

HALOCHOSCOPE



This week's (and next week's) question:

At the *Pesach seder*, someone is so full that he cannot eat anymore. He has not eaten *afikoman* yet. Midnight is approaching. Should he force himself to eat *afikoman* before midnight? Should he rather wait until he feels he has room to eat it without feeling sick, but miss eating it before midnight? Should a child under *bar-* or *bas-mitzvah* be told to eat it in these circumstances, to wait until later, or not at all? Should the child be told to eat a smaller amount than the minimum requirement?

The issues:

Last week's issue:

- A) *Afikoman*
- B) The timing of this *mitzvah*

This week:

- C) *Achila gasa*, eating on a full stomach
- D) *Chinuch*, training a child in *mitzvah* performance, in this case

C) *Achila gasa*

In the case in question, the person is quite full. If he pushes himself to eat the *afikoman* before midnight, he will literally be forcing it down. This is called *achila gasa*, coarse or crude eating, or extreme gluttony. Generally, this does not qualify as *halachic* eating. Accordingly, eating it in this state would not count as a fulfillment of the *mitzvah*. Furthermore, it would demean the *mitzvah*. However, there are levels of *achilia gasa*. Nonetheless, even mild *achila gasa* is discouraged when done for a *mitzvah*.

The issue is whether the view that one must eat the *afikoman* before midnight trumps the negative aspects of this type of eating. The person has already eaten some *matzo* earlier in the *seder*. Thus, he has fulfilled the Scriptural *mitzvah* according to one school of thought. The other school, that considers the *afikoman matzo* the real *mitzvah*, would accept the *matzo* eaten at the beginning of the *seder* as an emergency backup. As a practical matter, most poskim agree that if one did not manage to eat the *afikoman* by midnight, he should still eat it later. Furthermore, one might even have time to rely on a later version of midnight, and eat it when he is less full.

The Talmud debates *achila gasa* in regard to the *korban Pesach*. In one view, one who eats his *Korban Pesach* '*leshem* (for the sake of)' *achila gasa* is a *posheia*, rebellious sinner. In the other view, he is not evil. He fulfilled his *mitzvah*, but not in the most choice fashion. One explanation is that the one had the correct intent to fulfill a *mitzvah*, while the other had intent to gorge himself gluttonously. Nonetheless, he still ate the *korban*. Others say the passage contrasts one who eats the meat with enjoyment while performing the *mitzvah* with one who eats it on a full stomach. This means that according to

one view, one fulfills the *mitzvah* on a full stomach.

This idea raises questions. The Talmud states, elsewhere, that one who eats *achila gasa* has not “eaten” in the *halachic* sense. This refers to eating on *Yom Kippur* and liability of a non-*Kohain* who ate *terumah* tithes. It is termed *mazik*, damaging, rather than eating. It damages the food, which can make one liable, but not for the particular penalty for eating. It does not count as beneficial enjoyment that violates *Yom Kippur*.

There is a range of commentaries on this passage to explain *achila gasa*. Some seem to explain it as simply not enjoying the food, because one is full already. Others maintain that it refers to eating when one is overfull, and the extra food is repulsive. [The obvious question is, then why is he eating at all? Sometimes, people contend with a conflict between temptation and pain. The temptation is to satisfy the palate or taste buds, while the pain is lower down in the digestive tract, such as the throat or stomach.] The same range of commentaries applies to another passage, regarding eating *matzo 'achila gasa'* when one has recently eaten other food. The simple reading of the passage seems to refer to eating it without enthusiasm, because one is not hungry. However, the usage of the term *achila gasa* leads many to explain that one can be considered eating *achila gasa* even if he is not overfull. The feeling of satiety is enough to make further eating *gasa*. Others say that the passage refers to one who is so full prior to the *matzo* as to feel repulsed by it. The *poskim* also distinguish between types of food. One might feel stuffed when it comes to eating a bread type food, such as *matzo*, but have room for meat or sweets.

To resolve the apparent contradiction, some say that there are two levels of *achila gasa*. One who is totally revolted by the food, has not really eaten. One who is not revolted, but still has room, albeit with some discomfort, is considered *halachically* eating. In the passage about *korban Pesach*, the eater has some room, but is not in the mood of eating any more. If he eats, he fulfills the *mitzvah*, according to one view. In the cases of *Yom Kippur* and *Terumah*, he has no room, but stuffs the food down. He is not liable.

Another view differentiates between types of *mitzvah*. If a *mitzvah* centers around the act of eating, *achila gasa* cannot be recognized as *halachic* eating. This is the case with regard to *Yom Kippur*. If a *mitzvah* includes eating as a part of the performance, *achila gasa* can still be recognized. The other aspects of the *mitzvah* will be fulfilled regardless of the *halachic* qualifications of the *achila gasa*. This is the case with regard to *korban Pesach*. The *mitzvah* is to offer the animal as a *korban*, and then to partake of the meat. If one did not eat the meat, he fulfilled the first part of the *mitzvah*, and may not offer the compensatory *Pesach Shaini*. According to this view, any overeating is *achila gasa*. Later commentaries debate whether this means that even if there is a little room, but one does not feel like eating any more, it is *achila gasa* for *Yom Kippur*. Being repulsed by the food is not mentioned by the Talmud. It is introduced to distinguish between types of *achila gasa*. Accordingly, this view would not accept the milder form of *achila gasa* for *matzo*. Since the *mitzvah* of *matzo* revolves solely around the act of eating, *achila gasa* of any kind does not qualify. However, *afikoman* might depend on the viewpoint on its meaning. Those who consider it one way to fulfill *matzo* would not accept any form of *achila gasa*. Those who consider it a way to remember *korban Pesach* might accept mild *achila gasa* as a less than admirable way to fulfill the *mitzvah*.

All opinions would seem to agree that eating the *afikoman* on an overfull stomach does not work to fulfill the *mitzvah*. The poskim cite a view that gives three categories of one who eats *afikoman achila gasa*: One who finds it a bother is a *rasha*, wicked son. The Yerushalmi says that the question of the *rasha* is: Why do 'you' eat the *korban Pesach* when it is such a burden? This refers to one who has no appetite because he ate other food first. Even if he is not so full, he is a *rasha* due to his attitude. Therefore, one should ensure that he does not view *afikoman* this way, by leaving space during the meal. The second category is the *poshaia*, who eats it for the wrong reasons, whether he finds it burdensome or eats it gluttonously. He is not overstuffed, but has no desire to eat more. Both of these categories fulfill their obligations. In the latter case, he is nonetheless condemned. The third category is one who is overstuffed, and does not fulfill his obligation.

If one waits until he has some room, he has digested some of the food eaten earlier. This could be viewed as a separation between the eating. However, the concept of making room occurs in *halacha* as well. Certain things are done at stages in the meal to make more space in the stomach, or as appetizers. Therefore, there would appear to be no problem with waiting until one has more appetite for the *afikoman*. Indeed, since eating it by midnight is not as important as eating it with the correct intent and appetite, one should rather wait until he has room. Even if he is not overfull, he would perform the *mitzvah* more admirably by waiting until he is hungry, rather than eating reluctantly by midnight.

If one has room for one *kezayis*, should not try to stuff himself with two of them. Many poskim question the *minhag* to eat two *kezaysim*. Some say that one must be careful about his intent, especially since the two are being eaten for various different reasons. Some point out that one cannot fulfill all opinions either way. Some say that the two are part of the one *mitzvah* to eat *Pesach* with *matzo*. Others say that one of them fulfills one opinion of *matzo*, and some hold that it may not be eaten at the same time as something representing another *mitzvah*. Some even consider one of the *kezaysim* to represent the *chagiga*, a separate *korban* which was definitely eaten separately. Therefore, there is much to be gained by eating one *kezayis* if one is too full to eat two of them comfortably.

One who is full should eat a smaller amount, even if it means following a lenient view of a *kezayis*, such as a third of a smaller *shiur* of an egg. The gain by eating a larger amount will be offset by the loss due to *achila gasa*. [See Psachim 107b Yerushalmi 10:4 Yuma 80b-81a Yevamos 40a Nazir 23a Baba Kama 110a, Poskim. Rokaiach 283. Tur Sh Ar OC 476:1, commentaries. Pesach Meuvin 319. Nitei Gavriel Pesach 97:8-9, notes.]

D) Chinuch

The second part of our question is whether a child under *bar* or *bas mitzvah* should be encouraged to fulfill *afikoman* correctly. In our case, should the child stay up later, so that he or she can wait until there is more room to eat *afikoman*? Should the child eat *afikoman* on an overfull stomach, not eat it at all, or eat a tiny amount for symbolism.

Chinuch applies to any *mitzvah* that the child will fulfill as an adult. In addition, some poskim say that children have an obligation in this *mitzvah*. Though they are too young to be obliged in most *mitzvos* Scripturally, there are some cases where the adults are obliged to include them. In the case of *hagadah*, it appears that the children play a critical role, though they do not perform the actual *mitzvah*. Furthermore, some maintain

that children can be obliged on some level. In the case of *Pesach*, children can have a real share in the *korban*, though only qualified adults can participate. Apparently, the children can be considered part of the *mitzvah*. Some say that this is because the *mitzvos* are to publicize a miracle. The children were part of the miracle.

The question arises whether to include small children, who are able to perform the physical act of eating, but not the intellectual act of intent for the *mitzvah*. What if they cannot eat a full *kezayis*? Is there any *chinuch* in giving them a small amount? Should one 'force' them to eat more? This seems to be *chinuch* in *achila gasa*!

The poskim say clearly that children should not be made to eat two *kezaysim*, neither for the first *matzas mitzvah* at the beginning of the meal, nor for the *afikoman*. While the reason given seems to be due to hardship, it is safe to speculate that the concept of *achila gasa* plays a role in this. The poskim also discuss giving a younger child less than a *kezayis*. While this seems to be accepted, there is debate on whether this is simply 'better than nothing' or actual *chinuch*. There is further debate on whether the child should be taught to recite a *brocha* in this case, since it is not really fulfillment of the *mitzvah*. Is there separate *chinuch* on the *brocha*? Is this really anyhow *chinuch* on the *mitzvah* in some form?

In the case of *afikoman*, there is no *brocha*. Keeping the child awake or forcing him to eat more than he is able to would make him resent the *mitzvah*. Bearing in mind the concept of the *rasha* son, who sees the *mitzvah* as a burden, this should be forbidden.

If one has such a bad reaction to *matzo* that he cannot eat any, the poskim suggest that he should chew a small amount symbolically, without a *brocha*. [This assumes that this will not cause a bad reaction.] The child should be encouraged to do this with the *afikoman*, that anyhow has no *brocha*. If, however, he is too full for even a small amount, the opportunity should be used to teach about *achila gasa*! [See Tur Sh Ar OC 472:15, commentaries. Chaim Larosh (R C Falagi) Matzo 7, Afikoman 2. Nitei Gavriel 90:19 97:8-9, references in footnotes.]

In conclusion, one who is quite full should eat one *kezayis* before midnight, rather than wait. If he is too full for this, he should wait until after midnight. A child should not be made to wait, or to eat more than he or she is able. Rather, the child should eat a smaller amount. If the child wishes to wait anyhow, this is better.

On the Parsha ... *What remains of [the mincha], Aharon and his sons shall eat it; it shall be eaten as matzos; in a holy place, in the court of the Ohel Moed, they shall eat it .. Every male of the sons of Aharon shall eat it ... [6:9 11] These are additional mitvos, besides those mentioned in last week's parsha [Ibn Ezra, Ramban]* While each *mitzvah* relates to the eating, the first mention could easily be used for all the other *mitzvos*, without the need to repeat the word for eating each time. Perhaps the Torah stresses the eating aspect here. The *mitzvah* does not revolve solely around the eating, but around the offering. Thus, one might think that it may be eaten *achila gasa*. In fact, *kodashim* must be eaten royally, as befits food taken from the 'King's table'. The reason that it must be reiterated when discussing bread, is that bread is more filling, and can become *achila gasa* more easily. [See *Tosafos Psachim 107b*]

Sponsored for a *refuah shelaimah* for Naftali ben Jay *sheyichyeh*. 

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