YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

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**PESACH 5785**

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In memory of Pinhas ben Shalom (Paul) Cymbalista *z”l*.

*Niftar* 20 Nissan 5752. Dedicated by his family.

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Dedicated in memory of Sidney Gontownik *z"l*, brother of Jerry Gontownik,

on the occasion of Sidney's upcoming 15th *yahrzeit*, on the 24th of Nissan.

May his memory be for a blessing. The Gontownik Family.

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***Ein Maftirin Achar Ha-Pesach Afikoman***

**By Prof. Alan Jotkowitz**

*Written in memory of all the holy soldiers who fell* al kiddush Hashem *protecting us and our homeland, and with the fervent prayer that all the injured will be speedily healed and the hostages will return home quickly and safely.*

The Mishna ([*Pesachim* 10:8](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Pesachim.10.8?lang=he-en&utm_source=etzion.org.il&utm_medium=sefaria_linker)) teaches: “*ein maftirin achar ha-pesach afikoman* – one does not conclude after the *korban pesach* with *afikoman*.” The Gemara explains:

What is *afikoman*? Rav said: they should not leave [one’s original] group to [join another] group. And Shmuel said: [delicacies eaten after the meal,] such as mushrooms for me and chicks for Abba. And Rav Chanina bar Sheila and Rabbi Yochanan said: such as dates, roasted grains, and nuts [which would be eaten during the meal]. It was taught [in a *baraita*] in accordance with Rabbi Yoḥanan: One does not conclude after the *korban pesach* [with foods] such as dates, roasted grains, and nuts.

Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: One does not conclude after *matza* with *afikoman*. [The Gemara asks:] We learned [in the *mishna*]: ”one does not conclude after the *korban pesach* with *afikoman*” – it is after the *korban pesach* that one may not; however, after *matza*, one may conclude [with an *afikoman*]! [It answers: the *mishna*] was saying a “needless to say” [style of teaching]: Needless to say [that one may not conclude with *afikoman*] after eating *matza*, as the taste of *matza* is slight. Butafter the *korban pesach*, which has a strong taste that is not easily removed, one might think it is not an issue. Therefore, [the *mishna*] teaches us [that it is prohibited to conclude with *afikoman* after the *korban pesach* as well.[[1]](#footnote-2) (*Pesachim* 119b)

*Tosafot* (*Pesachim* 120a, s.v. *maftirin*) and other *Rishonim* connect the prohibition of eating after the *korban pesach* to the law that the *korban* has to be eaten *al-hasova*. They suggest the reason one is not allowed to eat after the *korban pesach* is to ensure that one will eat one’s fill *before* eating the *korban pesach* – as the Gemararuled:

It is taught [in a *baraita*]: The festival peace-offering that comes with the *korban pesach* is eaten first, so that the *korban pesach* will be eaten when one is [already] satiated. (*Pesachim* 70a)

Another answer offered by *Tosafot* is that one is not allowed to eat after the *korban pesach* because the taste of the *korban* must remain in one’s mouth. But why would this be required? It seems like a strange *halakha*; halakhic requirements to eat a particular food item don’t usually include an obligation for the taste to linger! (The Baal Ha-Maor, 26b in the pages of the Rif, was also bothered by this question.) The *Meiri* (*Pesachim* 119b) explains that the aftertaste of the *korban* serves as a reminder to finish the *seder*; otherwise, there would be a concern that one might forget to complete the *seder* after eating the festive meal.

The Rashbam ([*Pesachim* 119b](https://www.sefaria.org/Pesachim.119b?lang=he-en&utm_source=etzion.org.il&utm_medium=sefaria_linker), s.v. *kegon*) connects the requirement to have the taste in your mouth to a general obligation for *kohanim* to eat sacrificial meat "in the manner that kings eat." Kings do not only eat when they are ravenous; therefore, one is required to eat a *korban* when one is satiated, like a king.

This law of eating like kings is derived from a verse regarding gifts given to the priests:

The Lord told Aharon: Behold, I have given you the charge of My gift [offerings]. I have given you all the holy things of the children of Israel *for distinction*, and for your sons, as an eternal portion. ([*Bamidbar* 18:8](https://www.sefaria.org/Numbers.18.8?lang=he-en&utm_source=etzion.org.il&utm_medium=sefaria_linker))

The Gemara says these gifts must be prepared in accordance with the “distinction” attached to them:

R. Chisda said: The priestly dues may be eaten only roasted, and they may be eaten only with mustard. What is the reason? Scripture says: “for distinction” – [as a mark] of greatness – [they must therefore be eaten] in the manner that kings eat. (*[Chullin](https://www.sefaria.org/Chullin.132b?lang=he-en&utm_source=etzion.org.il&utm_medium=sefaria_linker" \t "_blank)*[132b](https://www.sefaria.org/Chullin.132b?lang=he-en&utm_source=etzion.org.il&utm_medium=sefaria_linker))

On Pesach night, all of us (not just *kohanim*)are obligated to eat the *korban pesach* while full; according to the Rashbam, thisis a reflection of our status as royalty on this night.

As Rabban Gamliel famously ruled (Mishna *Pesachim* 10:5, quoted in the Haggadah), in order to fulfill the mitzva of *korban* *pesach*, one has to articulate, understand, and internalize its significance. Thus, it’s not simply the taste of the *korban pesach* that has to remain with us through the night, according to the Rashbam, but the deeper meaning of the *korban* as well. Using the terminology of Rav Soloveitchik, we can say the *ma’aseh mitzva* (the technical act we are commanded to perform) is eating the *korban pesach*, while the *kiyum mitzva* (internal fulfillment of the mitzva) is to feel like kings and queens on Pesach night.

The *Sefer Ha-chinukh* explains several of the detailed laws of the *korban pesach* as expressions of royal dining:

And the fact that we were commanded to eat it [the *korban pesach*] specifically roasted is because this is the manner of children of kings and officers, to eat roasted meat, because it is a good and tasty food. (Mitzva #7)

And the fact that we were commanded not to leave over from [the *korban pesach*], the idea is [to eat it] in the manner of kings and officers, who do not need to leave some of their cooked foods for the next day. (Mitzva #8)

And this [not breaking the bones] also stems from the previously discussed principle, that it is not honorable for children of kings and advisors of the land to gnaw at the bones or break them like dogs…but only for the starving poor of the people… And through the actions and imaginations we perform, it will forever be imprinted in our souls. (Mitzva #16)

According to the *Chinukh*, observing the detailed laws of the *korban* helps us transform into royalty on Pesach night.

TheRambam cites the *halakha* of eating the *korban pesach* at the end of the meal in two places.

The optimal manner of performing the mitzva is to partake of the Paschal sacrifice in a manner [leading to] satiation. Therefore, if one sacrificed peace-offerings of the festival on the fourteenth of Nissan, one should partake of them first and then partake of the meat of the *korban pesach*,to be satiated from it. [Even] if one eats only an olive-size portion, he has fulfilled his obligation. (*Hilkhot Korban Pesach* 8:3)

After [eating *korech*], one continues the meal, eating whatever he desires to eat and drinking whatever he desires to drink. **And last, one eats from the meat of the *korban pesach***, even [as small a portion as an olive, **and does not taste anything afterwards**. And in this time [when we don’t have the *Beit Ha-mikdash*], one eats an olive size of *matza* **and does not taste anything afterwards**, so there will be an end of his meal and the taste of the meat of the *korban pesach* or the *matza* will [remain] in his mouth, **for eating them is the mitzva**. (*Hilkhot Chametz U-matza* 8:9)

The first *halakha* is focused on the sacrificial laws of the *korban* and mentions the requirement that the *korban* be eaten when one is already satiated. The second *halakha* discusses eating the *korban* within the context of the laws of the Pesach *seder*; there, the requirement to linger with the taste of the *korban* is central, because the purpose of the *seder*, with the aid of the associated *mitzvot*, is to help us reenact the experience of becoming free men and women. It is therefore important to not just eat the *korban pesach* but to internalize the experience of it.

Throughout the generations, even in the most dire of circumstances, Jews have come together to relive this experience and celebrate as royalty on Pesach night. We are blessed to be living in a time when we can feel and experience that freedom in our daily lives and not only on Pesach night, but we are also acutely aware of all the tears that have been shed and sacrifices made in order for us to celebrate our freedom and independence in our ancestral home. May the Pesach of 5785 herald imminent freedom for our hostages and peace in the Land.

1. Translations of texts in this *shiur* are primarily based on those available at Sefaria.org, with some edits. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)