

You shall not offer the blood of My feast-offering upon leavened bread. (23:18)

The *Korban Pesach* must be slaughtered on *Erev Pesach*, after all *chametz* has been disposed of. The *Sefer HaChinuch* explains that setting a designated time for the fulfillment of all matters is their source of preservation. Thus, concerning *Korban Pesach* -- which is a seminal *mitzvah* included among a group of *mitzvos* affiliated with the liberation from Egypt and setting the stage for our nationhood -- time and order are essential. The Torah gives preordained times for each and every component of the celebration of this Festival and its accompanying rituals. No commandment related to this time frame encroaches on the boundary of its fellow. Thus, we were first commanded to dispose of all *chametz* which, at the approach of *Pesach*, becomes disgusting in our eyes, and only then to commence with *Korban Pesach*, which heralds the liberation period.

While the *Sefer HaChinuch* seems to focus on timelines and order with regard to this *mitzvah*, he is, in fact, presenting an important and critical principal with regard to all *mitzvah* observance, to the point that one cannot compare the *mitzvah* observance of one who adheres to a strict timeline and order, with the individual who performs *mitzvos* at his convenience. The following vignette buttresses this idea.

An elderly woman (101 years old) passed away in Yerushalayim. Her descendants were sitting *shivah* and relating stories about her extraordinary, long life. They mentioned that she had grown up in Copenhagen, Denmark, in a community that had produced a number of members who lived beyond one century. What made this small Jewish community unique, so that many of its members achieved unparalleled longevity? As G-d-fearing Jews, they were acutely aware that nothing "just happens." If they were living longer, there was a reason. The spiritual leadership met to discuss why their community was so blessed. After much soul-searching and introspection, they came to a resolution: they felt the reason for the community's extraordinary blessing of life/time was the members' unusual adherence to timely attendance at *minyan/shul*! Whenever the *minyan* was designated to begin, they were all present in their seats, prepared to *daven* on time. When someone manifests such value for -- and appreciation of -- the gift of time, and he, likewise, demonstrates his devotion to serving Hashem by always being on time (which really means arriving early), he is worthy of such blessing.

This is not the end of the story. When the group met with *Horav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner, zl*, he agreed with their hypothesis, and added a vignette of his own. He was born in Vienna, a community that was also blessed in that many of its members achieved unusual longevity. It was a small Jewish community whose members were staunchly devoted to their *shul*. They realized that with a small membership, each individual Jew played a greater and more vital role. They knew that if any one of them was late for *minyan* -- they would all suffer. The proof positive to this assumption (as to why they were achieving longevity) was evident when one of their members passed away in his seventies (as opposed to reaching the century mark). It was discovered that he had never

made it to *shul* on time.

As *Mashgiach* of *Yeshivas Slabodka*, *Horav Moshe Tikuchinsky, zl*, saw to it that the *bachurim*, students, functioned within the framework of a timely schedule. First *seder* began promptly at 9:00 a.m. The *Mashgiach* would stand at the door to the dining room to make sure that the students were out in time for *seder*. One morning, a *bachur* arrived at the dining room at 9:00 a.m., when he should have been arriving at the *bais hamedrash*. The *Mashgiach* refused to grant him access. “Breakfast is over. Had you *davened* with the *yeshivah*, rather than visit one of the *shteiblach*, you would have arrived on time. Is this why the *Rosh Yeshivah* travels to *chutz la’aretz*, diaspora, to raise funds, so that you should *daven* in a private *minyan* and arrive late for breakfast?” The student was upset, because, after all, the *Mashgiach* was right. The *yeshivah* maintained a strict schedule, and, if everyone acted as he pleased, it would not be a *yeshivah*. He was about to go to the *bais hamedrash* hungry, when the *Mashgiach* said, “Do you think I will permit you to learn hungry? Come with me to my apartment, and I will give you breakfast – and you will go learn.” The *Mashgiach* had a job. He was also a human being with a beating heart that could not allow a *bachur* to learn on an empty stomach.