

# פרשת בא

קרבן פסח

Divine Lessons for the Start-Up Nation

שמות י"ב:א' – כ"ח

ויאמר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן בארץ מצרים לאמר: הוודע הזה לכם ראש חודשים ראשון הוא לכם לחודשי השנה: דברו אל כל עדת ישראל לאמר בעשר לחדש הזה ויקחו להם איש שה לבית אבת שה לבית: ואם ימעט הבית מהיות משה ולקחו הוא וישיכנו הקרב אל ביתו במכסת נפשית איש לפי אכלו תכסו על השה: שה תמים זכר בן שנה יהיה לכם מן הכבשים ומן העזים תקווו: והיה לכם למשמרת עד ארבעה עשר יום לחודש הזה ושזוטו אתו כל קהל עדת ישראל בין הערבים: ולקוו מן הדם ונתנו על שתי המזוזות ועל המשקוף על הבתים אשר יאכלו אתו בדם: ואכלו את הבשר בליקה הזה עלי אש ומצות על מדרים יאכלהו: אל תאכלו ממנו זא ובשל מבשל במים כי אם עלי אש ראשו על כרעיו ועל קרביו: ולא תותרו ממנו עד בקר והנתר ממנו עד בקר באש תשרפו: וכפה תאכלו אתו מותניכם וזגרים זעליכם ברזליכם ומקלכם בידכם ואכלתם אתו בזוהר פסו הוא לה: ועברתי בארץ מצרים בליקה הזה והפיתי כל בכור בארץ מצרים מאדם ועד בהמה ובכל אלהי מצרים אעשה שפטים אני ה': והיה הדם לכם לאת על הבתים אשר אתם שם וראיתי את הדם ופסוהי עלכם ולא יהיה בכם נגף למשוזות בהכתי בארץ מצרים: והיה היום הזה לכם לזכרון וזגתם אתו זוג לידנד לדרתיכם זקת עולם תזגהו: שבעת ימים מצות תאכלו אך ביום הראשון תשביטו שאר מבתיכם כי כל אכל זומין ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מישאל מיום הראשון עד יום השבעי: וביום הראשון מקרא קדש וביום השביעי מקרא קדש יהיה לכם כל מלאכה לא יעשה בהם אך אשר יאכל לכל נפש הוא לבדו יעשה לכם: ושמרתם את המצות כי בעצם היום הזה הוצאתי את עבאיתכם מארץ מצרים ושמרתם את היום הזה לדרתיכם זקת עולם: בראשון בארבעה עשר יום לחודש בערב תאכלו מצות עד יום האזור ועשרים לחודש בערב: שבעת ימים שאר לא ימצא בבתיכם כי כל אכל מזומצת ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מעדת ישראל בזר ובאורז הארץ: כל מזומצת לא תאכלו בכל מושבתיכם תאכלו מצות: ויקרא משה לכל זקני ישראל ויאמר אליהם משכו וקוו לכם צאן למשפוזתיכם ושזוטו הפסו: ולקווהם אגדת אווב וטבלתם בדם אשר בסף והזענתם אל המשקוף ואל שתי המזוזות מן הדם אשר בסף ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתחו ביתו עד בקר: ועבר ה' לנגף את מצרים וראה את הדם על המשקוף ועל שתי המזוזות ופסו ה' על הפתחו ולא יתן המשוזות לבא אל בתיכם לנגף: ושמרתם את הדבר הזה לזק לך ולבניך עד עולם: והיה כי תבאו אל הארץ אשר יתן ה' לכם כאשר דבר ושמרתם את העבדה הזאת: והיה כי יאמרו אליכם בניכם מזה העבדה הזאת לכם: ואמרתם זבחו פסו הוא לה אשר פסו על בתי בני ישראל במצרים בנגפו את מצרים ואת בתינו הציל ויקד העם וישתזוו: וילכו ויעשו בני ישראל כאשר צוה ה' את משה ואהרן בן עשו:

Hashem spoke to Moses and to Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be to you the head of the months; to you shall be the first of the months of the year. Speak to the entire community of Israel, saying, "On the tenth of this month, let each one take a lamb for each parental home, a lamb for each household. But if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor who is nearest to his house shall take [one] according to the number of people, each one according to one's ability to eat, shall you be counted for the lamb. You shall have a perfect male lamb in its [first] year; you may take it either from the sheep or from the goats. And you shall keep it for inspection until the fourteenth day of this month, and the entire congregation of the community of Israel shall slaughter it in the afternoon. And they shall take [some] of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel, on the houses in which they will eat it. And on this night, they shall eat the flesh, roasted over the fire, and unleavened cakes; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. You shall not eat it rare or boiled in water, except roasted over the fire its head with its legs and with its innards. And you shall not leave over any of it until morning, and whatever is left over of it until morning, you shall burn in fire. And this is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your shoes on

your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste it is a Passover sacrifice to Hashem. I will pass through the land of Egypt on this night, and I will smite every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and upon all the gods of Egypt will I wreak judgments I, Hashem. And the blood will be for you for a sign upon the houses where you will be, and I will see the blood and skip over you, and there will be no plague to destroy [you] when I smite the [people of the] land of Egypt. And this day shall be for you as a memorial, and you shall celebrate it as a festival for Hashem; throughout your generations, you shall celebrate it as an everlasting statute. For seven days you shall eat unleavened cakes, but on the preceding day you shall clear away all leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leaven from the first day until the seventh day that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And on the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; no work may be performed on them, but what is eaten by any soul that alone may be performed for you. And you shall watch over the unleavened cakes, for on this very day I have taken your legions out of the land of Egypt, and you shall observe this day throughout your generations, [as] an everlasting statute. In the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening, you shall eat unleavened cakes, until the twenty first day of the month in the evening. For seven days, leavening shall not be found in your houses, for whoever eats leavening that soul shall be cut off from the community of Israel, both among the strangers and the native born of the land. You shall not eat any leavening; throughout all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened cakes." Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Draw forth or buy for yourselves sheep for your families and slaughter the Passover sacrifice. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop and immerse [it] in the blood that is in the basin, and you shall extend to the lintel and to the two doorposts the blood that is in the basin, and you shall not go out, any man from the entrance of his house until morning. Hashem will pass to smite the Egyptians, and He will see the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, and Hashem will pass over the entrance, and He will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses to smite [you]. And you shall keep this matter as a statute for you and for your children forever. And it shall come to pass when you enter the land that Hashem will give you, as He spoke, that you shall observe this service. And it will come to pass if your children say to you, What is this service to you? you shall say, It is a Passover sacrifice to Hashem, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, and He saved our houses. And the people kneeled and prostrated themselves. So the children of Israel went and did; as Hashem commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

## יחזקאל ט"ז:

**וְאֵעֲבֹר עֲלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶה מִתְבּוֹסֵסִת בְּדַמֶּיךָ וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ חַיִּי וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ חַיִּי:**

And I passed by you and saw you downtrodden with your blood, and I said to you, 'With your blood, live,' and I said to you, 'With your blood, live.'

## רש"י שם

**מתבוססת – נכפסת כמו יבוס קמינו. בדמך חיי – אף בנוולך זה לא תמותי ושקננה לומר שני פעמים לפי שצדס פסח ודם מילה נגאלו:**

With your blood, live: Even with this loathsomeness of yours you shall not die. He repeats this a second time because they were redeemed with the blood of the Passover sacrifice and the blood of circumcision (Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer, chapter 29).

## ספר החינוך – מצוה טז

משרשי המצוה, לזכור ניסי מצרים, כמו שכתבנו באחרות. וגם זה גזעו מן השורש הנזכר, שאין כבוד לבני מלכים ויועצי ארץ לגרר העצמות ולשברם ככלבים, לא יאות לעשות ככה כי אם לעניי העם הרעבים. ועל כן בתחלת בואנו להיות סגולת כל העמים ממלכת כהנים ועם קדוש, ובכל שנה ושנה באותו הזמן, ראוי לנו לעשות מעשים המראים בנו המעלה הגדולה שעלינו לה באותה שעה. ומתוך המעשה והדמיון שאנחנו עושין נקבע בנפשותינו הדבר לעולם:

ואל תחשוב בני לתפוש על דברי ולומר, ולמה זה יצוה אותנו השם יתברך לעשות כל אלה לזכרון אותו הנס, והלא בזכרון אחד יעלה הדבר במחשבתנו ולא ישכח מפי זרענו, כי לא מחכמה תתפשני על זה, ומחשבת הנער ישיאך לדבר כן. ועתה בני אם בינה שמעה זאת, והטה אונך ושמע, אלמדך להועיל בתורה ובמצוות. דע כי האדם נפעל כפי פעולותיו, ולבו וכל מחשבותיו תמיד אחר מעשיו שהוא עושה בהם, אם טוב ואם רע, ואפילו רשע גמור בלבבו וכל יצר מחשבות לבו רק רע כל היום, אם יערה רוחו וישים השתדלותו ועסקו בהתמדה בתורה ובמצוות, ואפילו שלא לשם שמים, מיד ינטה אל הטוב, ובכח מעשיו ימית היצר הרע. כי אחרי הפעולות נמשכים הלבבות. ואפילו אם יהיה אדם צדיק גמור ולבבו ישר ותמים, חפץ בתורה ובמצוות, אם אולי יעסק תמיד בדברים של דופי, כאילו תאמר דרך משל שהכריחו המלך ומינהו באומנות רעה, באמת אם כל עסקו תמיד כל היום באותו אומנות, ישוב לזמן מן הזמנים מצדקת לבו להיות רשע גמור, כי ידוע הדבר ואמת שכל אדם נפעל כפי פעולותיו, כמו שאמרנו:

ועל כן אמרו חכמים זכרונם לברכה [מכות דף ב"ג ע"ב] רצה המקום לזכות את ישראל לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצוות, כדי להתפיס בהן כל מחשבותינו ולהיות בהן כל עסקינו, להטיב לנו באחריתנו, כי מתוך הפעולות הטובות אנחנו נפעלים להיות טובים וזוכים לחיי עד. ורמזו זכרונם לברכה על זה באמרו [מנחות דף מ"ג ע"ב] כל מי שיש לו מזוזה בפתחו ויציצית בבגדו ותפלין בראשו מובטח לו שלא יחטא, לפי שאלו מצות תמידיות ונפעל בהן תמיד:

לכן אתה, ראה גם ראה מה מלאכתך ועסקיך כי אחריהם תמשך ואתה לא תמשכם. ואל יבטיחך יצרך לומר, אחרי היות לבי שלם ותמים באמונת אלהים, מה הפסד יש כי אתענג לפעמים בתענוגי אנשים לשבת בשווקים וברחובות, להתלוץ עם הליצים ולדבר צחות, וכיוצא באלו הדברים שאין מביאין עליהם אשמות וחטאות, הלא גם לי לבב כמוהם, קטני עבה ממתניהם, ומדוע ימשכני הם אחריהם. אל בני, השמר מפניהם פן תלכד ברשתם, רבים שתו מתוך כך כוס תרעלתם, ואתה את נפשך תציל.

ואחר דעתך זה אל יקשה עליך מעתה ריבוי המצוות בענין זכירת ניסי מצרים, שהן עמוד גדול בתורתנו, כי ברבות עסקינו בהם נתפעל אל הדבר, כמו שאמרנו:

- Rav Hirsch explains that the pasuk 'And I shall take you to be a nation for Me' defines objective of the Exodus. Hashem was not just interested in simply creating a religious community to serve Him, rather He intended to create a people, a state and a society. The goal of the redemption was therefore a state whose whole social existence would be rooted in Hashem's will, fashioned by Him and dedicated to Him. The Korban Pesach was the foundation stone for this state. The people with whom Hashem built this state were slaves, as such they had no personality and no property. By giving them the mitzvah of Korban Pesach on the tenth of Nissan, Hashem was conferring upon them both personality and property.
- Through permitting one individual to take a lamb and slaughter it on behalf of others through the legal principle of *shlichus*, Hashem was declaring that all are equal before him and the Law. This is because the Gemara states that *shulcho shel adam kemoso*, a man's emissary is like himself. This stood in stark contrast to the hierarchical structure of Egyptian society where the lower classes were lorded over by the upper classes. Man's right to independence, equality, freedom and private property, ties of blood kinship and free choice, which gather people together and separate them into distinct households –is the foundation of the state built by G-d.
- Rav Hirsch explains that family dynamics work in two directions, ascending and descending and both are relevant to the details and message of the Korban Pesach. Ascending ties are those that bind children to their parents, uniting even married children who may even have children of their own around the parents and great grandparents in one single *beis avos*. Descending ties bind parents to their children, where the children establish homes of their own offspring, even as parents had lived for them and will continue to live on through them.
- In the structure that Hashem is building for His new state, even ascending family ties are based on free will rather than compulsion. The halacha permits self-determination in the formation of household units for the Korban Pesach, and adult children are not automatically considered to be part of the family unit unless they actively give consent. Having established the importance of the family unit in the newly formed free society, Rav Hirsch goes on to explain how those families join together to one another to form the ideal Jewish state. In other state-building systems it is considerations of necessity that bind people together, such as mutual need or weakness. The fact that we people each other means that it serves their interests to help others, as they in turn will be helped by others. This is essentially a social contact theory based on self-interest.
- The Divine system of state building is also based on mutual need but from another angle entirely. This is a need that comes from abundance, a need to do ones duty as the pasuk says, 'If the household is too small for one lamb, then he and his neighbour who is close to him should take according to the added number of souls...' In the Torah's system of state building, it is not the poor who need the rich, but the rich who need the poor. The one whose household is too small to take in the blessings G-d has bestowed upon them has to seek out his neighbour so that he can provide him with additional people to benefit from the abundance. Put succinctly, Hashem can provide for the poor without the rich, but without the poor, the rich cannot achieve life's purpose. In the Jewish state, it is not considerations of personal need, but rather a sense of duty and mitzvah that joins households into a community.
- It is the society that is joined by *tzedaka* that becomes the national structure referred to in the pasuk as *Kahal Adas Yisrael*. Yisrael is the national entity. *Eidah* refers to the independent individuals who are responsible for the fulfilment of the nation's mission, the community. *Kahal* refers to the higher echelons of society, those who take responsibility for leadership and government. These three groups are immortalised by the halacha derived from this phrase that the Korban Pesach must be slaughtered in three groups.
- It is at this moment of the birth of the nation that each individual has to see themselves, their family, their community in a relationship with Hashem that depicts them as a *שֶׂה*, a sheep. They are to dedicate themselves to being 'The sheep of His flock' and accept Hashem as their Shepherd. From this point on, this becomes the most comprehensive and lasting view of our relationship to Hashem and His relationship to us, as shall be explained.
- The offering of a sheep is not limited to the Korban Pesach. The Korban Tamid, the daily offering in the *Beis HaMikdash* is comprised of a sheep in the morning and a sheep in the evening. Rav Hirsch contends that this is actually a continuation and reiteration of the moment when Israel set out on its national path through history with the Korban Pesach. The Korban Tamid is therefore reaffirming the message that we are like sheep, submitting to leadership of our Shepherd, Hashem.
- The Jewish 'lamb' is far from being a sad, meek little creature that bears the troubles of the world on its shoulders, allowing itself to be taken like to the slaughter without offering any resistance. The Jewish lamb is whole in body, full of vigour and has the freshness of eternal youth. We, Hashem's flock are meant to be complete and independent. At the same time, we must remain forever young, never imagining that we have outgrown Hashem's guidance and direction.
- It is interesting to point out that one may bring sheep or goats for the Korban Pesach, both of them being included in the species of *צֹאן*. A goat, known as an *עֵז* generally shows greater independence towards the outside than a sheep does, its very name being derived from the word *עָז*, meaning strength. The goat assumes an outward posture of defiance showing his horns to every stranger, but to his shepherd he is as obedient as the sheep.
- The lamb was to be kept for inspection for four days, during this time they were meant to focus their attention on it and guard it against any blemish. In order to qualify as being acceptable for a *korban* it needs to be *tamim*, perfect in

all its aspects. This total commitment is a key aspect of our relationship with Hashem, as evidenced by the precondition of the covenant with Avraham where he is told, 'walk before Me and be tamim, perfect' .

- At the conclusion of the four days, the lamb was to be slaughtered during the afternoon of the 14th of Nissan, during the period of time known as *bein ha arbaim* , which literally means 'The two times when day and night mingle'. This is the time span between the moment when the sun has passed its strongest point and the moment of nightfall. The timing here is incredibly significant. This marks the point of separation between the 14th of Nissan, which was still part of the era of slavery and the 15th which was the day of deliverance and freedom. Although the 15th did not begin until nightfall, its twilight could already be discerned in the afternoon.
- The moment that marked the deliverance of Israel from their external oppressors and of their internal appointment to their new role as Hashem's people was a crucial one. It was specifically at this time that Klal Yisrael put itself in every respect, at the disposal of Hashem's guidance, we truly became His flock. In order to achieve this, they perform the act of shechita which symbolises their readiness to completely give up the lifestyle they had been living until this point.
- The idea behind the shechita is relinquishing one's former existence, however this itself never means annihilation, rather this is an essential requirement for a higher level of existence. The blood that is shed is immediately taken up and received for a new and higher existence through the process of *kabalas ha dam* (collecting of the blood). Whilst this is true for all *korbanos*, this is most certainly true for the *Korban Pesach* , which is slaughtered only in order to be eaten by those who are registered for it and who have symbolically nullified their existence and surrendered themselves to Hashem.
- Rav Hirsch explains that the point of freedom is to have the free use and enjoyment of one's own personality. The free person is able to use all of their physical energies and mental abilities for their own purposes. This alone gives the ego its personal worth and confers upon the individual his physical and spiritual self as his own domain over which he alone may rule. It is because of this, that it is so important that the *Korban Pesach* be eaten by those who are registered on it. The animal symbolises their personalities before the act of offering and the offering itself represents the nullification of their own existence and total commitment to Hashem. Eating the *Korban Pesach* symbolises the freedom and independence that the People of Israel attain by devoting themselves totally to Hashem.
- Through eating the *Pesach* they regain their own selves after having been slaves, absorbed and lost in the personality of the master. Slaughtering it for an unregistered group would imply outright enslavement and slaughtering it for people who were not going to eat it would imply self-sacrifice without regained independence. However Hashem did not seek to build a nation of free individuals. Klal Yisrael is to be built on households, formed by blood ties or free choice. Only within the framework of the family, formed by the will of its members, can the individual find gratification in his own personality. This is symbolised by putting the blood on the doorposts and the lintel of the house in which the lamb is to be consumed by the same people who offered it.
- The doorposts and lintel represent the entire house. The home is comprised of two elements, social insulation vis-à-vis society and physical insulation against the forces of nature. Social insulation is signified by the doorposts, the word *mezuzah* being related to the word *zuz* to move, namely to control the flow of those who enter and exit. The lintel in Hebrew is a *mashkof*, related to the word *lehashkof*, to look down from above . This represents the root which provides protection against the forces of nature. When the slave becomes a man, a father and a son, in the family of his own, he receives legal and physical protection from Hashem as represented by the *mezuzos* and *mashkof*. First, however he must completely devote himself to Hashem, surrendering to Him his whole former essence, as represented by the slaughtering of the *Pesach*. Only then can he find gratification in his own personality as represented by the eating of the *Pesach*.
- This is symbolised by the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and the lintel of the house in which then is to be consumed. It is not the walls that protect the person from the hostile human elements nor is it the roof that protects him from the hostile elements of nature. Rather it is Hashem who between the walls and under the roof, protects those who devote themselves to Him.
- On this night of freedom, the Jewish people are given back the lives that they offered up. However they have to eat the lamb roasted directly over the fire with *matza* and *maror*. The *matza* in this case symbolises enslavement. As we say in the *haggadah*, "This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in Egypt". As slaves, they were never given time to allow their bread to rise, the taskmaster's whip and the breathless rush of non-stop toil meant that they could only ever bake their bread in a speedy fashion, resulting in *matza*. The *maror* obviously symbolises another element of the slavery, the fact that the Egyptians embittered our lives. It was bad enough that we had to be slaves, but the harshness with which they treated us compounded the slavery and took it to a horrific level of cruelty.
- Rav Hirsch suggests that the method of roasting the *Korban Pesach* refers to a third aspect of our slavery, the fact that we were strangers in a foreign land. The *Korban Pesach* is to be roasted on a spit , suspended in mid-air, with no foundation or firm ground beneath its feet. Thus, at the moment when they gained freedom, they eat the *Korban* with these three elements to make them aware that even at this momentous time they were still slaves and only Hashem could grant them freedom.
- The *Korban* must be fully roasted and cannot be cooked with water . This gives us the message that we receive our freedom completely from the Hand of Hashem, with no added human assistance required. This freedom is received all at once, hence the need to totally consume the offering and not leave any over. Slaughtering it without eating it would represent the destruction of life without regaining it on a higher level.

