

Haggadah Night 5781

Rabbi Chaim Metzger ~ cmetzger@torontotorah.com

Dedicated by Raquel and Jason Goldberg in memory of their daughter Temimah a"h

Every year we during Maggid we retell the story of our leaving Egypt. The Festivities for modern day Pesach begin only truly begin after dark with everyone around the table and the beginning of the Seder. But this was not always the case. Please allow me to take you back to what the Korban Pesach was like in the times of the Second Beit Hamikdash, the Second Temple, and how awe-inspiring it truly was.

[When did preparation for Pesach Start?](#)

[Quantity of People at Korban Pesach](#)

[Josephus \(War of the Jews, 6:9.3\) \(1st century CE\)](#)

[Pesachim 64b](#)

[How did they all fit in Jerusalem?](#)

[What did the process in Beit HaMikdash look like?](#)

[Pesachim 64a-64b -](#)

[The Largest Communal BBQ/Tailgate Ever](#)

[Roof Shaking Hallel](#)

[Pesachim 85b-86a \(William Davidson Translation\)](#)

[Summary](#)

When did preparation for Pesach Start?

Ritual Purification Process of Parah Adumah, Red heifer, At the beginning of the month of Nissan which we read on Parshat Parah (Bamidbar 19) leading up to Pesach.

Quantity of People at Korban Pesach

Josephus (War of the Jews, 6:9.3) (1st century CE)

says 256,500 paschal lambs and between 10 and 20 per Korban, in all:

"So these high priests, upon the coming of that feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till the eleventh, but so that a company not less than ten belong to every sacrifice, (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves,) and many of us are twenty in a company, found the number of sacrifices was two hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred; which, upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to two millions seven hundred thousand and two hundred persons that were pure and holy..."

Pesachim 64b

תנו רבנן: פעם אחת ביקש אגריפס המלך ליתן עיניו באוכלוסי ישראל. אמר ליה לכהן גדול: תן עיניך בפסחים. נטל כוליא מכל אחד, ונמצאו שם ששים ריבוא זוגי כליות כפלים כיוצאי מצרים. חוץ מטמא ושהיה בדרך רחוקה. ואין לה כל פסח ופסח שלא נמנו עליו יותר מעשרה בני אדם. והיו קוראין אותו "פסח מעובין".

The Sages taught: Once, King Agrippa wished to set his eyes on the multitudes [ukhlosin] of Israel to know how many they were. He said to the High Priest: Set your eyes on the Paschal lambs; count how many animals are brought in order to approximate the number of people. The High Priest took a kidney from each one, as the kidneys are burned on the altar, and six hundred thousand pairs of kidneys were found there, double the number of those who left Egypt. This did not reflect the sum total of the Jewish people, as it **excluded those who were ritually impure or at a great distance**, who did not come to offer the sacrifice. Furthermore, this was a count of the Paschal lambs and not of the people, **and there was not a single Paschal lamb that did not have more than ten people registered for it. They called that Passover the Passover of the crowded**, due to the large number of people.

$600,000 * 2 * 10 \Rightarrow 12,000,000$ minimum (24 million according to Joesphus' 20 per group)

How did they all fit in Jerusalem?

Expanding the borders of Jerusalem on Pesach (for how see Mishnah Shavuot Chapter 2:2)

What did the process in Beit HaMikdash look like?

Pesachim 64a-64b -

מתני' הפסח נשחט בשלש כתות, שנאמר: "ושחטו אותו כל קהל עדת ישראל", קהל, ועדה, וישראל. נכנסה פת הראשונה, נתמלאה העזרה, נעלו דלתות העזרה, תקעו הריעו ותקעו,

MISHNA: The Paschal lamb was slaughtered in three groups, meaning those bringing the offering were divided into three separate sets, **as it is stated: "And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slaughter it in the afternoon"** (Exodus 12:6). The verse is interpreted as referring to three groups: **Assembly, congregation, and Israel**. The procedure for sacrificing the offering was as follows: **The first group** of people sacrificing the offering **entered**, and when **the Temple courtyard became filled** with them **they closed the doors of the Temple courtyard. They sounded uninterrupted, broken, and uninterrupted trumpet blasts**, as was done while sacrificing any offering.

הכהנים עומדים שורות שורות, ובידיהם בזיכי כסף ובזיכי זהב. שורה שכולה כסף כסף, ושורה שכולה זהב זהב, לא היו מעורבין. ולא היו לבזיכין שוליים, ששם יניחום ויקרש הדם.

The priests stood in rows from the place of slaughter to the altar, **and in their hands they held bowls [bezikhin] of silver and bowls of gold** in order to receive the blood of the offerings. There was **a row entirely** composed of priests holding **silver** bowls, **and a row entirely** composed of priests holding **gold** bowls, as the gold and silver bowls **were not mixed** in the same row. **The bowls did not have flat bases** that would allow them to be put down, out of concern that **perhaps** the priests would **set them down** and

forget about them **and** in the meantime **the blood would congeal** and become disqualified for sprinkling on the altar.

שַׁחַט יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְקָבַל הַכֹּהֵן. נוֹתְנוּ לַחֲבִירוֹ, וְחֲבִירוֹ לַחֲבִירוֹ. וּמִקְבֵּל אֶת הַמֶּלֶא, וּמִחֲזִיר אֶת הַרִיקָן. כֹּהֵן הַקְּרוֹב אֶצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ זֹרְקוֹ זְרִיקָה אַחַת כְּנֶגֶד הַיְסוּד.

An Israelite would slaughter the sacrifice, **and a priest would receive** the blood and immediately **hand it to another** priest standing next to him, **and the other** priest would pass it **to another**. Each priest would **receive a full** bowl of blood from the priest next to him **and return** to him **an empty** bowl being passed in the opposite direction, the contents of which had already been sprinkled on the altar. The **priest who was closest to the altar would sprinkle a single sprinkling** of blood **against the base** of the altar, i.e., against the north and west sides of the altar, where there was a base.

יִצְתֶּה כֶּת רֵאשׁוֹנָה, וְנִכְנְסָה כֶּת שְׂנֵיָהּ. יִצְתֶּה שְׂנֵיָהּ, וְנִכְנְסָה שְׂלִישִׁיתָהּ. כְּמַעֲשֵׂה הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה כֶּךָ מַעֲשֵׂה הַשְּׂנֵיָהּ וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁיתָהּ. קָרְאוּ אֶת הַהִלֵּל. אִם גָּמְרוּ — שָׁנוּ, וְאִם שָׁנוּ — שָׁלְשׁוּ, אֲפֹרָה עַל פִּי שְׁלֹא שָׁלְשׁוּ מִימֵיהֶם. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר: מִימֵיהֶם שָׁל כֶּת שְׂלִישִׁית לֹא הִגִּיעוּ לְ"אֶהְבְּתִי כִי יִשְׁמַע ה'", מִפְּנֵי שֶׁעָמָה מוֹעֵטִין.

The first group exited upon completion of the rite, **and the second group entered; the second group left** upon completion of its rite, **and the third group entered. As it was done by the first group, so was it done by the second and third** groups. All the people standing in the Temple courtyard while the Paschal lambs were being slaughtered would **recite hallel. If they finished** reciting it before all the offerings were slaughtered, **they recited it a second time, and if they finished reciting it a second time, they recited it a third time, although** in practice **they never recited it a third time**, as the priests worked efficiently and finished the rite before this became necessary. **Rabbi Yehuda says: The third group never reached** even once the opening verse of the fourth chapter of *hallel*: **"I love that the Lord hears** the voice of my supplications" (Psalms 116:1), **because its people were few** and the slaughtering of all the offerings was completed during the recitation of the first three chapters.

...

כִּיצַד תּוֹלִין וּמִפְּשִׁיטִין? אוֹנְקָלִיּוֹת שֶׁל בְּרָזֶל הָיוּ קְבוּעִים בְּכַתְלִים וּבְעַמּוּדִים שֶׁבֵּהֵן תּוֹלִין וּמִפְּשִׁיטִין. כָּל מִי שָׁאִין לוֹ מְקוֹם לְתֵלוֹת וְלַהֲפָשִׁיט — מְקָלוֹת דְּקָיִם וְחֲלָקִים הָיוּ שָׁם, מִנִּיחַ עַל כְּתָפוֹ וְעַל כְּתֵף חֲבִירוֹ, וְתוֹלָה וּמִפְּשִׁיט. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר שָׁחַל לֵהִיוֹת בַּשַּׁבָּת, מִנִּיחַ יָדוֹ עַל כְּתֵף חֲבִירוֹ, וְיָד חֲבִירוֹ עַל כְּתֵפוֹ, וְתוֹלָה וּמִפְּשִׁיט. קָרְעוּ, וְהוֹצִיא אֶת אֵימורָיו. נִתְּנוּ בְּמַגִּיס, וְהִקְטִירָן עַל גְּבֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.

How would one suspend and flay the Paschal lamb in the Temple? **Iron hooks [unkelayot] were secured into the walls and pillars, and upon them one would suspend** the offering **and flay** it. If **anyone lacked a place** among the hooks in the Temple courtyard **to suspend and flay** the offering, **there were thin, smooth rods there, which he would place on his own shoulder and on another's shoulder, and from it he would suspend** the offering and flay it. **Rabbi Eliezer says:** When **the fourteenth** of Nisan [64b] **occurred on Shabbat**, when moving the rods is prohibited (Rambam), **he would rest his hand on another's shoulder and the other's hand on his own shoulder and suspend** the offering **and flay** it. **He would tear open** the flesh of the offering **and remove its sacrificial parts**, i.e., the fats and other parts offered on the altar. **He would place** the sacrificial parts **in a large basin [mageis] and burn them on the altar.**

יִצְתֶּה כֶּת הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה וְיִשְׁבֶּה לָהּ בְּהַר הַבַּיִת. שְׂנֵיָהּ בַּחֵיל, וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁית בְּמִקְוֵה עוֹמְדָתָהּ. חֲשִׁיכָה — יִצְאוּ וְצָלוּ אֶת פְּסָחֵיהֶן.

If this took place on Shabbat, when carrying is prohibited, **the first group would exit and remain on the Temple Mount; the second** group would remain within **the rampart**, which was an area outside the women's courtyard; **and the third** group **would stand in its place** in the Temple. They would wait there

until nightfall, and as soon as it became dark, they would all go out and roast their Paschal lambs, everyone in his own place.

The Largest Communal BBQ/Tailgate Ever

Roof Shaking Hallel

Pesachim 85b-86a (William Davidson Translation)

וְהָאֵמֶר רַב מְשׁוּם רַבִּי חֲיִיא "כְּזִיתָא פְסָחָא, וְהָלִילָא פְקַע אִיגְרָא".

The Paschal lamb is the size of an **olive-bulk**, as it was common for so many people to register for a single Paschal lamb that each one would receive only an olive-bulk of its meat. **And the *hallel*** that is said during its consumption **breaks the roof**; there were so many people who said *hallel* together, it seemed as though the roofs were breaking due to all the commotion and noise.

Rashi - והלילא פקע איגרא - לקול המולת ההמון מההלל דומין כאילו הגגין מתבקעים שהיו אומרים ההלל על הפסח -

Summary

- Hook - Begging of Maggid - we start our telling of the story and our order of Pesach festivities only at night, how would things have looked during the Second Beit Hamikdash
 - Preparations for Pesach began several weeks earlier when all of the Jewish people needed to begin getting ritually pure for Pesach using the Parah Adumah's ashes
- Millions of Jews came streaming in from all over to offer Korban Pesach
- The day of Pesach truly began on the 14th with the bringing of the Korban Pesach
- There were so many people that there were shifts of people getting into the Beit HaMikdash
- The ritual slaughtering and sprinkling of the blood was a dazzling display, replete with special golden and silver utensils moving so quickly it appeared as though they joined together
- Afterwards, everyone would head out to roast their Korban Pesach (which takes several hours) and have plenty of time to begin discussing details of the miracle of leaving Egypt
- Everyone would be eating at the same and the sounds of everyone saying Hallel would shake every roof and building in Jerusalem