

## "If any man will be contaminated through a human corpse or on a distant road... he shall make the Pesach offering to Hashem." (12:10)

The law of *Pesach Sheini* was inspired by a group of men who had been *tamei*, contaminated, by a corpse. They came forth and complained that they had not been permitted to share in the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach*. *Chazal* debate the identity of these men. Rabbi Yishmael says that they were the ones who were carrying Yosef's coffin. Rabbi Yitzchak claims that they had become *tamei* as a result of tending to a "*meis mitzvah*," a corpse who has no one to look after him. Rabbi Akiva opines that they were Aharon's cousins, Mishael and Eltsafan, who had become *tamei* by their contact with the bodies of Nadav and Avihu.

The **Sefas Emes** notes the attitude of these men, especially in contrast with that of the rest of *Klal Yisrael*. These men felt dejected when they were not included in one *mitzvah*, *Korban Pesach*, while *Bnei Yisrael* did not seem to complain about being deprived of the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* the entire forty years that they were in the desert.

The **Sefer Ha'chinuch** gives rationales for the dispensation of *Pesach Sheini*. The explanations are related to the sanctity and pre-eminence of *Pesach* as a foundation of our belief in Hashem, His *Torah* and Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the father of all *Neviim*. *Pesach* is distinguished by its alluding signs to the splitting of the Red Sea, one of the most notable miracles of all time, and to Hashem as the G-d of history, Who sustains us constantly. We may wonder why the *Torah* is so insistent that we offer a second *korban*. What about *matzo*? Is the *mitzvah* of eating *matzo* to be ignored? Does the *mitzvah* of *matzo* not imply the same concept as *Korban Pesach*?

These two *mitzvos* are distinct from one another. *Korban Pesach* signifies our original preparation and yearning for *Pesach*. In Egypt, *Bnei Yisrael* began involving themselves in the preparation as early as the tenth of *Nissan*. One who does not prepare himself for the moment of redemption is given yet another chance to participate. On the other hand, one who has the opportunity to leave Egypt and does not do so because he was "busy" or "*tamei*", has lost his chance. *Matzo* symbolizes the actual redemption from Egypt. A Jew who is aware of the redemption, but cannot mark it at the designated time, loses his opportunity. There are certain things for which one simply cannot be late - one of them is his own redemption.