

Shabbat "haGadol" Malachi 3:4-23²

Shabbat HaGadol (Wikipedia)

Shabbat HaGadol ("Great Shabbat" **שבת הגדול**) is the Shabbat immediately before Passover. The first Shabbat HaGadol took place in Egypt on 10 Nisan five days before the Israelite Exodus. On that day, the Israelites were given their first commandment which applied only to that Shabbat, "On the tenth day of this month (Nisan)... each man should take a lamb for the household, a lamb for each home (Exodus 12:3). There is a special Haftarah reading on this Shabbat of the book of Malachi. Traditionally a lengthy and expansive sermon is given to the general community in the afternoon.

Various reasons are given for the name of this Shabbat:

אבן עזרא שמות (הפירוש הארוך) פרשת בשלח פרק טז

ומלת שבת בדקדוק קשה, כי איננה על משקל גנב, כי ת"ו שבת סימן לשון נקבה. והעד, "שבת היא לה" (שם כג, ג). ומלת שבת שם דבר כמו שביתה. וככה דקדוק המלה, היתה ראויה להיות שבתת על משקל דלקת (דבר' כח, כב), וכאשר חסרו הת"ו האחת פתחו הב"ת, להורות על לשון נקבה.

1. The [Tur](#) states: The lamb was the Egyptian deity. Many Jews, after 210 years of immersion within Egyptian civilization, had also adopted this animal as their god. When God commanded that a lamb be set aside and tied to the bed for four days in anticipation of sacrifice, the Jewish people abandoned their idolatrous practice and courageously fulfilled this mitzvah in the eyes of the Egyptian people, thereby demonstrating their complete trust and faith in God. Nothing could have been more abominable to the Egyptians, for their god was to be slaughtered. Nevertheless, miraculously the Egyptians were unable to utter a word or lift a hand. They watched helplessly as their god was being prepared for slaughter. This miracle was a great miracle (*nes gadol*) and gives this Shabbat its name.
2. The *P'ri Hadash* writes: On this day the Jewish people were commanded to fulfill their first mitzvah – to set aside the lamb as a sacrifice. (Note: The mitzvah of *Rosh Chodesh* was not one they practically fulfilled at that time on that month.) This significant achievement is therefore called *gadol*. Additionally, by fulfilling this first mitzvah they became like a child maturing into adulthood – they celebrated their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In this light, the name *Shabbat HaGadol* would translate: The Shabbat the Jews became *gadol/mature* adults.
3. The [Hatam Sofer](#) writes: On this day the Jewish people fully 'returned' (*Teshuvah*) to their commitment and faith in God (as explained in reason #1). **God is called *gadol***. Therefore, the Jewish People who embraced and subjugated themselves to God earned the title *gadol* as well.
4. The [Shibolei Haleket](#) writes: The customary lengthy *Shabbat HaGadol* speech (*d'rashah*) makes the Shabbat feel long, **drawn out, and 'gadol'**. (A similar reason is given for Yom Kippur being called *Tzoma Rabba* / The Big Fast – it feels long!).

- Rabbi [David ben Joseph Abudarham](#) writes: In the Haftarah of the Shabbat prior to Pesach we read the possuk [Malachi 3:23]: "*Hinei Anochi Shole'ach Lachem Et Eliyahu Hanavi Lifnei Bo Yom Hashem HaGadol V'hanorah,*", or "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord." This reason places *Shabbat HaGadol* in the same category as *Shabbat Hazon*, *Shabbat Nahamu*, and *Shabbat Shuva* for their name is derived from the Haftarah.
- Every **Shabbat preceding a festival** or festival season is known as *Shabbat Hagadol*. (Shibolei Haleket)

X

מלאכי ג'

righteousness. (4) Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem Be pleasant unto the Lord, As in the days of old, And as in ancient years. (5) And I will come near to you to judgment; And I will be a swift witness Against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, And against false swearers; And against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, The widow, and the fatherless, And that turn aside the stranger from his right, And fear not Me, Saith the Lord of hosts. (6) For I the Lord change not; And ye, sons of Jacob, are not consumed. (7)

וְעִרְבָה לִי מִנְחַת יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם
 בְּיָמַי עוֹלָם וּכְשֵׁנִים קִדְמֹנִית. (ה)
 וְקִרְבֹּתַי אֵלֵיכֶם לְמִשְׁפָּט וְהִיִּיתִי עַד
 מְמַהֵר בְּמִכְשָׁפִים וּבְמִנְאָפִים
 וּבְנֹשְׁבְעִים לְשֹׁקֵר וּבְעֹשֵׂי שֹׁכֵר
 שֹׁכֵר אֶלְמָנָה וְיִתּוֹם וּמִטֵּי גֵר וְלֹא
 יֵרְאוּנִי אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת. (ו) כִּי אֲנִי
 יְיָ לֹא שֵׁנִיתִי וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב לֹא
 כִּלִּיתֶם. (ז) לְמִימֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם סָרְתֶם
 מִחֻקֵּי וְלֹא שָׁמַרְתֶּם שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי
 וְאֲשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת
 וְאַמַּרְתֶּם בְּמָה נָשׁוּב. (ח) הִיִּקְבַּע
 אָדָם אֱלֹהִים כִּי אַתֶּם קֹבְעִים אֵתִי

בין אדם
למקום

בין אדם
לחבירו

בראשית פרשת תולדות פרק כז

(לו) וַיֹּאמֶר הָכִי קְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיִּעֲקֹבֵנִי זֶה פְּעָמִים אֶת בְּכֹרְתִי לָקַח וְהִנֵּה עָתָה לָקַח בְּרַכְתִּי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אֶצְלַת לִי בְרַכָּה:

ירמיהו פרק ט

(ג) אִישׁ מִרְעֵהוּ הִשְׁמְרוּ וְעַל כָּל אֶחָ אֵל תִּבְטְחוּ כִּי כָל אֶחָ עֲקוּב יַעֲקֹב וְכָל רַע רָכִיל יִהְלֹךְ:

From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside From Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, Saith the Lord of hosts. But ye say: 'Wherein shall we return?' (8) Will a man rob God? Yet ye rob Me. But ye say: 'Wherein have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and heave-offerings. (9) Ye are cursed with the curse, Yet ye rob Me, Even this whole nation. (10) Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now herewith, Saith the Lord of hosts, If I will not open you the windows of heaven, And pour you out a blessing, That there shall be more than sufficiency. (11) And I will

בְּלִיתֵם. (ז) לְמִימֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם סָרְתֶם
מַחְקֵי וְלֹא שְׁמַרְתֶּם שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי
וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת
וְאֶמְרַתֶּם בְּמָה נָשׁוּב. (ח) הֲיִקַּבַּע
אָדָם אֱלֹהִים כִּי אַתֶּם קֹבְעִים אֶתִּי
וְאֶמְרַתֶּם בְּמָה קֹבְעֵנוּדָּהּ הַמַּעֲשֵׂר
וְהַתְּרוּמָה. (ט) בְּמֵאֲרָה אַתֶּם נֹאֲרִים
וְאֶתִּי אַתֶּם קֹבְעִים הַגּוֹי כָּלּוֹ. (י)
הֵבִיאוּ אֶת כָּל הַמַּעֲשֵׂר אֶל בֵּית
הָאוֹצֵר וְיִהְיֶה טָרֵף בְּבֵיתִי וּבְחֲנוּנֵי נֹא
בְּזֹאת אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת אִם לֹא
אֶפְתַּח לָכֶם אֶת אַרְבּוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְהִרִיקְתִּי לָכֶם בְּרִכָּה עַד בְּלֵי דַי. (יא)
וְגִעַרְתִּי לָכֶם בְּאֵכֶל וְלֹא יִשְׁחַת לָכֶם
אֶת פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה וְלֹא תִשְׁכַּל לָכֶם
הַגֶּפֶן בַּשָּׂדֶה אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת. (יב)

בשבת הגדול יש שמפטירים "וערבה לה", ואינם מחלקים בין שנה שחל ערב פסח בשבת לשנים אחרות. ויש שכתבו [סידור יעב"ץ] טעם לדבר מפני שבפסח נידונים על התבואה. ועוד, כדי להזהיר העם על המעשרות, שבפרשת וערבה כתוב "הביאו את כל המעשר" וגו'.

BT Ta'anit 9a

R. Johanan met the young son of Resh Lakish and said to him, 'Recite to me the Bible verse [you have learnt to-day]. The latter replied, 'Thou shalt surely tithe', at the same time asking, 'What may be the meaning of these words?' R. Johanan answered, 'Give tithes that you may be enriched'. The boy then asked, 'Whence do you adduce this?' R. Johanan replied: "Go test it [for yourself]." The boy thereupon asked: Is it permissible to try the Holy One, blessed be He, seeing that it is written, "Ye shall not try the Lord?" -R. Johanan replied: Thus said R. Oshaia: The case of tithe-giving is excepted [from the prohibition], as it is said, "Bring ye the whole tithe unto the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall be more than sufficiency."

Saith the Lord of hosts, (13) Your words have been all too strong against Me, Saith the Lord. Yet ye say: 'Wherein have we spoken against Thee?' (14) Ye have said: 'It is vain to serve God; And what profit is it that we have kept His charge, And that we have walked mournfully Because of the Lord of hosts? (15) And now we call the proud happy; Yea, they that work wickedness are built up; Yea, they try God, and are delivered.' (16) Then they that feared the Lord Spoke one with another; And the Lord hearkened, and heard, And a book of remembrance was written before Him, For them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. (17) And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, In the day that I do make, even Mine own treasure; And I will spare them, as a man spareth His own son that serveth him. (18) Then shall ye again discern between the righteous and the wicked, Between him that serveth God And him that serveth Him not. (19) For behold

(יג) חִזְקוּ עָלַי דְּבַרְיִכֶם אָמַר יְיָ
וְאָמַרְתֶּם מָה נִדְּבַרְנוּ עָלֶיךָ. (יד)
אָמַרְתֶּם שׁוּא עֲבַד אֱלֹהִים וּמָה בָּצַע
כִּי שָׁמְרָנוּ מִשְׁמֵרְתּוֹ וְכִי הִלְכָנוּ
קִדְרָנִית מִפְּנֵי יְיָ צְבָאוֹת. (טו) וְעַתָּה
אֲנַחְנוּ מֵאֲשֵׁרִים יָדִים גַּם נִבְנוּ עֵשִׂי
רִשְׁעָה גַם בָּחֲנוּ אֱלֹהִים וַיִּמְלִטוּ. (טז)
אִז נִדְּבָרוּ יִרְאֵי יְיָ אִישׁ אֶל רֵעֵהוּ
וַיִּקְשֹׁב יְיָ וַיִּשְׁמַע וַיִּפְתַּב סֵפֶר זְכוֹרוֹן
לְפָנָיו לִירְאֵי יְיָ וּלְחֹשְׁבֵי שְׁמוֹ. (יז)
וְהָיוּ לִי אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת לַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר
אֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה סִגְלָה וְחִמְלָתִי עֲלֵיהֶם
כַּאֲשֶׁר יַחְמַל אִישׁ עַל בְּנוֹ הָעֶבֶד
אֹתוֹ. (יח) וְשִׁבְתֶּם וּרְאִיתֶם בֵּין צְדִיק
לְרִשָׁע בֵּין עֲבַד אֱלֹהִים לְאֲשֶׁר לֹא
עָבָדוּ. (יט) כִּי הִנֵּה הַיּוֹם בָּא בְּעַר
כְּתוּבָה וְהָיוּ כָל יָדָיִם וְכָל עוֹשֶׂה
רִשְׁעָה קֹשׁ וְלֹהֵט אֹתָם הַיּוֹם הַבֹּא
אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַעֲזֹב לָהֶם
שֹׁרֵשׁ וְעֵנָף. (כ) וּזְרַחַח לְכֶם יִרְאֵי
שְׁמִי שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָקָה וּמִרְפָּא בְּכַנְפֵיהָ
וַיִּצְאֲתֶם וּפְשֹׁתֶם כְּעֹגְלֵי מִרְבֵּק. (כא)
וַיִּמְחַרְחַח רִשְׁוֹנֵיהֶם כִּי יָרִינוּ אַחַר חֲתָת

serveth Him not (19) For, behold, the day cometh, It burneth as a furnace; And all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; And the day that cometh shall set them ablaze, Saith the Lord of hosts, That it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (20) But unto you that fear My name Shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; And ye shall go forth, and gambol As calves of the stall. (21) And ye shall tread down the wicked; For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet In the day that I do make, Saith the Lord of hosts. (22) Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, Which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, Even statutes and ordinances. (23) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming Of the great and terrible day of the Lord. (24) And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, And the heart of the children to their fathers; Lest I come and smite the land with utter destruction.

עבד אלהים לא אשר לא עבדו. (יט) כי הנה היום בא בער כתנור והיו כל ידים וכל עשה רשעה קש ולהט אתם היום הבא אמר יי צבאות אשר לא יעזב להם שרש וענף. (כ) וזרחת לכם יראי שמי שמש צדקה ומרפא בכנפיה ויצאתם ופשתם כעגלי מרבק. (כא) ועסותם רשעים כי יהיו אפר תחת כפות רגליכם ביום אשר אני עשה אמר יי צבאות. (כב) זכרו תורת משה עבדי אשר צויתי אותו בחרב על כל ישראל חקים ומשפטים. (כג) הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום יי הגדול והנורא. (כד) והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם פן אבוא והכיתי את הארץ תרם.

נוסח המקרא מבוסס על מהדורת

מקרא על פי המסורה (CC BY-SA)

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כתבי יד נוספים

The *Tur* states: The lamb was the Egyptian deity. Many Jews, after 210 years of immersion within Egyptian civilization, had also adopted this animal as their god.

The "Wicked" Son: Why is Exclusion an Act of Heresy?

The wicked son asks: מה העבודה הזאת לכם. "What is this ritual to you?" The Haggadah replies: וּלְפִי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכֹּלל, כִּפְר בְּעֵיקָר; "[His use of the word] 'You' excludes himself. Since he has excluded himself from the general rule, he has rejected an article [of faith]."

QUESTION:

Why is the refusal to participate the פסח קרבן regarded as a rejection of faith, an act of heresy? If someone fails to observe Shabbat, Kashrut, or Yom haKippurim, we don't necessarily declare them to be heretics; why is Pesah different?

INFORMATION TO CONSIDER:

After the plague of ערוב, Pharaoh offered to allow the Jews to bring sacrifices to God without leaving Egypt. Moshe declines the offer, explaining (8:22):

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לֹא נִכּוֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן כִּי תוֹעֵבֵת מִצְרַיִם נִזְבַּח לִיקְוֹק אֱלֹהֵינוּ הֵן נִזְבַּח אֶת־
תוֹעֵבֵת מִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִסְקְלֵנוּ:

It would not be proper because the Egyptians regard our sacrifices to the LORD as abominations. Could we break an Egyptian taboo before their very eyes without getting stoned?

[NOTE: We may recall that because the Egyptians held the eaters of the flesh of sheep and cattle in the lowest regard, Joseph's brothers were fed separately from the other Egyptians (Gen. 43:32). Joseph also encouraged his brothers to list their occupations as shepherds in order to keep them isolated from the rest of Egypt (46:34). Both of these references feature the word תועבה.]

ANSWER:

1. To slaughter and eat the פסח קרבן public was to offer the gravest insult to the Egyptians and to their gods. Only those Israelites who were firmly committed to God and to Moshe were prepared to take that risk. To participate under those circumstances was an instance of מסירות נפש, of total dedication. To refuse to participate meant that one was not convinced that God could really do all that He had promised, and that one still feared the Egyptians more than one feared God.
2. While a transgression of Shabbat or of kashrut is regrettable, it does not, per se, constitute either a denial of God or the recognition of some other power as greater than His. To reject the קרבן פסח, however, is to reject monotheism in its struggle for recognition over the "abominations" of idolatry.

3. The self-exclusion of the "wicked" son from this ritual is tantamount to his refusal to disavow idolatry. The Haggadah's observation: "Were he there [in Egypt] he would not have been redeemed," is self-explanatory. By rejecting the **פסח קרבן** and by honoring Egyptian abomination over divine commandment; he forfeited his right to redemption.

Preparation of the KORBAN PESAH in Exodus cp. 12:

QUESTION #1:

Why was the 15th of Nisan chosen for the korban?

Why was it necessary to select the sacrificial animal on the 10th day of Nisan?

Why was the blood smeared on the doorposts and lintel?

ANSWER:

The challenge of the **קרבן פסח**, as we have just explained, was to see if the Jews would stake their lives on God and Moshe, and free themselves from their subservience to, and fear of, the Egyptians. Anything that increased the indignity to the Egyptians heightened the risk to the Jews and made the test more meaningful.

Bearing this in mind, we can appreciate why the 15th of Nisan was chosen for the *korban*: The astrological symbol of the month of Nisan is Aries, the ram, and the 15th day is the climax of a lunar month. The god of the Egyptians was to be slaughtered on the evening of the full moon of its very own month (ostensibly, the height of its own powers), and the Egyptians would be powerless to prevent it! By selecting the sheep or ram four days in advance of the actual sacrifice, the Jews were flaunting their intentions in the faces of their Egyptian neighbors, as though daring them to interfere.

Similarly, the requirement that its blood be smeared on the door-posts and lintel was intended to force them to suffer the further indignity of seeing the lifeblood of the animal, the essence of many pagan rituals, "profaned." While the Torah doesn't specifically say so, we assume that the blood was smeared on the outside of the doorposts and lintel to mark the house as a participant in the ritual and eligible, thereby, for protection from the plague.

QUESTION #2:

Why is it forbidden to eat the **פסח קרבן raw (נא)**?

Why can it not be cooked in a pot (**מבושל במים**) but only roasted (**צלי אש**)?

Why did it have to be roasted whole (**ראשו על-כרעיו ועל-קרבו**) with its head, hind parts, and internal organs, intact?

ANSWER:

These details (vs. 9) were intended to increase the indignity the Egyptians were meant to suffer--and, correspondingly, increase the risk to the Jews participating in the sacrifice.

Roasting the sheep (or ram), rather than cooking it in a pot or eating it raw, meant that the aroma could not be contained. Even if the Egyptians did not actually see their taboo being slaughtered, they could not avoid the smell. By requiring the principal organs to be kept intact, the identity of the roasting animal could not be denied.

A Jew, who had slaughtered his קרבן פסח secretly, still fearing Egyptian reprisals, could not easily disguise its subsequent preparation. His participation in the ritual of redemption had to be made public, one way or another.

These same points are made by the מבעלי התוספות דעת זקנים commentary to the Torah:

פי' ראב"ע: דלפי שתועבת מצרים תזבח, שמא תאמרו לא נצלהו כל צרכו פן ירגישו בו המצרים. ת"ל "אל תאכלו ממנו נא". ושמא תאמרו נבשלנו ונכסנו בקדרה, ת"ל "ובשל מבושל". ושמא תאמרו לחתוך הראש והכרעים ואל יכירו מה זאת, ת"ל "ראשו על כרעיו ועל קרבו":

[Rabbi Avraham ben Ezra explained:]

Since you are about to sacrifice an Egyptian abomination you might not think to roast it entirely, lest the Egyptians realize it. Therefore it says... Since you might think to cook it in a closed pot, it says... And lest you think to cut off its head or legs so they can't tell what it is, it says...