

LEFTOVERS: NO PART WILL BE LEFT BEHIND!

by Rabbi Osher Chaim Levene

The Mitzvah

Every part of the meat from the Korban Pesach, Paschal lamb slaughtered on the 14th day of Nissan had to be eaten that evening. Nothing of it was allowed to remain uneaten until the morning. In the event, that some of the meat was left over, it had to be burnt (Shemos 12:10)

In contrast to the meat of the festival offering that could be consumed for up to two days after its slaughter, there was a prohibition against any meat of the korban pesach remaining until the morning after, namely the first day of Pesach.

What were the innate lessons why it was essential that this offering be eaten in its entirety on the night of the 15th of Nissan?

This remarkable night celebrates the "birth of the Jewish people". The Children of Israel were elevated as the Chosen Nation, whose sanctified lives were wholly dedicated towards fulfilling the will of G-d. The basic of the Exodus was Israel's emunah, loyalty and trust of G-d, to miraculously redeem them from their persecution and provide all their needs.

The undertaking of circumcision, the passage of rites to becoming a Jew, was followed by the offering up the lamb, the national Egyptian god, as a sacrifice to G-d.

The all-encompassing outlook of a Jew is forever suffused with his status as oved Hashem, a servant of G-d. His life's goal has to be to serve G- d "with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources" (Devarim 6:5); in short, with his whole being.

This means that there is nothing leftover for himself; his life is "all- for-G-d".

Similar to the indelible mark of circumcision on the Jew's flesh which firmly established his covenant with G-d, the accompanying Pesach offering symbolizes how all his future actions, in their entirety, will henceforth be exclusively employed in the fulfillment of the Divine word. Like the meat of the Pesach offering consumed in its entirety, so too, would there be nothing excluded or permitted to be placed outside of his mission in the worship of G-d.

"No leftovers" not only underlines the holiness of a Jew, which has to permeate every aspect of his life, without exception. But it importantly also spills over to the emunah that a Jew has to always have in G-d.

There is nothing redundant or superfluous in creation. Everything serves a higher purpose - whether or not we can readily understand what this is. Every moment is preciously invested with meaning. Every limb of the human body is a medium for the performance of mitzvos. Everything originates and has to be directed back to G-d. He is everywhere and there is nowhere where He isn't. It is the Omnipresence and All-Powerful Creator who grants all our needs.

The miraculous provision of the Mon, "manna" in the wilderness, similar to the korban Pesach, also carried the stipulation of not leaving over any food until the morrow (Shemos 16:19).

This is because there was no need for the Jews to save for later. Those that disobeyed Moshe with their portion of Mon demonstrated a failing in their emunah; an uncertainty whether G-d would also provide their needs tomorrow...and the day after...and onwards throughout the forty year journey to the Holy Land.

Starting from the korban Pesach, the Torah Jew has to live according to his ancestor's motto yaish li kol, "I have everything" (Bereishis 33:11). Every part of his Jewish being is sanctified to trust and serve G-d.

Whatever the circumstances - in good times and in better times - he conveys a resolute trust in G-d as the only One to turn to; the One who will provide all our sustenance and our daily needs. Every moment stands on its own merit - to be spiritualized in holiness. There are no second- rate leftovers.

To paraphrase the famous Jewish song, when it comes to serving G-d, no part of the Jew can be left behind.

The course is presented by Osher Chaim Levene, author of SET IN STONE (2004: Targum) about the meaning of mitzvah observance and PEOPLE OF THE BOOK (2007: Targum) about the biblical personalities. A London-based writer and educator, he learned at the Gateshead and Mir Yeshivas, holds a Bachelor of Science (Honors) business degree from London's City University, and is a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.