

The
CHASSIDUS
PERSPECTIVE
with Reb Yoel Kahn



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MINIMIZING THE FAULT

In Parshas Behaaloscha the Torah relates that during “the first month of the second year,” Hashem commanded the Bnei Yisroel to bring the Korban Pesach. Rashi points out that this story is not in chronological order, as Sefer Bamidbar begins with an account of the census of Bnei Yisroel, which took place one month later—during “the *second* month of the second year.” Rashi explains that *ein mukdam ume’uchar batorah*: the order events are recorded in the Torah does not necessarily reflect the sequence in which they took place.

Rashi then continues: “Why, indeed, doesn’t Sefer Bamidbar begin with the account of the Korban Pesach? Because it highlights the discredit of Bnei Yisroel: Throughout the forty years they traveled in the desert, they did not sacrifice the Korban Pesach aside for this one time.”

WHAT DID THEY DO WRONG?

What is Rashi’s question? Didn’t he just explain that *ein mukdam ume’uchar batorah*?

It’s true that the Torah does not necessarily record events in the order they occurred, because Torah is not a history book, and dates are inconsequential. However, in this case, the Torah clearly spells out the dates of both the census and the bringing of the Korban Pesach; apparently, it is important to know when they took place. Accordingly, they should have been transcribed in chronological order, if not for the reason Rashi proceeds to explain.

Mefarshim ask another question:

In Parshas Bo, the *possuk* says that the mitzvah of Korban Pesach applies “when you will enter the land Hashem will give

you.” As Rashi explains, “the Torah linked this mitzvah to their entry to the land. Throughout their years in the desert, the Jews were not obligated to sacrifice the Korban Pesach, except during the second year, when they were explicitly commanded to do so.” If so, what was wrong with not bringing the Korban Pesach in the desert?

Some *mefarshim* explain that the offense Rashi is referring to is the *chet hameraglim*, which caused them to remain in the desert for forty years; if not for that, they would have been able to bring the Korban Pesach sooner. However, Rashi doesn’t mention this at all. What’s more, according to this explanation,

the same discredit should apply to the fact that throughout their sojourn in the desert, they did not bring *bikurim*, *terumah*, *maasros*, and so on!

THE REQUEST THAT WASN’T

There is a fundamental difference between the Korban Pesach and the mitzvos of *bikurim*, *terumah*, *maaser*, and so on. The latter mitzvos are inherently associated with Eretz Yisroel. We bring *bikurim*, for example, to thank Hashem for the fruits of the land. *Terumah* and *maaser* are mitzvos performed with produce grown in Eretz Yisroel. Korban Pesach, however, has no inherent connection with Eretz Yisroel; after all, *korbanos* were sacrificed in the Mishkan as well. It was a *chiddush* that the Jews were only obligated to bring the Korban Pesach once they entered the land.

Another difference is that unlike these other mitzvos, Korban Pesach symbolizes a principal theme in Yiddishkeit—the *geulah* from Mitzrayim, when the Jewish nation left a state of being slaves to Pharaoh and became servants of Hashem. Each year when the Korban Pesach is brought, this idea is commemorated,

and moreover—it replays itself once more, each year in an ever greater way.

Although the Jews were not obligated to bring the Korban Pesach in the desert, this should have *bothered* them. How can it be that we will have to wait until we enter Eretz Yisroel to fulfill this mitzvah?! This is a mitzvah that can technically be performed in the desert, and it represents a cardinal concept in Yiddishkeit. The Jews should have demanded from Hashem that they be allowed to fulfill it sooner!

If the Jews would have asked for this, Hashem would surely have acceded to their request. The proof is from what actually occurred that second year: A few Jews were *tamei* and were unable to sacrifice the Korban Pesach, and they cried out, “Why should we miss out?!” They knew that they were halachically exempt from fulfilling the mitzvah, but it bothered them that they were forced to miss out on this opportunity.

If Hashem created a *new mitzvah*—the mitzvah of Pesach Sheni—because of their request, Hashem would surely have allowed the Jews to bring the Korban Pesach in the desert if they would have only asked. Unlike Pesach Sheni, it wouldn't even necessitate creating a new mitzvah. The Jews' fault lay in the fact that they did not do so.

A LEADER'S AHAVAS YISROEL

While this explains the fault of Bnei Yisroel, another matter remains unresolved: Why didn't Moshe and Aharon ask to bring the Korban Pesach? It surely bothered them that they

would have to wait so many years, and their conduct certainly wasn't lacking!

If Moshe and Aharon were to have made this request, Hashem would surely have acquiesced. But if that were to have occurred, the Jews' discredit would have been all that greater:


Moshe and Aharon were willing to forgo the great revelations they would experience, all so that the Jews' discredit should be minimized.

As long as no one asked for the chance to bring the Korban Pesach, the question of whether Hashem would have acceded to such a request remained a matter of speculation. True, it makes sense to say that the request would have been fulfilled, and there's even proof to that from the Pesach Sheni; but still, we can never know for certain what would have occurred.

However, if Moshe and Aharon would have actually made this request and it would have been answered, the Jews' fault would have become much more conspicuous: Such a request was made and indeed fulfilled, and the Jews hadn't been bothered enough to ask for it too!

This is why Moshe and Aharon did not ask to bring the Korban Pesach. They were willing to forgo the great revelations they would experience and the new heights of Yetzias Mitzrayim they would achieve, all so that the Jews' discredit should be minimized!

For further study see לקו"ש חלק כ"ג בהעלותה א'.



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