

בט"ד

*"IT IS A POSITIVE MITZVOH TO EAT OF THE KORBAN PESACH ON
THE NIGHT OF THE FIFTEENTH OF NISSAN."*

Rambam, *Sefer Hamitzvos*, Positive Mitzvoh No. 56

A
CONCISE GUIDE
TO THE
BASIC LAWS
OF THE
KORBAN
PESACH

or Zevach Pesach, the Pesach of Generations, the Paschal Lamb

3rd Edition

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CONCISE GUIDE TO THE BASIC LAWS OF THE KORBAN PESACH

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Significance of the Korban Pesach

Other than being a reminder of the Exodus and a re-creation of that experience, the *Korban Pesach* (Paschal offering) symbolizes the communal relationship between man and G-d, as well as the preservation and liberation of the entire people.

The *Chavuroh* (family, household, neighbors and friends) constitutes a community in microcosm. By offering the *Korban Pesach* in the national *Beis HaMikdosh*, each of these “mini-communities” proclaims that they are part of the Greater Community of *Knesses Yisroel*, the Assembly of Israel. That everyone in the *Chavuroh* must eat of the *Korban* symbolizes that each individual is an integral member of each of these larger communities to whom he is obligated and through which he serves G-d.

“In the Pesach offering, the Jewish Nation asserts all its members, assembled in family groups, as G-d’s flock and at His disposal, and then, in eating the same, it receives itself back, freed from physical and civic death. This is the bond between G-d and Israel, which has eternally to be renewed...only those may take part in it who belong to the Jewish bond with G-d both by nationality and conviction...”

Rabbi Shimshon ben Raphael Hirsch (*Shemos* 12:43)

It should be noted that the Rambam, in his *Hilchos Korban Pesach*, lists 16 *Mitzvohs* (4 positive and 12 negative) directly associated with the *Korban Pesach*.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. Tractate Pesochim, particularly Chapters 5-10 and the various commentaries therein
2. Mishneh Torah, Rambam, particularly Hilchos Korban Pesach and Hilchos Chagigoh.
3. Sefer HaMitzvos, Rambam
4. Sefer HaChinuch, Rabbi Aharon Halevi.
5. Siddur HaYavetz, Rabbi Yaakov Emden
6. Oruch HaShulchon Haosid, Rabbi Y. M. Epstein
7. Otzer Yisroel and Otzer Dinim U'Minhogim, R' J. D. Eisenstein
8. Sefer Hatodo'oh, R' Eliahu Kitov
9. The Jewish Encyclopedia

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Comparison Chart of the “Three” Pesachs

Based on the Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Korban Pesach 10:15

The *Halochoh* recognizes three distinct categories: *Pesach Mitzrayim* (of the Exodus), *Pesach Rishon* and *Pesach Sheni* (both as part of *Pesach Doros*, *Pesach* of the “generations”) which had common and particular laws. The shaded areas indicate the applicable laws:

	PM	PR	PS
ANIMAL MUST BE ACQUIRED ON 10TH OF <i>NISSAN</i>			
BLOOD MUST BE DABBED ON LINTEL AND DOORPOSTS WITH HYSSOP			
MUST BE EATEN HASTILY			
OWNER CANNOT POSSESS <i>CHOMETZ</i> AT TIME OF SLAUGHTER			
MEAT CANNOT BE REMOVED FROM <i>CHAVUROH</i>			
<i>HALLEL</i> MUST BE SUNG AT TIME OF EATING			
<i>CHAGIGOH</i> MUST ALSO BE BROUGHT			
CAN BE BROUGHT WHEN <i>TOMEI</i> , UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES			
<i>KORBAN</i> SUPERSEDES <i>SHABBOS</i>			
REQUIRES THE SINGING OF <i>HALLEL</i> WHEN SLAUGHTERED/OFFERED			
MUST BE ROASTED			
MUST BE EATEN IN ONE HOUSE			
MUST BE EATEN WITH <i>MATZOH</i> AND <i>MORROR</i>			
NO LEFTOVERS PERMITTED			
NO BONES MAY BE BROKEN			

Legend:

- PM = Pesach Mitzrayim
- PR = Pesach Rishon, 15th of Nissan
- PS = Pesach Sheni, 15th of Iyar.

SUMMARY OF THE BASIC LAWS

THE CHAVURAH

1. By no later than the time of the slaughtering of the *Korban Pesach* on the afternoon of the 14th of *Nissan*, all circumcised Jewish males above the age of thirteen, and all women, who are no further than a three day walk from Jerusalem (i.e. at least all Jews living in *Eretz Yisroel*)ⁱ must affiliate himself/herself with a *Chavuroh* (each person is a *Monuy*, “subscriber”)ⁱⁱ.

Typically, the core of the *Chavuroh* is the family.

2. Everyone in the *Chavuroh* must be ritually cleanⁱⁱⁱ at the time of slaughtering.

3. Small children or individuals who due to illness or old age are unable to eat a *K'zyis* (olive's-bulk) of the meat are not to be counted in the *Chavuroh*. A child who can eat a *K'zyis* can be included.

4. A *Chavuroh* may not comprise only women and children, however, a *Chavuroh* comprising women alone is acceptable. A *Chavuroh* comprising only small children or only the ill, elderly, converts or *Onanim* (those who are waiting to bury dead relatives) is not allowed, a priori.

5. It would appear that in any of the above cases, the addition of at least one other person who is required to eat, and is capable of eating, a *K'zyis* of the *Korban* would validate this *Chavuroh*.

6. The *Chavuroh* is required to consume the entire animal; each member of the *Chavuroh* eating a minimum of one *K'zyis* of meat. At a minimum, and theoretically, one person can constitute a *Chavuroh* if he thinks that he can eat the entire *Korban* by himself(!); although this was discouraged. The maximum size of the *Chavuroh*, therefore, would be equal to the number of *K'zyaisim* into which the *Korban* can be divided.

THE KORBAN

1. Each *Chavuroh* must acquire one lamb or kid of its own for the express purpose of the *Korban Pesach*.

2. This lamb or kid must be male, (less than) one year old and without any blemishes.

BRINGING THE KORBAN TO THE BEIS HAMIKDOSH

1. On the afternoon of the 14th of *Nissan*, representatives of each *Chavuroh* bring their *Korban Pesach* to the *Beis HaMikdosh* in Jerusalem.
2. No member of the *Chavuroh* nor any of the *Kohanim* involved in the *Korban Pesach* procedure (as outlined below) may possess any *Chometz* (leaven) whatsoever at the time of the slaughtering of the *Korban*^{iv}. Nevertheless, if anyone of them did own *Chometz* at this time, the *Korban* is Kosher. It is permissible to own *Chometz* during *Pesach Sheni*.
3. At approximately 3:00 p.m. (except when *Erev Pesach* falls out on *Erev Shabbos* when this takes place at about 2:00 p.m.) after the daily afternoon *Tomid* offering has been brought, the *Ketores* (incense) burned, and the *Menorah* lamps trimmed, these representatives of the *Chavuroh* are ushered into the *Azoroh* (courtyard) section of the *Beis HaMikdosh* along with their *Korbanos Pesach*^v as the first group or shift.
4. Entry is on a first come, first enter basis. When the *Azoroh* is filled, the gates of the *Beis HaMikdosh* are closed (literally, locked).
5. After the first shift completes its activities, a second group is ushered in, and so a third. Each shift must comprise no fewer than thirty people (based on the verse [*Shemos* 12:6] which uses three seemingly redundant terms “*Khal Adas Yisroel*”^{vi}).
6. No more than a total of three shifts are admitted.

SLAUGHTERING THE KORBAN

1. *Semichoh* (laying of hands) is not required for the *Korban Pesach*.
2. Slaughtering can be performed by any Jew, even a non-*Kohen*.
3. The *Korban* can be slaughtered anywhere in the *Azoroh*, as in the case with other *Kodshim Kalim* (“lesser” holy) offerings^{vii}.
4. It is important that the slaughterer have the correct intention at the time of slaughtering; i.e. that this animal is being slaughtered for the purpose of *Korban Pesach* and for this specific *Chavuroh*. A wrong intention invalidates the offering.
5. The slaughterings and offerings are accompanied by the *Leviim* singing *Hallel*^{viii}, the *Kohanim* (or some say the *Leviim*) playing musical instruments, and the *Kohanim* blowing the *Shofar* thrice: *Tekioh*, *Teruoh*, *Tekioh* with each

reading of the *Hallel*. If the *Leviim* finish singing a round of *Hallel* prior to the completion of the group's slaughterings and offerings, they begin singing *Hallel* again. They stop whenever the slaughterings and offerings conclude, even in the middle of *Hallel*.

CAPTURING THE BLOOD

1. The animal's "life blood" (first spurt of blood after the neck is cut) is captured by a *Kohen* in a special gold or silver, coagulation-preventing, round-bottomed container called a *Bozich*.
2. A row of *Kohanim*^{ix} passes this container from hand-to-hand until the last *Kohen* in line tosses or pours the blood upon the base of the *Mizbayach*.
3. For uniformity, any particular row uses only either gold or silver *Bozichim* and may not mix the two types.
4. The empty vessel is returned, hand-to-hand, for use with another animal.

HANDLING THE CARCASS

1. After slaughter, the animal's carcass is suspended on hooks along the walls or columns or on poles shouldered by two men, and flayed in one piece. If *Erev Pesach* falls on *Erev Shabbos*, the animal is flayed only as far as the breast or chest in one piece, and in strips from there on.
2. The hide is taken home by the owners.
3. The abdomen is cut open, the *Amorim* (fatty portions^x) for offering are removed and placed in a vessel, salted, and taken by a *Kohen* to the *Mizbayach* for burning on the pyre^{xi}. If *Erev Pesach* falls on a *Shabbos*, the burning may continue into the night since *Shabbos*-produced fats may be burned on *Yom Tov*.
4. The remaining entrails are removed, washed and cleansed of dung. This is done even if *Erev Pesach* falls on a *Shabbos*. These parts will be roasted with the *Korban* on the spit.

THE CHAGIGOH OF THE 14TH^{xii}

1. The Rabbis enacted an edict that the people must bring an additional *Korban* "Chagigoh of the 14th"^{xiii} if the meat of their *Korban Pesach* alone was insufficient to satiate the members of the *Chavurah*. This *Korban* was brought^{xiv}, except if:

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a) *Erev Pesach* falls on *Shabbos*^{xv}

b) The *Korban Pesach* was offered when the majority of the people were *Tomeh*

2. The *Korban Pesach*, its entrails, the *Korban Chagigoh* and any other *Korbanos* that may have been brought today are now carried home or to wherever the people are staying this day. If *Erev Pesach* falls on *Shabbos*, the people wait in the vicinity of the *Beis HaMikdosh* until *Shabbos* is over and then proceed homeward^{xvi,xvii}.

ROASTING THE KORBAN PESACH

1. The *Korban Pesach* in its entirety must be roasted over an open fire.
2. To accomplish this, a non-metallic spit^{xviii} is inserted through the animal's mouth and exits via the anus. The legs are not tied up, but must dangle to enable the entire animal to be properly roasted. Alternatively, the *Korban* may be laid across a grate constructed in such a way as to assure that the meat is roasted by the fire and not the heat of the grate.
3. The entrails are pierced and suspended on the spit for roasting.
4. Two or more animals can not be roasted on one spit.

EATING THE KORBAN

1. At the end of the *Seder*, and on a full stomach^{xix}, the entire *Korban Pesach* must be eaten, and only by members of the pre-appointed *Chavuroh*.
2. The *Korban* must be completely roasted and cannot be eaten cooked or raw^{xx}.
3. It is permissible to baste the *Korban* with wine, oil, honey, fruit juice or any other liquid other than water while it is roasting, as well as to dip the meat in fruit juice or another liquid when eating it.
4. Everyone in the *Chavuroh* must eat a minimum of one *K'zyis* of meat.
5. The *Korban* may be eaten only within the boundaries of Jerusalem.
6. The *Korban* may only be eaten within a house or in an area bounded off by a fence, wall or the like, and where the *Chavuroh* has gathered^{xxi}.
7. The *Korban* is eaten only when everyone in the *Chavuroh* is together.

8. The *Brochah* recited before eating the *Korban* is:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וציונו על אכילת פסח:^{xxii}

9. If multiple *Chavurohs* are eating in the same location, a partition or marker must be arranged between the *Chavurohs* at the time of the eating of the *Korban*.

10. Members of one *Chavuroh* must turn their faces away from adjacent *Chavurohs* when eating the *Korban*.

11. One *Korban* cannot be shared by multiple *Chavurohs* even if they all eat in the same house^{xxiii}. Even in a case where one *Chavuroh* has an excess of meat and another has too little, there can be no transfer of meat between *Chavurohs*.

12. Once the *Chavuroh* begins eating from the meat of the *Korban*, any piece taken out of the house and placed down becomes disqualified and may not be eaten even if returned to the *Chavuroh*^{xxiv}.

13. The *Korban* is eaten with *Matzoh* and *Morror*^{xxv}.

14. Care must be taken so that no bone (left with a *K'zyis* of meat or marrow) is broken neither during the roasting nor the eating^{xxvi}. This is also applicable during *Pesach Shenit*^{xxvii}. The animal may be dismembered at its joints.

15. The Rambam says that the *Gid Hanosheh* (sciatic nerve) is removed when it is reached (Hilchos Korban Pesach 10:11) while the Ra'avad there says that it must be removed before the roasting.

16. Women must, and girls under twelve may, eat of the *Korban*.

17. The following individuals are forbidden to eat of the *Korban*:

- a) One who is uncircumcised^{xxviii}
- b) One whose son or bondsman is not circumcised, excepting a father whose son is less than eight days old
- c) One who is *Tomeh*
- d) Non-Jews
- e) A *Ger Toshav* (i.e. a non-Jew who rejects idol worship)^{xxix}
- f) A *Ger Tzedek* (righteous convert) who is circumcised, but has not gone to the *Mikveh* and completed his conversion process
- g) A *Shifchah* (maidservant) who has not immersed in the *Mikveh*
- h) Apostates - Jews who denounce their religion^{xxx}.

18. Although, technically, the *Korban* may be eaten all night long, the Rabbis decreed that, as a precaution, it must be eaten by midnight.

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19. If someone falls asleep while eating the *Korban* and awakens, he may no longer eat of the *Korban* even if it is still early in the evening.
20. Nothing may be eaten after the *Korban* tonight.
21. Immediately after eating the *Korban*, *Hallel* is sung. This is not required at *Pesach Sheni*.
22. No portion of the *Korban* may remain until morning due to the prohibition of “*Nosar*”^{xxxii}. Anything which might remain, including the bones, must be burned in the morning^{xxxii}. Both these regulations are also applicable during *Pesach Sheni*^{xxxiii}.

General Notes

- a. *Korban Pesach* is one of only two positive *Mitzvohs* from the *Torah* which mandates the penalty of *Koreis* (excision) for failure to perform. The other *Mitzvoh* is *Miloh* (circumcision).
- b. The Rambam says that it is a positive *Mitzvoh* (Number 55) to slaughter the *Korban Pesach* on the afternoon of the 14th of *Nissan*. This *Mitzvoh* is obligatory for men and women and supersedes the laws of *Shabbos*, excepting those activities which can be performed prior to or delayed until after *Shabbos*^{xxxiv}.
- c. Anyone who, for any reason, is unable (or unwilling) to participate in the *Korban Pesach* on the 14th of *Nissan* is required to participate in a *Korban Pesach* one month later on the 14th of *Iyar*, “*Pesach Sheni*”^{xxxv}. If this person was disqualified then as well, there is no additional chance for recovery.
- d. It is a well-known *Halochoh* that if the majority of the people are *Tomei Meis* (defiled as a result of contact with the dead), everyone, whether they are ritually clean or unclean, offers the *Korban Pesach* on the 14th of *Nissan*, and no one defers it to *Pesach Sheni*. If only a minority of the people are *Tomei Meis*, then those who are ritually clean observe the 14th of *Nissan* and the others observe the 14th of *Iyar*.
- e. *Pesach Sheni* is observed only in ritual cleanliness, is obligatory for men but voluntary for women^{xxxvi}, and supersedes *Shabbos*.
- f. *Korban Pesach* is a *Korban Shelomim* and, as such, a *Kodshim Kalim*.

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g. *Korban Pesach* cannot be brought nowadays since we can not bring *Kodshim* (consecrated offerings) outside the *Mikdash*^{xxxvii}.

יהי רצון לפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה בימינו ותן חלקנו בתורתך :
ושם נעבדך ביראה כימי עולם וכשנים קדמוניות:

ⁱ Oruch HaShulchon HaOsid, Hilchos Korban Pesach, 181:6-11.

ⁱⁱ The Rambam (Sefer HaMitzvos, Prohibition 115, based on *Shemos* 23:18) says only those who are in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem (within 15 *mil*) on the 14th are obliged to bring the *Korban*. Rabbi Yaakov Emden (Shailas Yaavetz 127) says that the obligation falls on anyone who could, theoretically, walk to Jerusalem within 30 days which, according to one calculation, would include anyone living within a radius of approximately 1400 km (870 miles) of Jerusalem.

ⁱⁱⁱ Those who are considered *Tomeh* (ritually unclean) for the *Korban Pesach* include people who have had contact with the dead or have experienced certain bodily emissions (*Zav* or *Zava*), a menstruant, one who has had relations with a menstruant, and a birthing mother, but exclude lower-level *Temeim* such as those who have contact with carrion and reptiles.

^{iv} In his Sefer HaMitzvos, the Rambam lists this as Prohibition 115, based on *Shemos* 23:18.

^v Slaughtering the *Korban Pesach* prior to offering the *Tomid*, etc. is only an a priori requirement (see *Pesochim* 59a). Regardless, the blood of the *Tomid* must be tossed upon the *Mizbayach* prior to the tossing of the *Korban Pesach's* blood to validate the latter. A *Korban Pesach* slaughtered prior to mid-day is invalid (Rambam, Hilchos Korban Pesach 1:4).

^{vi} A priori, no *Korban Pesach* could be offered if fewer than fifty people showed up today. If exactly fifty came, thirty would enter as the first shift and bring their *Korbanos*. Ten of these would leave and ten new people would join the remaining twenty to comprise the second shift. Another ten would leave and the last ten would join them comprising the third shift. (See the Rambam, Hilchos Korban Pesach 1:10,11). However, if everyone went in together as one group, the Rambam rules this *Korban Kosher*.

^{vii} If the animal is found to have some sort of invalidating blemish or is a *Tereifoh*, another animal must be brought, "even a hundred", and even on *Shabbos*. If by nightfall no animal offered is *Kosher*, this *Chavuroh* is deferred to *Pesach Sheni*.

^{viii} Tehillim 113-118. This is also required for *Pesach Sheni* (Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvoh 380).

^{ix} In order to merit as many *Kohanim* as possible in the *Mitzvoh*.

^x This comprises the fat on the innards, the diaphragm on the liver, both kidneys and the fat on them and, with sheep, the fat tail which is severed at the backbone.

^{xi} When *Erev Pesach* falls on a weekday, the *Amorim* must be burned during the day and not left until evening. See Rambam, Hilchos Timidim 1:8 and Hilchos Korban Pesach 1:7.

^{xii} In addition to this *Korban*, people are also required to bring three other offerings on the first day of *Yom Tov*: the *Olas Re'ioh* (consumed by the *Mizbayach*), a *Shalmei Simchah* and a *Shalmei Chagigoh* (both eaten by the owners). *Beis HaMikdash* expert Catriel Sugarman of Jerusalem has pointed out that we are unable to fully comprehend the logistics of how so many people were able to offer so many *Korbanos* in such a limited time and confined space.

^{xiii} The *Chagigoh* of the 14th (a *Korban Shelomim*) was enacted to ensure that the *Korban Pesach* is eaten on a full stomach, as required by Law. This *Chagigoh* can be eaten over a period of two days and one night (Rambam, Hilchos Korban Pesach 10:13). The *Chagigoh* was not brought on *Pesach Sheni* (Rambam, Hilchos Korban Pesach 10:12).

^{xiv} There is question as to whether the *Chagigoh* of the 14th is brought before or after the *Tomid* (see the entry on "*Chagigoh* of the 14th" in the Encyclopedia Talmudis and the Oruch HaShulchon HaOsid, Hilchos Korban Pesach 194:18.) The Chofetz Chaim (Likutei Halachos – 6th Chapter of *Pesochim*) says that although there is a debate as to whether it may or may not be brought before noon, all opinions agree that the *Chagigoh* of the 14th was brought before the Afternoon *Tomid*.

^{xv} Either since the *Chagigoh* has *Tashlumim* (restitution) for seven days and can be brought at a later time (Rambam, Hilchos Chagigoh 1:8) or since not being a *Torah* obligation, it does not take precedence over the laws of *Shabbos*.

^{xvi} Why must they wait? Isn't Jerusalem surrounded by a wall and carrying within permitted on *Shabbos*? Tosofos in Pesochim say that this ruling was made at a time when the walls of Jerusalem were breached. Tosofos in Shabbos, however, say that this was enacted so as not to mislead the other members of the household into believing that (all) the laws of *Shabbos* have been suspended in deference to *Pesach* and other *Melochos* (prohibited creative activities) are permitted.

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- xvii The *Azoroh* would be washed clean after the third shift leaves, even on *Shabbos*. (Rambam, Hilchos Korban Pesach, 1:16)
- xviii It is preferable that the spit used be made of pomegranate wood since its unique properties would not cause the *Korban* to be "roasted" or cooked internally from the heat of the spit itself as would be the case with other materials, but only from the fire, as required.
- xix The Yerushalmi says that this is required so that no one is so hungry when eating the *Korban Pesach* meat that he might come to break a bone and eat the marrow. The Mordechai says that we must eat the *Korban Pesach* leisurely, as would kings, and not because we are famished (i.e. to show that we are eating it deliberately for the *Mitzvoh*).
- xx Rambam, Prohibition 125 (based on *Shemos* 12:9).
- xxi Rambam, Prohibition 123 (based on *Shemos* 12:46).
- xxii Rambam says to say: "הפסח". Rashi, Pesochim 121a says that the *Nusach* is "על אכילת פסחים".
- xxiii The Kesef Mishneh, apparently, disagrees and says that two *Chavurohs* may eat of one *Korban Pesach* in different places.
- xxiv The Rambam in Hilchos Korban Pesach, 10:15 opines that *Korban Pesach* meat removed outside the *Chavuroh* on *Pesach Sheni* may be returned to and eaten by the *Chavuroh* (see Oruch Hashulchon HaOsid, Hilchos Korban Pesach).
- xxv For *Pesach Sheni*, this rule is also applicable (as per *Bamidbor* 9:1) for men, but not women (see Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvohs 380 and 381).
- xxvi Rambam, Prohibition 121 (based on *Shemos* 12:46).
- xxvii Rambam, Prohibition 122 (based on *Bamidbor* 9:12) and Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvoh 383.
- xxviii Rambam, Prohibition 127 (based on *Shemos* 12:48).
- xxix Rambam, Prohibition 126 (based on *Shemos* 12:45).
- xxx Rambam, Prohibition 128 (based on *Shemos* 12:43).
- xxxi Rambam, Prohibitions 116 (based on *Shemos* 23:18) and 117 (*Shemos* 12:10).
- xxxii Rambam, Prohibition 119 (based on *Bamidbor* 9:12).
- xxxiii See Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvohs 380 and 382.
- xxxiv Such as bringing the animal within the *Shabbos Techum* (limit), washing the intestines, the roasting, etc. (Rambam, Hilchos Korban Pesach 1:18). This law is based on the verse's use of the word "במועדו" "in its appointed time" (*Bamidbor* 9:2).
- xxxv Rambam, Hilchos Korban Pesach 5:1 lists slaughtering on *Pesach Sheni* as a positive *Mitzvoh*.
- xxxvi Therefore, a *Chavuroh* comprising only women would not be permitted on *Pesach Sheni* (see Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvoh 380). The Rambam, however, in Hilchos Korban Pesach 2:4 rules that a women-only *Chavuroh* is allowed on *Pesach Sheni*.
- xxxvii Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvoh 487 states that during the time of the *Beis HaMikdosh* it was forbidden to offer the *Korban Pesach* on a "private" *Mizbayach*, wherever one wishes, but only on the (official) "public" *Mizbayach* - emphasizing that this is a collective act. He concludes by saying that it is possible that this prohibition is still in force today.