

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Pesachim 100-106

Week of 5 - 11 Kislev 5759 / 24 - 30 November 1998
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Havdalah With a Difference

When a *Yom Tov* festival begins *motzei Shabbos* (Saturday night) the usual *havdalah* over wine which ushers out the holy day undergoes an addition and a subtraction.

The addition is the *kiddush* which declares the holiness of the incoming *Yom Tov*. There is a difference of opinion among the Sages as to which comes first — *kiddush* or *havdalah*. We follow the opinion that *kiddush* comes first. Two reasons for this are offered by the commentaries.

One reason is that it is more important to declare the holiness (*kiddush*) of the *Yom Tov* than to stress the distinction (*havdalah*) between *Shabbos* and all other days. *Kiddush* therefore deserves precedence.

Another reason for putting *havdalah* second is that putting it first would create the impression that one is eager to be free of the burden of *Shabbos* and therefore ushers it out at his earliest opportunity.

The subtraction is in regard to the blessing we usually make on *besamim* (spices or fragrant substances) in our *havdalah*. Two reasons are offered by the commentaries for deleting this blessing on the eve of a *Yom Tov*.

One reason is that there is no need for the *besamim*. The reason we sniff them at the conclusion of a regular *Shabbos* is to provide comfort for our spiritual essence traumatized by the departure of the *neshama yesera* (extra dimension of soul) which has been part of us during this soulful holy day. Since we are endowed with a *neshama yesera* on *Yom Tov* as well, we suffer no such trauma, and have no need for the comfort of *besamim*.

Tosefos, however, finds this explanation problematic since it raises the question as to why we do not sniff *besamim* in the *havdalah* we make at the conclusion of *Yom Tov* to comfort us for the loss of our *Yom Tov neshama yesera*. The alternative explanation offered is that the joy of the *Yom Tov* and the abundance of delicious food and drink serve the same comforting purpose as *besamim* and therefore render them redundant.

Pesachim 102b

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Issue #250 - Pesachim 100-106

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The Great Kiddush

Upon his arrival in an unfamiliar community, Rabbi Ashi was honored with saying *kiddush* on wine Shabbos morning on behalf of the congregation.

“Please say *kiddusha rabba* for us” they requested.

“*Kiddusha rabba?*” Rabbi Ashi silently pondered. He had never heard that phrase before and he began to wonder what sort of a *kiddush* was traditionally said in this community. Then he hit on a foolproof plan.

Every *kiddush* begins with the blessing on wine — “*borei pri hagefen.*” He therefore said that blessing and paused. If no one in the congregation would drink from the cup of wine before him, he would assume that the communal tradition was to say the longer *kiddush* said on Shabbos eve, and he would continue with its text. When he observed one of the older congregants bending down to partake of his wine, he knew that their tradition was no different from his, and that the *kiddush* consisted of no more than that one blessing.

But why is this *kiddush*, which consists of only a single blessing (the passages from Torah and Prophets traditionally recited before the blessing are customary but are not an essential part of the *kiddush*), called by the paradoxical name of *kiddusha rabba* — the “great *kiddush*”?

The Torah commands us to “remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it,” which obligates us to verbally declare its holiness. Our Sages directed us to fulfill this command by making this declaration in the *kiddush* we say at the onset of the holy day, and therefore designed a special text for it which concludes with the praise of Hashem as the “One Who sanctifies the Shabbos.” Since the Shabbos meal eaten during the day gives more honor to the holy day than the one at night, our Sages commanded us to make a token *kiddush* before it as well. But in order to distinguish this *kiddush* of rabbinic origin from the Torah-mandated one at night, they limited its text to the single blessing on wine.

Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir, grandson of Rashi) explains that this *kiddush* of a single blessing is accorded this grandiose title because it is the universal opening for every Shabbos and Festival *kiddush*.

Rabbeinu Nissim (*RaN*) takes an almost opposite approach by suggesting that this title is a euphemism to cover up the brevity of the *kiddush*, in the same way that we euphemistically refer to a blind person as “one with much light.”

Pesachim 106a

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