**The**

**Greatness &**

**Uniqueness of**

**Korban**

**Pesach**

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**Preface**

Which Korban is the greatest of all?

* The only offering that is obligatory upon every man and woman,
* If one refuses to participate, there is a severe ‘Korais’ penalty,
* It has to be brought at the Beis Hamigdosh,
* The only offering that has to be brought after noontime and after the ‘Tamid’ offering of the afternoon on Erev Pesach,
* Only after one has disowned all of his Chometz,
* The meat must be eaten roasted,
* The Levites say Hallel while the Pesach offering is being slaughtered,
* Some of its laws override the laws of Shabos.

1. **Step by Step**

1- The Rambam begins Sefer Avoda with the Mitzva to build the Bais Hamigdosh for two purposes:

1. To bring Korbonos,
2. Also to come to serve Hashem there three times a year…

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2- Later on in Chapter 13 by the laws that can invalidate an offering, the Rambam says: “Three thoughts can invalidate an offering - thinking to change its name, place or proper time…

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3- In 15:3 the Rambam explains that by Pesach, the Torah emphasizes that all of the steps of the offering have to be for the sake of Pesach. Thus if he changed the name of the offering or of the people it is for, it is Posul.

2. **Why?**

Why is the Korban Pesach so special?

The Rambam uses the same expression in 15:3 and 18:1, “One may not think inappropriate thoughts by Kedoshim.”

In 18:3, he explains it is a transgression of a prohibition and it ruins the Kodoshim. It is like causing a blemish in Kodoshim…”

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Then in Hilchos Korban Pesach, the Rambam 4:1 explains: “I have already taught that a Pesach has to be slaughtered,

1- for the sake of Pesach, and

2- for its owners…

* What if the fellow they sent to represent them comes back and says, “I did it for the wrong purpose,”
1. If they believe him, they need to bring another one,
2. If they don’t believe him, they are exempt, but it is better if they bring Pesach Sheini.”

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The Raavad argues: “No Pesach Sheini when it is questionable.”

3. **Two Action Mitzvos**

How did we prepare to be worthy to be rescued by Hashem? Rashi, Shmos 21:6, explains that Hashem gave us two Mitzvos - Pesach and Milah.

The Maharal in Gur Aryeh explains why specifically these two Mitzvos:

1- We used to be slaves to Paroh. By accepting Bris Milah, we change our identity to become Hashem’s nation, servants of the Holy One blessed is He.

That is why when we thank Hashem every time we say Bentching, for a meal with bread, we include: “...and for Your Covenant that You sealed in our flesh.”

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We should pause when we say this in Bentching to think, “Wow, what a unique badge of honor! What a merit that we are privileged to have Hashem’s seal which shows we were chosen to receive the 613 Mitzva opportunities, to gain perfection and closeness to Hashem!”

4. **After We Sign Up**

There is more:

2- An ‘Eved’ Hashem has to show that we follow through to serve Hashem every day, and each year with a Korban Pesach. Rashi continues to explain: “Hashem says, “Pull away from foreign service like idol worship and bring the animal offering of service to Me.”

The eating of this offering is such a great Mitzva because the Egyptians worshipped the sheep as an idol. Thus they would never eat it. We are instructed by Hashem to prepare a delicious meal out of it and thus to celebrate Hashem choosing us to serve Him. Hashem created everything, including the food of the animal to be used appropriately.

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We say, “This is our service to Hashem, ‘Lochem’ - for your benefit. We embrace all Mitzvos as the sweetest and most pleasurable gifts from Hashem.

5. **Pesach Now**

The Rambam begins the laws of the Pesach offering by saying that every man and woman is obligated in this Mitzva. One who refuses to participate may be cutting themselves off from their heritage. In the Sidur we say, “It has to be eaten roasted at night, before midnight, by those who had joined the group.”

We all get to choose how we participate in serving Hashem. Hashem provides each one of us with life-changing ideas. They are like treasure maps from Hashem, guiding us on how to dig up the treasures He sends us.

We need to act and follow through on the ideas to gain great levels of satisfaction and Simcha. We will be happy and fulfilled, as we come closer to knowing who we are and why Hashem loves us so dearly.

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6. **Two Steps to Life**

“I will say to you, in your blood you shall live.” This phrase is repeated twice in Yechezkel 16:6.

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People come alive by really knowing who they are and what special accomplishments they can do in their lifetime.

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Everyone of us makes a difference in the world. But we get to choose what type of difference we want to make with Hashem’s help. Even not making a choice is a decision.

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Why does Rashi say, “The blood of Pesach and Milah.” He could have said, “Korban Pesach and Bris Milah?”

Some explain the ‘Blood’ stands for Mesiras Nefesh. To know what we stand for and what we do with our blood!

7. **First Pesach**

Rashi, Breishis 27:9 explains that Yaakov Avinu brought his father two delicious young goats, one for Korban Pesach and one for Chagiga.

Rabeinu Bechaye explains they provide us with ongoing benefits:

* Yaakov received the blessings,
* Yaakov will win over Eisov,
* The Jews will receive atonement over Yom Kipur,...

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The Gr”a on Chad Gadya explains that all of the benefits we receive in history are due to the Korban Pesach. As the Maharal says:

* Milah represents accepting Hashem as our King,
* Pesach represents accepting the yoke of Mitzvos from our King.

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When we learn what to answer to a wise son, we say, “Also tell him, ‘Not to eat anything after the Pesach Afikomon.’” Why that message? We don’t want to lose the flavor of the Mitzva food.

We should learn to appreciate the sweetness of every Mitzva!

8. **Avraham’s Holiday**

The Tur, Siman 417, says that Pesach corresponds to Avraham Avinu whose specialty was kindness. He followed Hashem’s ways to merit that Hashem provides us with life, growth and redemption. He overcame 10 major challenges in his lifetime to reach the highest levels of love of Hashem always.

This links also to the Medrash, Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer, Perek 32, that Yitzchak Avinu gave 10 great blessings to his son Yaakov, a parallel to the 10 sayings with which Hashem created the universe. Why did Hashem create the world with 10, He could have done it all in one?

Avos 5:1 explains, “To provide more spectacular rewards to the righteous who maintain the magnificent world that Hashem created with 10 sayings!

9. **The Secret**

The secret of the Pesach offering is that it negates ‘Avoda Zora’ and thus fulfills the teaching - “All who deny idol worship are considered as if they accepted the entire Torah,” Chulin 5a.

Just as Bris Milah is a sign that the person belongs to Hashem’s chosen people, the Pesach Korban is a symbol that we are all part of this nation that Hashem says is the reason He created the world.

There is a Sefer, Mitzvos Hashekulos, by Rav Wolbe z.t.l., that lists this as one of seven Mitzvos that are considered equal to all of the other Mitzvos.

1- Denying idol worship - Hashem made everything and He is in complete control. He redeemed us from slavery and He gave us His Torah and Mitzvos.

2- Torah Study is equal to all Mitzvos, it teaches them all…

10. **Five More**

3- Shabos is the day once a week which shows that we emulate Hashem’s way of creating the world in six days and resting on shabos.

4- Bris Milah is the sign on our body that we are Hashem’s servants.

5- Eretz Yisrael is the land Hashem gave us to show that there are ways for us to come closer to Him.

6- Tzitzis on our clothing remind us that Hashem is all over and He pulls the strings to make everything happen.

7- Tzedaka - is the way we demonstrate that all income is from Hashem...He is the Source of all resources.

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Mesilas Yeshorim teaches that a person was created to have joy from being close to Hashem...and the ultimate place for this happiness is in the World to Come!!!

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May we merit to bring the Korban Pesach and have the complete redemption speedily in our days.