

# Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf

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Bava Basra Daf 9

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## Daily Daf

### *Penalizing the Violators of Community Edicts*

There were two butchers who made an agreement with each other that if either slaughtered on the other's day, the animal's hide should be torn up (*in a way which would prevent him from profiting*). One of them actually slaughtered on the other's day, and the other went and tore up the hide. Those who did so were summoned before Rava, and he obligated them to make restitution (*for the deal was not binding*).

Rav Yeimar bar Shelemya called Rava's attention to the *braisa* which ruled that the community officials may inflict penalties for breach of their regulations!?

Rava did not answer him. Rav Pappa explained: Rava was quite right not to answer him; this regulation applies only where there is no distinguished person in the town, but where there is a distinguished person (*such as Rava*), they do not have the power to make such regulations (*without that person participating*). (9a)

### *Charity Collectors*

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The charity collectors are not required to give an account of the monies

entrusted to them for charity. And the treasurers of the Temple are not required to reckon the funds given to them for the Temple purposes. And although there is no actual proof of this in the Scriptures, but there is a hint of it in the following verse: *And they would not reckon with the men into whose hand they delivered the money, to give to those that did the work, for they dealt faithfully.*

Rabbi Elozar said: Even if a man has in his house a treasurer on whom he can rely, he should tie up and count out all money that he hands to him, as it is written: *They bound it in in bags and counted the money.* (9a)

### *Investigating the Poor*

Rav Huna said: Applicants for food are investigated (*to see if they are truly needy*), but not applicants for clothing.

This rule can be based, either upon Scripture, or alternatively, on logic. The logic is as follows: The one who is inadequately dressed is debasing himself, but not the other (*who is merely claiming that he is hungry*). Alternatively, it is written: *Will you not break your bread for the hungry?* The word '*paros*' is written with a '*sin*,' as much as to say, "Clarify and then give him food," whereas later it is written: *When you see the naked, you*

*shall cover him; that is to say, immediately (without investigating).*

Rav Yehudah, however, said that applicants for clothing are to be examined, but not applicants for food. This rule can be based, either upon logic, or alternatively, upon Scripture. The logic is as follows: The one without food is actually suffering (*and we should not prolong his suffering*), but not the other. Alternatively, it is written: *Will you not break your bread for the hungry?* Bread should be given to them immediately, whereas later it is written: *When you see the naked, you shall cover him*, that is to say, “After you have seen that he deserves, clothe him.”

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which is in agreement with Rav Yehudah: If a man says, “Clothe me,” he is examined, but if he says, “Feed me,” he is not examined. (9a)

## **Charity**

A poor man who is traveling receives from the community that he is passing through enough food that he can eat two meals. He must receive an amount of bread that can be purchased with a *pundyon*, when a *sela* (*a coin that is the equivalent of twenty-four silver ma'os - a ma'ah equals two pundyons - there are forty-eight pundyons in a sela*) can be used to purchase four *se'ah's* of wheat. At this price, one can purchase with a *pundyon* a loaf of bread whose volume is a quarter of a *kav* (*the equivalent to six eggs*). This loaf of bread is sufficient to provide one with two daily meals. If the poor person remains in the city overnight, he is provided with a bed and a pillow. If he remains in the city for *Shabbos*, he receives enough food for three meals.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: If he is a beggar who goes from door to door, we are not obligated to give him from the public charity.

A certain man who used to beg from door to door came to Rav Pappa for money], but he refused

him. Rav Sama the son of Rav Yeiva asked him: If you do not give anything to him, no one else will either; is he then to die of hunger? Rav Pappa replied: Has it not been taught that if he is a beggar who goes from door to door, we are not obligated to give him from the public charity? Rav Sama replied: We do not help him with a large donation, but we do give him a small one.

Rav Assi said: A man should never neglect to give at least a third of a *shekel* for charity each year. The *Gemora* cites a Scriptural source for this.

Rav Assi further said: Charity is equivalent to all the other *mitzvos* combined; as it is written (*in a verse regarding charity*): *And we took upon ourselves commandments*. It is not written, ‘commandment’ (*in the singular form*), but ‘commandments.’

[*A sign to remember the following three statements; Greater, Temple and Moshe.*] Rabbi Elozar said: He who causes others to do charitable deeds is greater than the one who does the deed himself. The *Gemora* cites a Scriptural source for this.

If a man deserves, then he shall give money (*that Heaven decreed he should lose*) to hungry people, but if he does not deserve, the government will confiscate his money.

Rava said to the people of Mechuza: I beg of you, perform acts of charity with one another, so that you may be on good terms with the government.

Rabbi Elozar further said: When the Holy Temple stood, a man used to bring his *shekel* and so receive atonement (*through the sacrifices*). Now that the Holy Temple no longer stands, if they perform acts of charity, all will be well, but if not, the idolaters will come and take money from them forcibly. And even so, it will be reckoned to them as if they had given charity (*for the poor people cannot afford to pay the taxes*), as it is written: *I will make your taskmasters charity*.

Rava said: A child (*Rav Sheishes*) that debased the ways of his mother (*as described by the Gemora below*) once told me in the name of Rabbi Elozar: What is the meaning of the verse: *And he donned charity as a coat of mail?* It tells us that just as in a coat of mail, every small scale joins with the others to form one piece of armor, so every little *perutah* given to charity combines with the rest to form a large sum.

Rabbi Chanina said: The same lesson may be learned from here: *And all our acts of charity are as a repulsive garment.* Just as in a garment, every thread unites with the rest to form a whole garment, so every *perutah* given to charity combines with the rest to form a large sum.

The *Gemora* asks: Why was he called “a child that debased the ways of his mother”?

The *Gemora* explains: Rav Achadvoi bar Ami inquired of Rav Sheishes: How do we know that a *metzora* (a person with a certain skin disease which makes him *tamei*) while he is counting his days for purification renders a person that he touches *tamei*?

Rav Sheishes replied: Since he renders garments *tamei*, he renders a person *tamei* as well.

But, Rav Achadvoi said, perhaps this only applies to clothes which are directly connected to the *metzora* (but not something which he merely touches)? For similarly, we have the case of the moving of a *neveilah* (carcass of an animal that was not slaughtered properly), which makes the garments *tamei* but not the man!

Rav Sheishes replied: And from where do we know that a *sheretz* (the Torah enumerates eight creeping creatures whose carcasses transmit *tumah* through contact) makes a man *tamei*? Is it not from the fact that it makes garments *tamei*!?

Rav Achadvoi replied: Of the *sheretz*, it is distinctly written: *Or a man who touches any creeping thing will be made tamei.*

Rav Sheishes suggested another source: How then do we know that semen makes a man (who touches it) *tamei*? Do we not say that it is because it makes garments *tamei*, therefore it makes a man *tamei*?

Rav Achadvoi replied: The rule of semen is also distinctly stated, since it is written: *Or a man*, which includes one who touches the semen!

Rav Achadvoi made his objections in a mocking manner which deeply distressed Rav Sheishes. Soon afterwards Rav Achadvoi lost his speech and forgot his learning. Rav Sheishes’ mother came and wept before him, but in spite of all her cries, he paid no attention to her. She then said to him, “See these breasts from which you have sucked. [*Repay that kindness by listening to my request. This is what was meant that the child debased the ways of his mother.*] Rav Sheishes prayed for him and he was healed.

The *Gemora* asks: But what is the answer to the question that has been raised?

The *Gemora* answers: It has been taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: Washing of clothing is mentioned in connection with the period of the *metzora*’s counting, and washing of clothing is also mentioned in connection with the period of his confirmation. Just as a confirmed *metzora* renders any man he touches *tamei*, so also in the days of counting, he renders any man he touches *tamei*.

Rabbi Elozar said: A man who gives charity in secret is greater than Moshe our Teacher, for of Moshe it is written: *For I was in dread of the anger and the wrath*, and of one who gives charity secretly it is written: *A gift in secret pacifies anger and a present in the bosom – strong wrath.* I

Rabbi Yitzchak said: He who gives a *perutah* to a poor man obtains six blessings, and he who comforts him with words obtains eleven blessings. The *Gemora* cites a Scriptural source for this.

Rabbi Yitzchak further said: What is the meaning of the verse: *He who pursues charity and mercy will find life, charity and honor?* Because a man has pursued charity, shall he find charity (*he shall become poor and receive charity*)? The verse is teaching us that if a man pursues chances to give charity, the Holy One, blessed be He, furnishes him money with which to give it.

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, sends him men who are fitting recipients of his charity, so that he may be rewarded for assisting them.

The *Gemora* asks: What is he coming to exclude?

The *Gemora* answers: Such as those mentioned in the exposition of Rabbah, when he said: What is the meaning of the verse: *But let them be made to stumble before You; deal with them in the time of Your anger?* Yirmiyah addressed the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe! Even when they (*the people of Anasos*) are prepared to do charity, cause them to stumble by people who are unworthy (*of receiving charity*), so that they won't receive and reward for that charity.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: He who habitually does charity will have sons who are wise, wealthy, and versed in the *Aggadah*. The *Gemora* cites a Scriptural source for this. (9a – 10a)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### *Reckoning with the Charity Collectors*

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The charity collectors are not required to give an account of the monies entrusted to them for charity. And the treasurers of

the Temple are not required to reckon the funds given to them for the Temple purposes. And although there is no actual proof of this in the Scriptures, but there is a hint of it in the following verse: *And they would not reckon with the men into whose hand they delivered the money, to give to those that did the work, for they dealt faithfully.*

Rabbi Elozar said: Even if a man has in his house a treasurer on whom he can rely, he should tie up and count out all money that he hands to him, as it is written: *They bound it in in bags and counted the money.*

Rashi writes that although he has no intention of demanding an accounting afterwards, he still should tie up and count out all money that he hands to him.

What is the purpose of such a counting?

The Meiri explains that if he will not count it in the beginning, he will certainly suspect the treasurer that he accepted more money than he actually spent. Now that it is counted, at least they are both aware as to the amount of money which was given over to him. One should always make an effort not to suspect a person of committing a wrongdoing.

The Maharsha writes that the money is counted in order that the *mazikin* (*spiritual damagers*) should not have any control over the money, for money that is tied, sealed, or counted they cannot have any effect over.

The Ein Eliyahu answers that it is counted in order that the treasurers themselves can make a calculation at the end, if they so desire.