

Kinder Torah®

בס"ד

Parashas Chaye Sara

The Korbon Pesach

Two Mitzrim speak . . .

"What is that smell?"

"I think it is roasted lamb."

"Impossible! No one would dare to take our sacred animal, the lamb, and roast it in public. Anyone who would have the nerve to do such an act of religious desecration would get the death penalty."

"Haven't you noticed that the Jewish slaves purchased a large number of lambs four days ago? They tied them up inside their homes. Everyone who heard the lamb's voices burned with rage over the boldness of these Jews."

"How despicable!"

"That is not the end of the story. Now, four days later they openly slaughtered the holy lambs and brazenly smeared the blood on the doorposts of their homes."

"Unbelievable."

"Look at that! I cannot believe it. A Jewish family is roasting a lamb over an open fire. These people are truly fearless."

That night, in the Jewish section of Mitzrayim . . .

"Do you hear something?"

"It sounds like someone is screaming."

"There is another scream, and another, and another. Can you make out what they are saying?"

In the distance they hear . . .

"My dear son! My firstborn! Help me, help me someone. He is not breathing...!"

More screams and wails. They are everywhere. Mitzrayim is in chaos. The plague strikes every home.

"It is really happening. Makkas Bechoros (the plague of the first-born). Let us go out to see."

"No, it is forbidden. Moshe commanded us not to leave our houses all the night. Death is in the streets."

"What shall we do?"

"We only do as Hashem says. We have already *shechted* (slaughtered) our Korbon Pesach, smeared its blood on the doorposts, and roasted the meat. Hashem has commanded us to mix flour and water, start kneading the dough, and sing Hallel – praises to Hashem."

"That's all? We don't have to fight the Mitzrim?"

"Hashem is fighting for us. We have suffered long enough. We just stand back and watch His miracles."

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The verse states: "When I see the blood I shall pass over you; there shall not be a plague of destruction over you when I strike in the land of Mitzrayim" (Shemos 12:13). Did the blood really have the

power to prevent or cause the plague? Of course not, explains Rabbeinu Bechaye. Rather, one who trusted in Hashem and fearlessly slaughtered, roasted, and smeared the blood of the Mitzri's holy animal merited salvation. He had shown himself worthy of Hashem's protection.

There are sixteen mitzvos associated with the Korbon Pesach. All of these mitzvos bind us to Hashem as His nation. A Jew who has rejected Hashem may not eat from the Korbon Pesach. The Sefer HaChinuch explains that the Korbon Pesach is a sign and a remembrance that Hashem covered us with the wings of the Shechina (Divine Presence) and brought us into the covenant of the Torah and Emunah (Faith). One who denies this cannot eat from this Korbon.

The Meshech Chochma explains the verse, "And you shall celebrate it (Pesach) as a festival for Hashem" (Shemos 12:14). We celebrate that Hashem identified us as His nation. He goes on to explain that the mitzvah of the Korbon Pesach brought national unity. It was eaten together in a group, which brought people together. In the times of the Beis HaMikdash, they all went to the courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash and *shechted* their korbonos at the same time. There is even an opinion in the Gemora (Kiddushin 42a) that one Korbon Pesach would suffice for everyone! This korbon had many meanings and benefits for every member of Klal Yisrael.



Kinderlach . . .

We mention the Korbon Pesach in the Korbonos section of our daily prayers. This korbon is a tremendous event in our lives. It commemorates the very first Korbon Pesach in Mitzrayim. One who brought that korbon placed himself in mortal danger by slaughtering the holy animal of the Mitzrim. He thereby demonstrated his unshakeable faith in the Almighty and His salvation. Indeed, the blood of the korbon, smeared on his doorposts, protected him from the terrifying plague of Makkos Bechoros. That original korbon brought unity amongst the Jewish people in Mitzrayim. Therefore, throughout the generations, it was sacrificed and eaten in a way that promoted and commemorated national unity. "Hashem, the Master of war" (Shemos 15:3) protected us and fought our battles against the Mitzrim. Just as He saved us then, we believe with emunah she-layma (perfect faith) that He constantly watches over us, protects us, and will send the Moshiach speedily in our days. Recall all of this when you mention the Korbon Pesach kinderlach. It will begin your day on an entirely different madrayga (spiritual plane). You will walk one-step closer to Hashem.

Self Repair

Avraham Avinu had a son, and his trusted servant Eliezer had a daughter. When the time came to choose a wife for Yitzchak, Eliezer hoped that his daughter would be considered. Avraham Avinu had other plans. He sent Eliezer to his homeland, Aram Naharim, to look for a wife from among his family members. The Altar of Navardok explains that Eliezer knew that he was biased. His Yetzer Hora would try to sway him to make his mission fail. Therefore, he took several precautions to insure that he would carry out the word of his master Avraham.

He prayed for success to Hashem on his own, and did not rely solely upon the prayers of Avraham Avinu. This gave him extra prayers and additional motivation to succeed. When he saw the first indication that Rivka was a suitable wife, he gave her the jewelry immediately, without asking her family background. If he delayed, his Yetzer Hora would have the opportunity to confuse him and make excuses not to give the jewelry. Eliezer was subsequently offered food by Lavan but refused to eat until he discussed the marriage. Again, he did not want to give his bias the opportunity to enter the picture. Finally, Eliezer resisted Lavan's attempt to get Rivka to remain in his house for up to a year. He wanted to bring her home immediately and conclude the marriage.

How strongly a person must fight his Yetzer Hora! Eliezer was Avraham's trusted servant, yet he did not trust himself to stand up to his Yetzer Hora without taking many precautions. We see from this, says the Altar of Navardok, how a person must wage war against his Yetzer Hora. This is the purpose of the whole Torah. Our sages state, "The conversation of the servants of our forefathers is more pleasing than the Torah of their sons" (Bereshis Rabba 60:8). We learn the purpose of the whole Torah - battling the Yetzer Hora to correct our character faults - from the conversations of Eliezer. His personal battle is a lesson for all time.*

Kinderlach . . .

We work hard to learn, understand, and remember Torah. Mishna, Gemora, Rashi, Tosafos, Rambam, Halacha, mussar, Tanach, and other subjects require great efforts to master. The Altar of Navardok teaches us that patience, kindness, honesty, diligence, inner happiness, and other middos (character traits) are at least equally difficult to master. However, they are no less important. They are, in fact, the purpose of the Torah. Learn from Eliezer, kinderlach. Fulfill the purpose of the Torah. Fix up your middos.

*For further explanation see Lekach Tov.

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