

# THE MEANING OF LEANING: HESEIBAH ON PESACH

from Archaeology to the Brisker Rav

THE MISHNAH (PESACHIM 10:11; PESACHIM 99B) TELLS US THAT A PERSON MAY NOT EAT ON THE NIGHT OF PESACH UNTIL HE RECLINES. THIS LAW IS CODIFIED IN SHULCHAN ARUCH ORACH CHAYIM 472. THIS REQUIREMENT IS MEANT TO EXPRESS FREEDOM AND TO IMITATE THE MANNER IN WHICH KINGS AND NOBLES EAT (RAMBAM, COMMENTARY TO THE MISHNAH, PESACHIM 10:1). ITS PURPOSE IS "TO MAKE IT KNOWN THAT WE EMERGED FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM" (YERUSHALMI PESACHIM 10:1); WE DEMONSTRATE OUR LIBERATION BY CONDUCTING OURSELVES AS FREE PEOPLE DO. IN WHAT WAY IS RECLINING DURING A MEAL A DEMONSTRATION OF FREEDOM? LET US TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THIS UNUSUAL HALACHAH.

**Leaning on Pesach and Year-Round** In the Mishnah, reclining actually plays a halachic role in *any* meal eaten on any day of the year, with respect to the requirement to recite *bircas hamazon* with a *zimun*, a quorum of three (or more) adult males. The Mishnah (*Berachos* 6:6) rules, "If they sat to eat, each one blesses for himself; if they reclined, one person blesses for all of them." The halachah is that only a meal with *kevius*, in which each of the participants has a set place at the meal, may be concluded with a *zimun* — and that this *kevius* is established by *heseibah* (Rashi, *Berachos* 42a; Rambam, *Peirush HaMishnayos* ad loc.; Rav Ovadiah Bartenura, ad loc.). As the Gemara (*Berachos*, *ibid.*) infers, if the three participants do not recline while eating, *no zimun* may be recited.

With respect to this requirement to recline, however, the Gemara itself (*ibid.*) allows for a more flexible definition of the required *kevius*; other conditions, such as a

prior arrangement to sit together, can serve in its place. On that basis, many Rishonim rule that in the post-Talmudic era, with its altered norms of eating, the convention of sitting at one table can create a *kevius* paralleling that which would be created by *heseibah*. While the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 167) does cite the requirement to recline in order to recite a *zimun*, it also notes that the requirement no longer exists because the standard manner of eating has changed.<sup>2</sup> The requirement to recline at the Pesach Seder, however, appears in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 472) with *no* qualification or distinction.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, the shift in common dining practice does not justify eliminating the requirement of *heseibah* on Pesach night. But why should this be so?

**The Traklin and the Triclinium** The key to understanding the norms and conventions of dining described in our *mishnah* may lie



in another *mishnah*, this one in *Pirkei Avos* 4:16: "This world is similar to a *prozdor* [entrance vestibule] to the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the *prozdor* to enter the *traklin*."<sup>4</sup> What is a *traklin*?

A *traklin* is a *triclinium* (plural: *triclinia*; Greek — *triklín[i]on*), a formal Roman dining room or a great banquet hall in a Roman building. In the classical Roman world, free people ate reclining on three couches around a small table, whereas slaves ate standing or sitting, since they were always on call.<sup>5</sup> The free men's way of eating, called a *triclinium* ("three reclining"), came to be the name of the main dining room or eating hall in Latin, from the Greek *triklinos* (a room with three couches). The arrangement of these couches around a central round or rectangular table was the typical Roman furnishing for a dining room.<sup>6</sup> The couches could be built of stone,

so that their location would even now be recognizable in the floor plan of the house, but they were frequently movable. (The *prozdor*, or entrance vestibule, is itself a loanword from the Greek *prothuron*.)

The *triclinium* was well-known in Eretz Israel in the Mishnaic and Talmudic period,<sup>7</sup> and was discussed extensively in legal (and Aggadic) contexts.<sup>8</sup>

The *triclinium* had three *klinai* (couches) on three sides of a low, square table. The table's fourth side, which usually faced the room's entrance, was left unoccupied in order to allow servants and slaves to bring food to the table. The advantage of this arrangement was that the serving was centralized between the three sides, as all the diners were approached from the front.<sup>9</sup> Slaves were not allowed to recline at dinner because they were busy cooking and serving the meal, and they were certainly not of

adequate rank to join the company regardless. Thus, we understand the statement of Rav Levi in the *Yerushalmi* (*Pesachim* 10:1): "We are obligated to eat reclining on the nights of Pesach in the manner of free men, for it is the way of slaves to eat standing, and here we eat reclining."

In Hebrew, eating in this formation was called "*mesubin*," since the participants in the meal sat surrounding (*saviv*) the table (*Aruch s.v. Sav*). Thus, Rashi (*Bereishis* 27:19) describes Yitzchak as "*meisev al hashulchan*," reclining at the table, and Achashveirosh dined at his feast "on beds" (*Esther* 1:6, 7:8).

With this background, we can understand the teaching of the Tosefta (*Berachos* 5:5), cited in the Gemara (*Berachos* 46b and *Yerushalmi Taanis* 4:2): "What is the [social] order of reclining [*hesev*]? When there are three couches, the greatest one reclines at

---

---

*Eating while reclining meant that your time was your own, that you were not on call, that you were autonomous and not subservient. In short, you were not owned*

---

---

the head of the middle [couch<sup>10</sup>], the one second to him reclines above him and the third reclines below him.”<sup>11</sup> The terms “upper,” “middle,” and “lower” couches, or “above” and “below,” follow the Latin terms for the “highest couch” (*lectus summus*), the “middle couch” (*lectus medius*), and the “lowest couch” (*lectus imus*) of the *convivium* dinner eaten in the Roman *triclinium* configuration.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, the Hebrew term *hesev* and the Latin term *traklin* come together in *Yerushalmi Bava Basra* 9:3: “If a man made his son ... a *hesev* in a *traklin*, what is the law?”

The practice of dining in this formation originated in the east, where it was a form of dining for elites. (An Assyrian stone relief unearthed in Nineveh, now on display in the British Museum, shows King Ashurbanipal feasting on a couch in the 7th century BCE — leaning, of course, on his left side.) It became popular among the Greeks in the early 7th century BCE and then spread to their colonies in southern Italy (Magna Graecia). Eventually, it was adopted by the Etruscans. The Romans may have seen the first dining *klinai* in use by the Etruscans, but they may have refined the practice when they later came in closer contact with the Greek culture. The practice of reclining during meals spread throughout the Mediterranean and survived for over a millennium.

*Triclinia* were common in wealthy Roman-era dwellings. Many *triclinia* have been discovered in Israel:<sup>13</sup> at the Herodium, at Herod’s palace in Jericho (mid-first century BCE);<sup>14</sup> at Tsippori, as part of the oldest known synagogue near Jericho;

at “Hilkiya’s Palace” at Khirbet el-Muraq (first century CE); and in a wealthy house excavated in Jerusalem, dating back to the first century CE.<sup>15</sup>

**Heseibah: The Essential Meaning** The fact that servants in the Classical world stood or sat to eat, while free men reclined, points to a dramatic distinction in the significance of each position. Eating while reclining meant that your time was your own, that you were not on call, that you were autonomous and not subservient. In short, you were not owned; you ate reclining, leaning on your left side so that you could eat with your right hand.<sup>16</sup> The Gemara (*Pesachim* 108a) thus rules, “Leaning on the right is not *heseibah*.” No one in the Classical world ate while reclining to the right; it would be meaningless, just as left-handed people shake hands with their right hands today as a convention. (The question of the food going down the trachea is a secondary consideration in the Gemara, and according to some Rishonim<sup>17</sup> may well refer to the case mentioned before it, of eating on one’s back.<sup>18</sup>)

The standards of status, freedom, and autonomy are reversed at the Seder. Even servants<sup>19</sup> must demonstrate their freedom and eat while reclining as free men do,<sup>20</sup> even in their masters’ presence,<sup>21</sup> at least while eating matzoh. (See *Pesachim* 108a: “The servant who ate a *k’zayis* of matzoh and was reclining has fulfilled his obligation.”) This requirement applies even to servants serving at the Seder meal itself. The night of the Seder is a night of freedom for all,<sup>22</sup> and a Jewish servant is no less obligated to observe this law than any

other Jewish person.<sup>23</sup> According to some authorities, even Jewish-owned slaves (*avadim canaanim*) are obligated to recline at the Seder.<sup>24</sup>

We ask in one of the Seder’s Four Questions why “on all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night we all eat reclining.” Some commentators understand this as a reference to the fact that, depending on social status, throughout the year some Jews ate sitting while others reclined to eat. On the Seder night, however, every Jew must recline, even a servant.

**“On This Night, We All Recline”** This line itself is the subject of considerable discussion: It does not appear in the Mishnah’s version of the Mah Nishtanah (*Pesachim* 10:4), nor does it appear in any source in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmud Bavli, or Talmud Yerushalmi. Its first appearance is in the ninth- and tenth-century works *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* and *Siddur Rav Saadiah Gaon*. In place of this question, the Mishnah’s list of four questions includes one that is not part of the Haggadah text we use today: “On all other nights we eat roasted, boiled, or cooked meat; this night we eat only roasted meat.” Why did the original version of the Mah Nishtanah not include a reference to *heseibah*?

The Vilna Gaon (*Commentary to Haggadah*) suggests that this question was not asked in the era of the Beis HaMikdash simply because reclining while eating was not considered unusual then, as people in those times *always* ate in that fashion. According to the Vilna Gaon, the question was added only in later generations, when the practice of reclining while

eating fell out of vogue. The Rogatchover Gaon (*Hilchos Chometz U'Matzoh* 8:2), too, offers this explanation, but disagrees with the Vilna Gaon on another point. The Gaon maintains that there must always have been four questions in the Haggadah, paralleling the four cups of wine, the four sons, and so forth; the Rogatchover, on the other hand, does not assume that this was always the case.

But by no means is it clear that the inclusion of this line in the Haggadah was a later development. The Rambam (*Hilchos Chometz U'Matzoh* 8:2) lists the question about reclining among the questions that were asked even during the era of the Beis HaMikdash. According to the Rambam, it seems that there were *five* questions at that time, with the question regarding the Korban Pesach being dropped after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

Actually, the Rambam's version of the Haggadah presents this passage not as a list of questions but rather as *statements* made by the reader of the Haggadah in response to the child's spontaneous questions prompted by the unusual practices of the night, such as the removal of the table. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, in his commentary on the Haggadah, argues that the Rambam would not have invented this line in the Haggadah on his own; he reasons that the Rambam must have had a source for it. He notes that the questions appear in different orders in various Talmudic manuscripts and that in some versions, certain questions (such as those pertaining to roasted meat or to *maror*) are missing. Furthermore, a Talmudic account in *Pesachim* 115b indicates that not all the questions need to be asked even *l'chatchilah*. The Lubavitcher Rebbe therefore suggests that there were different customs regarding this portion of the Haggadah, which were eventually organized as one set of five questions (as in the Rambam's version) in the time of the Beis HaMikdash.

Similarly, Rav Menachem Kasher,<sup>25</sup> who also cites the varying versions of the Mah Nishtanah in different Talmudic manuscripts, argues that this question may have been part of the Haggadah even during the era of the Beis HaMikdash — but that it may have originally referred to the practice of eating the Korban Pesach as a part of a group. The term *mesubin*, he suggests, may refer not to the act of reclining but rather to eating as a member of a group, a *chaburah*. There is precedent for this interpretation in the Rambam's use of the term *mesubin* in *Peirush HaMishnayos* (*Berachos* 6:6), where he uses it to describe the fellowship that warrants reciting a *zimun*. *Targum Yonasan* to *Shemos* 12:46 describes the Torah's requirement to eat the Korban Pesach “in one house” as *b'chaburah chada*, “in one fellowship,”<sup>26</sup> a similar situation to the people whom the Rambam describes as *mesubin*.

Rav Chaim Pinchas Benish<sup>27</sup> suggests that, in fact, the question may have been instituted only after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, and that the Rambam merely prescribes how the question, now that it has been instituted, *will be* asked once the Beis HaMikdash is rebuilt.

**Heseibah: Independent Requirement or Component Part?** As we quoted above, the Gemara describes the requirement of *heseibah* with the words, “The servant who ate a *k'zayis* of matzoh and reclined has fulfilled his obligation” (*Pesachim* 108a). It is not clear from this Gemara whether the “obligation” it mentions is a reference to the obligation of eating matzoh or to the requirement of *heseibah*. This question — whether *heseibah* is an independent obligation or merely a detail of the mitzvah of eating matzoh — is the subject of considerable discussion.

The Brisker Rav (Rav Yitzchok Zev Ha-Levi Soloveitchik) notes<sup>28</sup> the Rambam's description of this requirement: “[Since a

person] is obligated to show himself as if he himself just now went out from subjugation in Egypt and was redeemed, when he eats his meal on this night he must eat and drink while he reclines” (*Hilchos Chometz U'Matzoh* 7:6-7). The Brisker Rav understands the Rambam's statement to mean that there is an independent halachic requirement to perform *heseibah* as an expression of freedom, but the Gemara qualifies this requirement by ruling that it is sufficient to engage in *heseibah* merely during the eating of the matzoh.

Thus, the Rambam continues, “When does one need *heseibah*? For eating the *k'zayis* of matzoh and for drinking the four cups. For the rest of his eating and drinking, if he reclined, that is praiseworthy, and if not, he does not need to.” The Brisker Rav notes that the Rosh (*Pesachim* 20) disagrees with the Rambam's view, as he understands the Gemara to mean that if a servant ate matzoh without leaning, he has failed to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzoh and must repeat his performance of the mitzvah. Thus, according to the Rosh, the requirement of *heseibah* qualifies the manner in which matzoh must be consumed.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe<sup>29</sup> notes that, in fact, both possibilities are incorporated in halachah:<sup>30</sup> One should *l'chatchilah* recline during the actual meal, which implies that *heseibah* is an independent requirement that is not connected to eating matzoh, but the halachah also states that a person who ate matzoh without reclining must eat it again, which implies that *heseibah* is simply a detail of the mitzvah of eating matzoh. He therefore suggests that there are two distinct obligations of *heseibah*: an independent requirement to recline and a condition that must be fulfilled for the consumption of matzoh and the four cups of wine. Thus, reclining while eating matzoh is both a way to properly fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzoh as well as an observance of

the independent requirement of *heseibah*, and there is also a *hiddur mitzvah* (in the mitzvah of *heseibah* itself) in eating the entire meal while reclining.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (*Harerei Kedem* 148) takes a different approach: He maintains that *heseibah* is an obligation associated with the Pesach meal, and the matzoh and the four cups of wine, in his view, are its *primary fulfillment*. Thus, reclining for these portions of the meal fulfills the requirement of how the *seudah* must be eaten. But there also is a *hiddur mitzvah* (albeit an optional one) in eating the *entire meal* in this position.

**An Outdated Practice?** By the period of the Rishonim, some authorities (usually in the Carolingian countries – northern France and Germany) noted that free or important people in Western (Ashkenazic) countries no longer maintained the practice of reclining during meals. In the Carolingian Empire, people usually ate sitting together on benches at long dining tables. Instead of eating around small tables, they customarily ate at one long one. At royal banquets, at the high table, it was customary to sit on long benches; usually only the important personage at the head of the table sat on a chair (chairs were fairly rare).

In light of this shift in societal norms, does the practice of *heseibah* still have a place at the Seder as a demonstration of freedom? The first recorded discussion of this question is attributed to Ra'avan, Rav Eliezer ben Nossan (Germany, 1090–1170) and appears in the writings of his grandson, Raaviah (*Sefer HaRaaviah, Avi HaEzri* no. 525): “They would recline on beds on their left sides, but we who are not accustomed to that fulfill our obligation in our manner of eating *and we should not lean left or right*.” Raaviah himself adds: “In our times in which free people in our land are not accustomed to recline, one should sit



in his usual fashion.” Similar rulings are attributed to the Mordechai (*Pesachim*, chapter 10, “*HaSeder Biktzarah*,” 34b), Abudraham (*Seder Haggadah U’Peirushah* 216), and *HaAgur* (sec. 791), although the latter notes that “nevertheless, the custom of the people is to recline.”

Maharil (18b) quotes a tradition that *heseibah* is not obligatory, “for we, who do not have such a practice the rest of the year to recline, should not do so on the nights of Pesach, for what freedom is there in this? On the contrary, it appears as if he is ill.” Maharil himself, however, argues that the practice of *heseibah* should be preserved: “What does it matter if the rest of the year he does not recline? On this night one is obligated to conduct himself as a free person and is obligated to recline.”

*Sefer Amarkol* (a student of the Rosh, 66b) cites Raaviah’s position and the comment of his contemporaries, Rav Baruch of Magence and Rabbeinu Chaim, that *heseibah* is unnecessary “and on the contrary, the way of kings today is to eat without reclining.” In fact, *Machzor Vitri* (Rav Simchah

ben Shmuel of Vitry, France, a student of Rashi) notes that *heseibah* was not practiced in France, “where it is not the fashion of nobles to recline.” (Although Rashi himself comments on the *pasuk* in *Shmuel* I, 20:24-25, “And the king [Shaul] sat by the meal to eat,” that “*their practice* was to eat leaning on beds”<sup>31</sup> – implying that the practice was no longer in vogue in his own days – he does not make note in his commentary on *Maseches Pesachim* of any change in the rituals of the Seder.)

*Hagahos Maimoniyos* (*Hilchos Chometz U’Matzoh* 7:7), in contrast, argues that Raaviah’s ruling is the view of a lone authority, and “all of the *poskim* rule that there must *always* be *heseibah*, even in our times.” The Tur (*Orach Chayim* 472) mentions that one should prepare a place where he can recline while eating at the Seder, but he also notes Raaviah’s ruling that one should sit normally and there is no need to recline.

Rav Yosef Karo in *Beis Yosef*, evidently basing himself on the *Hagahos Maimoniyos*, comments that this is a isolated opinion

(that is, a marginal minority opinion) and he does not cite it even as a “*yesh omrim*” in his *Shulchan Aruch*.<sup>32</sup> The Bach ad loc. understands the Tur to mean that even if *heseibah* is not required, it certainly is permitted and *should* be done *l’chatchilah*. Rema, 472, rules that Raaviah’s opinion might be relied upon in a *bidi’eved* situation — i.e., a person who did not recline need not eat or drink again.

It is important to note that this question was raised only by the Rishonim who lived in Carolingian Ashkenazic (Western) countries (or in Christian Spain), but it does not appear in the writings of Rishonim from Eastern countries, where reclining during a meal continued to be a normal convention of eating. (As late as 1948, Rav Shem Tov Gaugine in *Keter Shem Tov* [London 1948] notes that reclining to eat in fact continues to be a contemporary “favorite way of eating in Eastern countries, Arab countries, India, and Israel.”)

The Rambam, who lived in Egypt, does not raise this issue in *Hilchos Chometz U’Matzoh* 7:6. Likewise, in his commentary to *Mishnah Berachos* 6:6, the Rambam states, “If they sat to eat, each one blesses [*bircas hamazon*] for himself; if they reclined, one person blesses for all of them,” making no qualification about the practice having been discontinued, although he does make that very point about the burning of incense mentioned in the very same *mishnah*. The *Aruch* of 11th-century Italy and Southern France (s.v. *Mesibah*) states that reclining around tables at meals and banquets “was their practice in ancient days, and still is today among people of the East.” (*Knesses HaGedolah* 472:1, states that in countries where reclining at meals is a convention, it is an obligation on Pesach.)

**Heseibah Past and Present** Considering the seemingly anachronistic nature of *heseibah*, how can we account for the many Rishonim who maintain that it should still be practiced (while no such requirement exists today for a *zimun* throughout the year)? The answers may go to the heart of the special nature of the Pesach Seder.

One approach maintains that by reclining at the Seder, we commemorate our liberation from Mitzrayim, since the Jews who were freed from slavery also expressed their newfound emancipation by performing *heseibah* at their own festive meals. (In a similar vein, we commemorate the way Hillel ate the Korban Pesach by doing the same ourselves.)<sup>33</sup> Additionally, there is an aspect of *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the miracle, in *heseibah* (*Midrash Seichel Tov*).

Another suggestion is that we continue to observe the halachah of *heseibah* precisely because it is not a year-round practice. This is yet another tactic we employ to cause our children to ask why the Seder night is different from all other nights (*Aruch HaShulchan*, 472:3).

Moreover, the very fact that we engage in a practice that has no meaning in contemporary times may itself be significant. The Seder that we celebrate today lacks its essential central component: the Korban Pesach. We cannot bring the Korban Pesach because the Romans destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. *Heseibah* itself was a Roman practice, one that is no longer relevant because the Romans and their empire are gone.<sup>34</sup> *Heseibah* is a thing of the past while we are here in the present, singing at the Seder’s end, “Next year in Yerushalayim,” with hope and faith for the future. The very fact that *heseibah* seems so out of place may lend it this significant and poignant meaning.



Finally, we quote Maharil (*Seder HaHaggadah*): “A person should be fearful to fulfill the words of the Sages who instituted the mitzvos of the Seder and the Haggadah, and the matter should not be a light matter in his eyes — even if there are some things in the Seder which appear in his eyes as not crucial, he should be wise in his thinking to fulfill them, for there is nothing in them without meaning.” There is thus an unusual and deep eloquence particularly appropriate to the Seder on this night, in (even as we encourage our children to ask questions) expressing our freedom by *subjugating* ourselves, despite difficulties raised, to fulfilling a halachic tradition.

For these reasons, and many more, we recline at the Seder as a meaningful act of freedom. May we merit to perform *heseibah* in freedom next year in Yerushalayim. ■

Nachman Levine of Detroit, Michigan, is the research editor and publications designer for the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute, and has taught and published widely on topics in Tanach and Midrash.

**Endnotes:**

- 1 And Tosefta, *Pesachim* 10:1.
- 2 See also *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 167:15,17; 213:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 167:11; no. 65.
- 3 Rema there does cite the Ravyah's view discussed later that it is no longer required today, for a *bidi'eved* situation.
- 4 Similarly *Tosefta Berachos* 6:21.
- 5 See J. H. D'Arms, "Slaves at Roman *Convivia*," in W. J. Slater, ed., *Dining in a Classical Context*, Ann Arbor, 1991, 171-183; K.M.D. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality*, Cambridge University Press, 2004; Matthew B. Roller, *Dining Posture in Ancient Rome: Bodies, Values, and Status* (Princeton, 2006), 15-22.
- 6 Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, VI.3.10.
- 7 On the Talmudic *triclinium* and Chazal: Samuel Krauss, *Kadmoniyot Ha-Talmud*, vol. 1.2 (Hebrew; Berlin, 1923), 437-38; Gil P. Klein, "Torah in Triclinia: The Rabbinic Banquet and the Significance of Architecture," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Summer 2012, 102:3, 325-370; Daniel Sperber, *A Commentary on Derech Eretz Zuta*, Bar-Ilan University Press, 1990, 67-68.
- 8 For halachic discussions of *triclinia* in Israel: *Tosefta Terumah* 7:16 (*mayim megulin* in a *traklin*); *Tosefta Shabbos* 16:18 (heating a *triclinium* for Shabbos); *Mishnah Eiruv* 6:6; *Tosefta Eiruv* 5:8 (*eiruv* for five *chaburos* in one *triclinium*); *Tosefta Keilim Bava Metzia* 5:3 (purity of dining tables in *triclinia*); *Yerushalmi Nazir* 7:3 (*nazir* and purities in a *triclinium*); *Mishnah Bava Basra* 1:6 (dividing a *traklin*); 6:4 (the size of a house for a *triclinium*); *Mishnah Middos* 1:6 (the "*traklin*" in the Beis HaMikdash; and in the post-Talmudic *Maseches Mezuzah* 2:3 (if a closet leading to a *triclinium/traklin* needs a *mezuzah*). See also *Sifre Devarim* 29:1 (Moshe being allowed to enter Israel as if up to the entrance to the king's

*triclinium*); Rav Yannai's invitation to the peddler to come up to his *traklin* in *Vayikra Rabbah* 16:2; and much more.

- 9 Bernard Rudofsky, *Now I Lay Me Down to Eat: Notes and Footnotes on the Lost Art of Eating*, Garden City 1980, 20.
- 10 Tosafos and Tosfos Rosh, *Bavli Berachos* 46b.
- 11 *Tosefta Kifshuta*, *Berachos*, 62 and 72 cites Plutarch, and the *Letter of Aristaeas*.
- 12 D. Sperber, *A Commentary on Derech Eretz Zuta*, 67-70; *Tosefta Kifshuta*, *Zer.* part 1, 62; Sperber, *Material Culture in Eretz Israel in the Time of the Mishnah and the Talmud* (Hebrew; Ramat Gan, 1993), 2:140-45.
- 13 For archaeology of *triclinia* in Israel, see Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period* (Jerusalem, 1995), 21-107, 260-61; Zeev Weiss, "The House of Orpheus: Another Villa from the Late Roman Period in Sepphoris" (Hebrew), *Qadmoniot* 36.126 (2003): 94-101; Rina Talgam and Zeev Weiss, *The Mosaics of the House of Dionysos at Sepphoris, Qedem* 44 (Jerusalem, 2004). See also Samuel Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie* (Leipzig, 1910-12), 3:43-46.
- 14 Ehud Netzer and Rachel Laureys-Chachy, *The Architecture of Herod, the Great Builder* (Tübingen, 2006), 45-49.
- 15 Nahman Avigad, *The Upper City of Jerusalem* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1980), 95-120.
- 16 Rashbam, *Pesachim* 108a.
- 17 Rashi, *Pesachim* 108a.
- 18 Although the halachic authorities discuss whether left-handed people should lean on their right sides, a practice that would have been meaningless in the ancient world (see Maharal, *Gevuros HaShem* 48), a potential danger outweighs other considerations in halachah, and it is considered safer to lean on the left regardless of which hand is dominant.
- 19 *Taz*, 472:6; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 472:6.
- 20 *She'iltos* 77; *Maharil Hilchos Haggadah*; *Chok Yaakov, Pri Chadash* 472; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*

472:12.

- 21 Rambam, *Hilchos Chometz U'Matzoh* 8:6.
- 22 Meiri, *Pesachim* 98b
- 23 Rabbeinu Manoach on the Rambam.
- 24 *Chok Yaakov, Pri Chadash* 472. On the reality of Jewish-owned slaves at the Seder: *Pesachim* 11. Rambam, *Hilchos Chometz U'Matzoh* 7:2.
- 25 *Haggadah Sheleimah*, 115
- 26 Suggested also by R. Tzvi Karel, *Biur Chada al Mishnah Pesachim V'Chagigah*, Lvov 1925; see also Daniel Goldschmidt, *Haggadah shel Pesach v'Toldoteha*, Jerusalem 1960, 13.
- 27 *Haggadah shel Pesach im Iyunei HaHaggadah*, Bnei Brak, 1989., 80.
- 28 *Chiddushi Maran Gri'z HaLevi*, Jerusalem 1971, *Hilchos Chometz U'Matzoh* 7:7, 14. *Chiddushei HaGrach al HaShas*, Jerusalem 1969 *Pesachim* 108a.
- 29 *Likutei Sichos*, Vol. 11, *Va'eira: Chidudshim U'Biurim BaShas*, Jerusalem 1979, 88.
- 30 He notes that there is a practical ramification of this discussion: with regard to a person who ate matzoh and did not perform *heseibah*, then sat before his *rebbe*, in which case it is forbidden to recline. If the failure to recline meant that he failed to fulfill the mitzvah of *heseibah* itself, this person would now be exempt from eating matzoh again. But if his failure to recline invalidated his actual act of eating matzoh, he must eat another *k'zayis* — this time *again without leaning* due to the presence of his *rebbe*.
- 31 R. David Kimchi, Radak, 12th century southern France, 1160-1236 (Narbonne, Provence), comments on this verse: "For so was the custom in those days, and so we find in the words of our Sages of blessed memory."
- 32 Interestingly, Rav Yosef Karo lived in Christian Spain, Turkey, and Israel, and may have seen several practices.
- 33 See Rav Menachem Kasher, *Responsa Divrei Menachem*, 3:18.
- 34 Rabbi Norman Lamm, *The Royal Table*, OU Press, New York, 2012.

