

## **"And you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to Hashem, Who passed over the houses of Bnei Yisrael in Egypt.' (12:27)"**

It is noteworthy that Hashem's passing-over the houses of *Bnei Yisrael* is the source for the name of the festival of Pesach, as well as the sacrifice offered on this holiday. If one were to look at all of the miracles which took place in Egypt up to and including the exodus from Egypt, the "passing-over" might not seem quite as remarkable. Why, then, is it so distinctly represented in the name and motif of the festival?

*Horav Yeruchum Levovitz z.l.*, offers a profound insight into the matter. The most significant component of the Exodus, which can be credited solely to Hashem, is that act of distinguishing between firstborn and non-firstborn, Jew and non-Jew. Indeed, this supreme act of discernment rises above the other miracles. These distinctions are the basis for the Exodus, for without them the miracles are meaningless.

Yet, we may wonder why the differentiation between Jew and non-Jew demanded Hashem's intervention. Perhaps, the answer lies in the fact that *Bnei Yisrael* had not yet "attained" the required level of *kedusha*, holiness, essential to their being worthy of these miracles. Had they not sunk to the nadir of impurity? It is well known that at the parting of the Red Sea the angels questioned *Bnei Yisrael's* merit in being spared over the Egyptians. Were they not both idol-worshippers?

This was not a mere differentiation between black and white; it represented a distinction between two shades of gray! *Bnei Yisrael's* willingness to draw away from the pagan environment to the point of self-sacrifice earned them this distinction. It is not from where one originates that is important; it is where his focus for the future lies which distinguishes him. The Egyptians continued in their blasphemy, while *Bnei Yisrael* divested themselves of their impurity in order to reach out with devotion to Hashem.