*), but, we may imply, that if they are not reclining, he may not. This is contradicted by the following *braisa*: If ten people were traveling on the road, even though they are all eating from one loaf, each one says the blessing for himself; but if they sat down to eat, even though each one was eating from his own loaf, one may say the blessing on behalf of all of them. It says here, ‘sat,’ which implies (*that one can recite the blessing for all of them*) although they did not recline?

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak replied: This *braisa* refers to a case where they said (*beforehand*), “Let us go and eat bread in such and such a place.” [*This is where mere sitting can also create a joined group.*]

The *Gemora* relates: When Rav died, his disciples followed him (*his coffin – to be buried*). When they returned, they said, “Let us go and eat bread by the Danak River.” After they had eaten, they sat and discussed the question: When the *Mishna* stated that ‘they reclined,’ is it to be taken strictly (*that only then may one recite the blessing for all of them*), as excluding sitting, or perhaps, when they say, “Let us go and eat bread in such and such a place,” it is as if they reclined (*and even then, one may recite the blessing for all of them*)? They did not have the answer at hand. Rav Adda bar Ahavah rose and turned the rent in his garment (which he had initially made at the time of the

eulogy for Rav) from front to back and made another rent (*for the only way to fulfill the mitzvah of “rending” is by rending the garment in the front*), saying, Rav (*our teacher*) has died, and we have not learned the rules about Birchas Hamazon (*Grace after meals*)! [*Since they felt the loss of their teacher at this time when they couldn’t decide the halachah, they felt that they must rend their garments again.*] Until a certain old man came and pointed out the contradiction between the *Mishna* and the *braisa*, and resolved it by saying: once they have said, “Let us go and eat bread in such and such a place,” it is as if they were reclining. (42b – 43a)

Bread and Wine

The *Mishna* had stated: If they are reclining, one recites the blessing for all of them.

Rav said: This law was taught only with bread that it requires reclining (*and then, one may recite the blessing for all of them*), but wine does not require reclining (*and even when sitting, one may recite the blessing for all of them*). Rabbi Yochanan, however, says that wine also requires reclining.

There were those who reported the above discussion as follows: Rav said: This law was taught only with bread, for which reclining is effective (*that now one can recite the blessing for the others*), but for wine, reclining is not effective (*for they still are not regarded as a joined group*). Rabbi Yochanan, however, says that for wine also reclining is effective.

They asked on Rav from the following *braisa*: What is the procedure for reclining? The guests enter and sit on stools and chairs until they are all assembled. They would bring them water, and each one washes one hand (*in order to take the cup*

of wine with; this will be drunk before the meal). When the wine was brought to them, each one would recite the blessing for himself. [After all the guests arrived] They would go up (to the main dining room) and recline, and water was brought to them. Although each one of them has already washed one hand, he now again washes both hands. When wine is brought to them, although each one has said a blessing for himself, one now says a blessing on behalf of all of them.

Now, according to the version (the first one) where Rav says that 'the law (that if they are reclining one recites the blessing for all of them) was taught only with bread that it requires reclining (and if they were sitting, they recite the blessing themselves), but wine does not require reclining (and even when sitting, one may recite the blessing for all of them) there is a contradiction between his view and the first part of this statement (for why would they each make their own blessing on the wine; the halachah is that regarding wine – even when they are not reclining, one recites the blessing for all of them)?

The Gemora answers: Guests (where it was customary for the wealthy householders to invite to their meals guests who are poor) are different, since they intend to shift their location (to the main dining hall). [They therefore are not regarded as a group, and each one recites his own blessing. Rav, however, was referring to a case where they were drinking wine outside of "meal-time," or during an established meal, but when they are drinking before a meal and not at the place of the meal, and they are waiting for the others to arrive, and then they will shift to the main dining hall, each one recites the blessing for himself, for this is regarded as a temporary sitting.]

The Gemora asks: According to the version (the second one) where Rav says that 'the law that reclining is effective was taught by bread (and one may recite the blessing for all of them, but for wine, reclining is not effective (and each one recites the blessing himself), there is a contradiction his view and the first part of this statement (for why, after they reclined, would one recite the blessing on the wine for the others; the halachah is that regarding wine – reclining is not effective)?

The Gemora answers: The case is different there, because since the reclining was effective for bread, it was also effective for the wine.

The Mishna had stated: If wine is brought to them during the meal [each one of them says the blessing for themselves; if it is brought after the meal, one says it for all of them].

Ben Zoma was asked: Why was it that they said that if wine is brought to them during the meal, each one says a blessing for himself, but if it was brought after the meal, one says it for all of them? He replied: It is because (during meals) the throat is not empty of food (and since they are eating, they will not be able to concentrate on the blessing – Rashi; or answer 'Amen' – Tosfos). (43a)

Blessing on Incense

The Mishna had stated: And he (the one who said the blessing on the wine) says it on the incense (for once he has started saying the blessings after the meal, he continues to do so) - although the incense is not brought out until after the meal.

The Gemora notes that by the fact that the Mishna stated that 'he says it on the incense,' we may infer from there that there is present someone superior to him (a Torah scholar, who, otherwise, would have recited the blessing). This seems to support that which Rav said, for Rabbi Chiya bar Ashi said in the name of Rav: The one who washes his hands first (after the meal) can claim the right to recite the Birchas Hamazon blessing.

Rav and Rabbi Chiya were once sitting before Rebbe at a meal. Rebbe said to Rav: Get up and wash your hands. Rabbi Chiya saw that Rav was upset (for Rav thought that Rebbe was telling him that hands are dirty, or that he is taking too long to eat). Rabbi Chiya said to him: Son of Princes! He is telling you to think over the Birchas Hamazon (Grace; for the one who washes his hands first is the one who is designated to recite the blessing for all of them).

Rabbi Zeira said in the name of Rava bar Yirmiyah: From when do we recite the blessing over the incense? It is as soon as the smoke column ascends (but not beforehand).

Rabbi Zeira said to Rava bar Yirmiyah: But (at that point) he has not yet smelled it (and did not derive any pleasure yet; accordingly, it is premature to make the blessing at that time)!

He replied: According to your reasoning, when one says, '*Hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz*' -- 'the One Who brings forth bread from the ground,' he has not yet eaten (*but nevertheless recites the blessing*)! Rather, he says it because it is his intention to eat. So too here, it is his intention to smell.

Rabbi Chiya the son of Abba bar Nachmeini said in the name of Rav Chisda who said in the name of Rav, and others say that it was Rav Chisda who said in the name of Ze'iri: Over all incense, the blessing recited is, '*Borei atzei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates fragrant woods,' except over musk, which is derived from a living creature and the blessing is, '*Borei minei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates species of fragrance.'

The *Gemora* asks from a *braisa*: The blessing of '*Borei atzei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates fragrant woods' is recited only over the balsam wood of the household of Rebbe and the balsam wood of the Caesar's household (*where, due to their wealth, the wood itself was brought out*) and over myrtle everywhere! [*Mere incense, however, which is not the wood itself, we would recite the blessing of 'Borei minei besamim' -- 'the One Who creates species of fragrance'!?*] This indeed is a refutation.

Rav Chisda said to Rav Yitzchak: What blessing is said over this balsam oil? He replied: Rav Yehudah said: '*Borei shemen artzeinu*' -- 'the One Who creates the oil of our Land.' He then said to him: Leave out Rav Yehudah, who dotes on the Land of Israel (*and that is why he ruled the way he did*), what should ordinary people say? He replied: Rabbi Yochanan said: '*Borei shemen areiv*' -- 'the One Who creates pleasant oil.'

Rav Adda bar Ahavah said: Over costus (*a spice used to make the ketores*), the blessing is, '*Borei atzei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates fragrant woods,' but not over oil in which it is steeped (*for the costus cannot be seen*). Rav Kahana, however, says: Even over oil in which it is steeped (*that blessing is recited, for the costus is in the oil*), but not over oil in which it has been ground (*for the costus is not in its initial form*). The *Nehardeans* say: Even over oil in which it has been ground (*that blessing is recited, for the costus is still in the oil, even though it has changed*).

Rav Giddal said in the name of Rav: Over jasmine, the blessing is '*Borei atzei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates fragrant woods.'

Rav Chananel said in the name of Rav: Over spikenard (*a spice used to make the ketores*), the blessing recited is, '*Borei atzei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates fragrant woods.'

Mar Zutra said: What Scriptural verse supports this (*that although it is not actual wood, since their stems are hard, the blessing of 'the One Who creates fragrant woods' can still be recited*)? It is from the following: *She had brought them up to the roof and hid them in the woods of flax.*

Rav Mesharsheya said: Over narkom (*a rose*); if it is the type that grows in a garden (*whose stalks are hard*), the blessing for it is, '*Borei atzei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates fragrant woods'; if it is the wild type (*whose stems are soft*), the blessing for it is, '*Borei is'vei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates fragrant herbage.' Rav Sheishes said: Over violets, the blessing is, '*Borei is'vei besamim*' -- 'the One Who creates fragrant herbage.'

Mar Zutra said: He who smells an esrog or a quince should say, 'Blessed are You etc. Who has given a good smell to fruits.'

Rav Yehudah says: If one goes out in the days of Nissan, and sees the trees blooming, he should say, 'Blessed are You etc. Who has not left His universe lacking in anything, and has created in it good creatures and good trees, for the enjoyment of mankind.'

Rav Zutra bar Toviah said in the name of Rav: From where do we know that a blessing should be said over a fragrance? It is because it is written: *Let every soul praise God.* What is it from which the soul derives pleasure but the body does not? You must say that this is fragrant smell.

And Rav Zutra bar Toviah said in the name of Rav: The young men of Israel are destined to emit a sweet fragrance like the Lebanon (*forest*), as it is written: *His young shall go forth, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his fragrance as the Lebanon.*



And Rav Zutra bar Toviah said in the name of Rav: What is the meaning of the verse: *He has made everything beautiful in its time?* It teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, made every man's craft seem beautiful in his own eyes (*even those that involve foul odors; this was done in order that the world should not be lacking any type of work*).

Rav Pappa said: This agrees with that which people say: Hang a palm shoot on a pig's neck, and it will do the usual thing with it (*by rolling around in the trash heap with it*).

And Rav Zutra bar Toviah said in the name of Rav: [*Elsewhere, Rav had stated that one should not walk outside alone at night.*] A torch is as good as two people and the moon is as good as three.

The question was asked: Is the torch as good as two counting the carrier, or as good as two besides the carrier (*meaning that it can be regarded as if there are three*)?

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this from that which Rav said that the moon is as good as three. If the torch is as good as two counting the carrier, there is no difficulty. But if you say that it means besides the carrier (*and consequently, 'the moon is as good as three' means that there are four here*), what is the necessity for four, seeing that a master has said: To one person, a demon may show itself and harm him; to two, it may show itself, but it will not harm them; to three, it will not even show itself?

The *Gemora* concludes that we must therefore say that a torch is equivalent to two including the carrier; and this indeed is a proof.

And Rav Zutra bar Toviah said in the name of Rav, and according to others it was Rav Chanah bar Bizna who said it in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida, and according to others, it was Rabbi Yochanan who said it in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: It is more preferable for a man to throw himself into a fiery furnace than that of publicly putting his neighbor to shame.

The *Gemora* asks: How do we know this concept?

The *Gemora* answers: It is from the action of Tamar; for it is written [Breishis 38:25]: *As she was taken out, she sent to her father-in-law etc. [She chose to be burned rather than publicly put her father-in-law to shame. It was only through Yehudah's own confession after he received her private message that she was saved.]*

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: If (*a fragrant*) oil (*used to clean one's hands from the smell of the food*) and myrtle are brought (*at the end of a meal*) before a person, Beis Shammai say that he first says a blessing over the oil and then over the myrtle, while Beis Hillel say that he first says a blessing over the myrtle and then over the oil. Rabban Gamliel said: I will decide based upon the following logic: Oil is beneficial for its fragrance and to be used as anointing, but a myrtle is beneficial only for its fragrance, but not for anointing. [*Therefore, Beis Shammai is correct that the blessing on the oil takes precedence over the blessing on the myrtle.*]

Rabbi Yochanan said: The *halachah* is in accordance with the words of the "decider" (*Rabban Gamliel*).

Rav Pappa once visited the house of Rav Huna the son of Rav Ika. Oil and myrtle were brought before him and Rav Pappa took up the myrtle and recited the blessing over it first, and then he recited the blessing over the oil. Rav Huna said to him: Doesn't the master hold that the *halachah* is in accordance with the words of the "decider"? He replied: Rava said that the *halachah* is in accordance with Beis Hillel.

The *Gemora* notes that this was not correct, however (*Rava never issued such a ruling*); he said so only to save face. (43a – 43b)

Conduct of Torah Scholars

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: If (*a fragrant*) oil and wine are brought (*at the end of a meal*) before a person, Beis Shammai say that he first takes the oil in his right hand and the wine in his left hand and recites the blessing over the oil and then a blessing over the wine. Beis Hillel, however, say that he takes the wine in his right hand and the oil in his left, and recites the blessing over the wine and then over the oil. Before going out, he smears it on the head of the waiter (*for it is unbecoming for*

a Torah scholar to go on the street with perfumed hands); and if the waiter is a Torah scholar himself, he smears it on the wall, for it is unbecoming for a Torah scholar to go on the street perfumed.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Six things are unbecoming for a Torah scholar.

1. He should not go on the street perfumed.
2. He should not go out by night alone.
3. He should not go outside in patched shoes.
4. He should not converse with a woman in the street.
5. He should not recline (*i.e., eat a meal*) in the company of ignorant people.
6. He should not be the last to enter the study hall.

Some add that he should not take long strides while walking, and he should not walk with an upright posture.

The *Gemora* explains each one: 'He should not go on the street perfumed.' Rabbi Abba the son of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This applies only to a place where people are suspected of homosexuality (*and they are wearing perfume in order to entice other men*). Rav Sheishes said: This applies only to the scenting of one's garments, but regarding the body, there is no concern, for his perspiration will remove the smell of the perfume. Rav Pappa said: The hair is the same as his clothes (*and it would be forbidden*). Others, however, say that his hair is as his body (*and it would be permitted*).

'He should not go out at night alone.' This is in order not to arouse suspicion (*that he is involved in a promiscuous relationship*). The *Gemora* qualifies the ruling: It is only if he has no set time (*to study with his teacher*), but if he has a set time, everyone knows that he is going to study.

'He should not go outside in patched shoes.' This supports Rabbi Chiya bar Abba, for Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said: It is unbecoming for a Torah scholar to go outside in patched shoes.

The *Gemora* asks: Is that so? Didn't Rabbi Chiya bar Abba go out wearing such shoes?

Mar Zutra the son of Rav Nachman said: It is only unbecoming if there is one patch on top of another.

The *Gemora* qualifies it further: And this applies only to the top portion of the shoe (*where the patch will be visible*), but if it is on the sole, there is no objection. And even when it is on the top, this ruling was stated only when he is going on the road, but inside the house there is no objection. And furthermore, this is the case only in the summer season, but in the rainy season (*when the patch will be covered by dirt*), there is no objection.

'He should not converse with a woman in the street.' Rav Chisda said: Even with his wife.

It has been taught similarly in a *braisa*: Even with his wife, even with his daughter, even with his sister, because not everyone knows who are his female relatives.

'He should not recline (*i.e., eat a meal*) in the company of ignorant people. What is the reason for this? It is because he perhaps will be drawn into their ways.

'He should not be last to enter the study hall.' This is because he will be called negligent.

'Some add that he should not take long strides.' This is because a master has said: Long strides diminish one five-hundredth of a man's eyesight. What is the remedy? He can restore it with drinking the *kiddush* wine of Friday night.

'He should not walk with an upright posture.' This is because a master has said: If one walks with an upright posture - even for four cubits, it is as if he pushed the "feet" of the Divine Presence, since it is written: *The whole world is full of His glory.* (43b)