



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון  
INSTITUTE שלום הרטמן

## Finding Transcendence at Home: The Korban Pesach (Paschal Lamb)

In Honor of Shabbat HaGadol

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Hartman@Home: Talmud from the Balcony  
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1.	Shemot (Exodus) 12:3–10	1
	<b>Home or Temple?</b>	<b>2</b>
2.	Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 96a	2
3.	Rambam (Maimonides), Introduction to Seder Kodashim	2
	<b>Sacrifice or Meal?</b>	<b>3</b>
4.	On Whose Behalf?: Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 61a	3
5.	Owning Hametz (Leaven): Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 63a-b	4
6.	Ritual Impurity: Pesachim 76b	4
	<b>Offering or Narrative?</b>	<b>5</b>
7.	Tosefta Pesachim 10: The Rabbis in Lod	5
8.	Haggadah Text: The Rabbis in Bnei Brak	5
9.	Sagit Mor, “The Laws of Sacrifice or Telling the Story of the Exodus?” <i>Zion</i> 68:3, 2003, p. 309	6

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1. Shemot (Exodus) 12:310

3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: On the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every person a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household;

ג דַּבְּרוּ, אֶל-כָּל-עֵדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר, בְּעֶשֶׂר, לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה: וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם, אִישׁ שְׂה לְבֵית-אָבִתּוֹ—שְׂה לְבֵיתוֹ.

4 and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next to his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every person's eating you shall make your count for the lamb.

ד וְאִם-יִמְעַט הַבַּיִת, מִהְיוֹת מִשְׂה—וְלָקַח הוּא וְשִׁכְנוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ, בְּמִקְסַת נַפְשֹׁתַי: אִישׁ לְפִי אֹכְלוֹ, תִּכְסֹּו עַל-הַשְּׂה.

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; you shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats;

ה שְׂה תָמִים זָכָר בֶּן-שָׁנָה, יִהְיֶה לָכֶם; מִן-הַכְּבָשִׂים וּמִן-הָעִזִּים, תִּקְחוּ.

6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk.

ו וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת, עַד אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה; וְשַׁחְטוּ אֹתוֹ, כָּל קֹהֶל עֵדַת-יִשְׂרָאֵל—בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים.

7 And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it.

ז וְלָקַחוּ, מִן-הַדָּם, וַנִּתְּנוּ עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת, וְעַל-הַמַּשְׁקוּף—עַל, הַבָּתִּים, אֲשֶׁר-יֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ, בָּהֶם.

8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

ח וְאָכְלוּ אֶת-הַבָּשָׂר, בַּלִּילָה הַזֶּה: צֹלֵי-אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת, עַל-מַרְרִים יֹאכְלֻהוּ.

9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof.

ט אַל-תֹּאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ נָא, וּבִשָּׁל מִבִּשָּׁל בְּמַיִם: כִּי אִם-צֹלֵי-אֵשׁ, רֹאשׁוֹ עַל-כַּרְעָיו וְעַל-קַרְבּוֹ.

10 And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire.

י וְלֹא-תוֹתִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ, עַד-בֹּקֶר; וְהַנֶּתֶר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד-בֹּקֶר, בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרְפוּ.

## Home or Temple?

### 2. Babylonian Talmud Pesahim 96a

Rabbi Zera asked: the sacrificial portions of the Paschal lamb that the Jewish people sacrificed in Egypt on the first Passover, just before they left Egypt, where did they burn them? Abaye said to him: Who will tell us that they did not make them roasted and eat them?

And furthermore, Rav Yosef taught that there three altars there: upon the lintel and upon the two doorposts; and there was nothing else.

בעי ר' זירא אימורי פסח מצרים  
היכא אקטרינהו? אמר ליה אביי  
ומאן לימא לן דלא שויסקי עבוד!

ועוד הא תנא רב יוסף שלשה  
מזבחות היו שם על המשקוף ועל  
שתי המזוזות ותו מידי אחרינא לא  
הוה.

### 3. Rambam (Maimonides), Introduction to Seder Kodashim

And the fourth type (of sacrifice) is the offering of the individual which resembles the communal offering, and that is the Paschal offering which everyone slaughters on the fourteenth of Nissan.

והמין הרביעי קרבן יחיד דומה  
לקרבן צבור, והוא קרבן פסח  
ששוחט כל אחד ביום י"ד בניסן

## Sacrifice or Meal?

### 4. On Whose Behalf?: Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 61a

**Mishnah:** If one slaughtered it not for those who will eat it or not for those appointed to it, for the uncircumcised or those who are ritually impure, it is not valid...  
משנה : שחטו שלא לאוכליו ושלא למנויו לערלים ולטמאים פסול...

**Gemara:** The Sages taught in the Tosefta: How so for those who cannot eat it? For a sick person or for an old person. How so for those who did not register for it? One group registered for it, and one slaughtered it for the sake of a different group. From where do we derive this? As the Sages taught, "According to the number of" (Ex. 12:4) teaches that the Paschal lamb is slaughtered only for those who have registered for it...  
גמ': תנו רבנן כיצד שלא לאוכליו? לשום חולה או לשום זקן. כיצד שלא למנויו? נמנו עליו חבורה זו ושחטו לשם חבורה אחרת. מנהגי מילי? דתנו רבנן "במכסת" (שמות יב) מלמד שאין הפסח נשחט אלא למנויו...

We have found for those who have not registered for it; from where do we derive regarding those who cannot eat it? The verse says: "According to every person's eating you shall make your count"; those who eat it are juxtaposed to those who are registered.  
אשכחן שלא למנויו שלא לאוכליו מנא לן? אמר קרא "איש לפי אכלו תכוסו" איתקיש אוכלין למנויין...

(See also Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 71b for ramifications on Shabbat)

## 5. Owning Hametz (Leaven): Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 63a-b

**Mishnah:** One who slaughters the Paschal lamb over leaven transgresses a negative commandment...  
משנה: השוחט את הפסח על החמץ עובר בלא תעשה...

**Gemara:**...Rabbi Oshaya asked Rabbi Ami: If the slaughtered did not have leaven, but one of the members of the eating group did, what is the ruling? He responded: Does it say, "Do not slaughter on *your* leaven"? It says, "Do not slaughter on leaven (Ex. 34:25)." He responded: Then, maybe someone anywhere in the world owning leaven would be a problem too! He responded: The verse says, "Do not slaughter" and "it shall not be left overnight" – Do not slaughter over the leaven of those who are responsible for not leaving the offering overnight.  
גמרא:...בעא מיניה רב אושעיא מרבי אמי: אין לו לשוחט ויש לו לאחד מבני חבורה מהו? אמר ליה מי כתיב לא תשחט על חמצך "לא תשחט על חמץ" (שמות לד) כתיב. אמר ליה אי הכי אפילו לאחד בסוף העולם נמי! אמר ליה אמר קרא לא תשחט ולא ילין: לא תשחט על חמץ הנך דקיימי עליה משום לא ילין...

## 6. Ritual Impurity: Pesachim 76b

**Mishnah:** Five items are brought in impurity but are not to be eaten in impurity: The *omer*, the two loaves; the shewbread, the communal peace-offerings, and the goat of the New Moons. However, the Paschal lamb that is sacrificed in impurity is eaten in impurity,<sup>1</sup> as it is brought to begin with only for eating.  
משנה: חמשה דברים באין בטומאה אינן נאכלין בטומאה: העומר, ושתי הלחם, ולחם הפנים, וזבחי שלמי צבור, ושעירי ראשי חדשים. הפסח שבא בטומאה נאכל בטומאה שלא בא מתחילתו אלא לאכילה.

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<sup>1</sup> See Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 62a which specifies that an individual who is ritually impure or uncircumcised may usually send the offering with someone else to offer it on their behalf. This is not the case for the korban Pesach (Paschal lamb).

## Offering or Narrative?

### 7. Tosefta Pesahim 10: The Rabbis in Lod

Once Rabban Gamaliel and the elders were reclining in the house of Boethius son of Zonin in Lod, and they were engaged in studying the laws of Pesach all night until the crow of the rooster. What is the blessing on the Paschal Lamb? Blessed is the One Who sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to eat the Paschal Lamb. What is the blessing on the other offering? Blessed is the One Who sanctified us with commandments, and commanded us to eat the slaughtered offering.

מעשה ברבן גמליאל וזקנים שהיו מסובין בבית ביתוס בן זונין בלוד והיו [עסוקין בהלכות הפסח] כל הלילה עד קרות הגבר הגביהו מלפניהם ונועדו והלכו [להן] לבית המדרש איזו היא ברכת הפסח ברוך אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לאכול הפסח איזו ברכת הזבח ברוך אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לאכול הזבח.

### 8. Haggadah Text: The Rabbis in Bnei Brak

Once Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Elazar son of Azaryah and Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were reclining in Bnei Brak. And they were telling the story of the exodus from Egypt that whole night, until their students came and told them, "Our masters, the time for the morning recitation of the *shema* has arrived."

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ור' יהושע ור' אלעזר בן עזריה ור' עקיבא ור' טרפון שהיו מסובין בבני ברק. והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל אותו הלילה עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו להם רבותינו הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית.

Rabbi Elazar son of Azaryah said: I am as 70 years old, and I never won the argument about reciting the exodus from Egypt at night until Ben Zoma expounded upon it. As it is said: "So that you will remember the day you left Egypt all of the days of your life" – the days of your life: daytime, all of the days of your life: including nights. And the sages say: the days of your life: this world; all the days of your life: including the world to come.

אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא. שנאמר "למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיידך" – ימי חיידך: הימים, כל ימי חיידך: להביא הלילות. וחכמים אומרים ימי חיידך: העולם הזה, כל ימי חיידך: להביא לימות המשיח.

9. Sagit Mor, "The Laws of Sacrifice or Telling the Story of the Exodus?" *Zion* 68:3, 2003, p. 309

The story of the rabbis in Bnei Brak, which connects the current moment to parallel processes in Jewish history, changes practically the perspective of the people present. The destruction and exile are not a singular experience...but instead one experience among the many difficulties that the Jewish nation has survived during its existence...

סיפור המעשה בבני ברק, הקושר את ההווה הנוכחית עם תהליכים מקבילים בהיסטוריה של העם היהודי, משנה למעשה את זווית הראייה של הנוכחים. החורבן והגלות אינם נתפסים עוד כחוויה יחידה בעצמתה...אלא כחוויה אחת מני חוויות משבריות רבות ששרד העם היהודי במהלך קיומו...