

25 Adar 5781
March 9, 2021



Pesachim Daf 108

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

The *Gemora* records that Rav Sheishes would fast the entire Erev Pesach. The *Gemora* asks if this was because he maintains that the *Mishna* means ‘close to the greater Minchah period,’ and out of concern of the korban pesach, we prohibit eating on Erev Pesach, for he might continue on in his meal and refrain from performing the korban pesach. And he holds like that which Rabbi Elozar said in the name of Rabbi Oshaya: Ben Beseirah ruled that a *pesach* offering which was slaughtered for its own sake on the morning of the fourteenth is valid, because he maintains that the entire day is regarded as the *pesach’s* proper time. This is because he maintains that the words *bein ha’arbayim* (which means that it must be slaughtered in the afternoon) means between two darknesses (and therefore the entire day of the fourteenth is fit for the slaughtering of the *pesach* offering). The *Gemora* answers that the reason he fasted is because he was a delicate person, and his appetite at night would be easily ruined by his eating earlier in the day, and therefore it was appropriate to refrain from eating at those times. (108a1 – 108a2)

Even the poorest man in Israel must not eat until he reclines. It was stated: [For the eating of] the matzah reclining is necessary; for the marror reclining is not

necessary.¹ [As for the drinking of] the wine, — It was stated in Rav Nachman's name [that] reclining is necessary, and it was stated in Rav Nachman's name that reclining is not necessary. Yet they do not disagree: one [ruling] refers to the first two cups, and the other ruling refers to the last two cups. Some explain it in one direction, others explain it in the other direction. [Thus:] some explain it in one direction: for the first two cups reclining is necessary, because it is at this point that freedom commences; for the last two cups reclining is necessary, [because] what has been has been.² Others explain it in the contrary direction: on the contrary, the last two cups necessitate reclining, [because] it is precisely then that there is freedom; the first two cups do not necessitate reclining, [because] he is still reciting ‘we were slaves.’ Now that it was stated thus and it was stated thus, both [the first and the last ones] necessitate reclining. (108a2)

Lying on the back is not reclining; reclining on the right side is not reclining.³ Moreover he may put [his food] into the windpipe before the esophagus,⁴ and thus endanger himself. A woman in her husband's [house] need not recline,⁵ but if she is a woman of importance she must recline. A son in his father's [house] must recline.⁶

¹ The former symbolizes freedom; the latter, bondage. The Rashbam explains that the reason one is required to lean for matzah is because it represents our freedom from Egypt. It therefore must be eaten in the style of freemen, while leaning. However, the maror indicates the servitude and bitterness of Egypt, and therefore does not have to be eaten while leaning.

² The last two cups come after the meal, by which time the whole narrative of Israel's liberation has been completed. Hence there is no need then to emphasize the theme of freedom.

³ Since he must eat with his right hand.

⁴ If he eats lying on his back may go down the wrong way.

⁵ Because she stands under his authority.

⁶ He does not sense his father's authority so strongly.

The scholars asked: What about a disciple in his teacher's presence? — Come and hear, for Abaye said: When we were at the Master's [Rabbah's] house, we used to recline on each other's knees. When we came to Rav Yosef's house he remarked to us, 'You do not need it: the fear of your teacher is as the fear of Heaven.' An objection is raised: A man must recline with all [people], and even a disciple in his master's presence? — That was taught of a craftsman's apprentice.

The scholars asked: What about an attendant? — Come and hear, [or Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: An attendant, who ate as much as an olive of matzah while reclining has discharged [his obligation]. Thus, only while reclining, but not if he was not reclining. This proves that he must recline. This proves it. (108a2 – 108a3)

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi also said: Women are subject to [the law of] these four cups because they too were included in that miracle.⁷ (108a3 – 108b1)

Rav Yehudah said in Shmuel's name: These four cups must contain sufficient for the mixing of a generous cup.⁸ If he drank them raw [undiluted], he has discharged [his obligation].⁹ If he drank them [all] at once,¹⁰ he has discharged [his obligation]. If he gave his sons and

household to drink of them, he has discharged [his obligation].

'If he drank them raw [undiluted]. he has discharged [his obligation].' Rava observed: He has discharged [his obligation] of wine, but he has not discharged [his obligation] of [symbolizing his] freedom.¹¹ If he drank them [all] at once, Rav said: He has discharged [his obligation of drinking] wine,¹² [but] he has not discharged [his obligation of] four cups.¹³ 'If he gave his sons and household to drink of them, he has discharged [his obligation]': Said Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak: Providing that he [himself] drank the greater part of [each] cup. An objection is raised: These four cups must contain the standard of a *revi'is*, whether neat or diluted, whether new [wine] or old; Rabbi Yehudah said: It must possess the taste and the appearance of wine. Thus it is incidentally taught, 'the standard of a *revi'is*,' whereas you say, 'a generous cup'? — I will answer you: Both are the same standard, [for] what does he mean by 'sufficient for the mixing of a generous cup? For each one separately [of the four cups], which is a *revi'is* for all of them together.¹⁴ 'Rabbi Yehudah said: It must possess the taste and appearance of wine. Said Rava: What is Rabbi Yehudah's reason? Because it is written: Do not look upon the wine when it is red.¹⁵ (108b1 – 108b2)

⁷ Of liberation; as the Gemara states elsewhere that the Israelites were redeemed as a reward to the righteous women of that generation; Rashbam. Similarly, women must hear the Megillah on Purim because Esther brought about the miracle of Purim. [Tosfos (108b, DH "Hayu") argues that this means that they were also redeemed and therefore are commanded in the mitzvah, not because the miracle was because of them.]

⁸ Their wine was too strong to be drunk neat. 'A generous cup' is one of sufficient quantity for Bircas Hamazon, viz., a *revi'is* (quarter of a log), and Rav Yehudah said that each of these four cups must contain enough undiluted wine to make up to a *revi'is* of diluted wine. — The usual mixture was one part wine to three parts water.

⁹ Providing that he drank a *revi'is* on each, occasion (Rashbam).

¹⁰ Without following the order prescribed below.

¹¹ I.e., he has discharged his obligation in a poor way, since drinking undiluted wine is hardly drinking at all. — This does not refer to wine nowadays, which is not so strong and does not require dilution.

¹² A man must rejoice on a Festival by drinking wine; this obligation he has now discharged.

¹³ But all count as one cup, and another three are necessary.

¹⁴ I.e., a *revi'is* of the raw wine, which when diluted will make four *revi'is* of drinkable wine, a *revi'is* for each cup.

¹⁵ Thus it does not merit the name wine unless it has its appearance too.



Our Rabbis taught: All are bound to [drink] the four cups, men, women, and children. Said Rabbi Yehudah: Of what benefit then is wine to children? But we distribute to them parched grain and walnuts on Erev Pesach, so that they should not fall asleep, and ask [the 'questions'].¹⁶ It was related of Rabbi Akiva that he used to distribute parched grain and walnuts to children on Erev Pesach, so that they might not fall asleep but ask [the 'questions']. (108b2 – 109a1)

INSIGHT TO THE DAF

The Gemora states that a student should not lean before his teacher. This is because the fear of one's teacher should be like the fear of Heaven. Being that leaning in front of one's teacher is somewhat disrespectful, Chazal did not institute that such a person must lean to fulfill the mitzvah.

I have had various students ask if it is appropriate that they should go to their teacher's seder because they cannot lean and thereby express this aspect of the mitzvah. Obviously, going to one's teacher for the seder is very beneficial, as one can see how to conduct one of the most important nights in the Jewish calendar. It is certainly not reason not to go to a teacher's seder. However, the question arises: Should one ask his teacher to forgo his honor, which his teacher can, in order that he should be able to lean? Or is it better to simply not lean?

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l (in Halichos Shlomo pg. 233) answered that a person should specifically not ask his teacher to forgo his honor. He held that even asking one's teacher, "Can you forgo your honor for me?" is inappropriate. However, if one's teacher voluntarily told his students that they may lean and that he forgoes his honor, they may do so.

¹⁶ The 'Mah nishtanah'.

DAILY MASHAL

A great Chassidic teacher once explained that the time-honored rituals of the Seder serve not only to commemorate our freedom from the Biblical Mitzrayim, but as a means to achieve redemption from the personal Mitzrayims within each and every one of us. Rabbi yitzchok Breitowitz notes that the four cups of wine and reclining calls upon us to recognize that notwithstanding the maror — enslavers — we have the innate capacity and spiritual greatness (with G-d's help) to become liberated. Awareness of our faults must be coupled with an equal awareness of our potential for self-improvement, goodness, and nobility of character.