

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

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The Torah provides one law for all humanity.

וְכִי־יָגוּר אִתְּכֶם גֵּר וַעֲשֵׂה פֶסַח לַיהוָה כְּתֹקֶת הַפֶּסַח וּכְמִשְׁפָּטוֹ כִּן יַעֲשֶׂה תִקָּה אֶחָת יִהְיֶה
לָכֶם וּלְגֵר וּלְאֶזְרָח הָאָרֶץ:

“And because a stranger will sojourn with you, and make Pesach to Hashem, like the statute of the Pesach and its rules so shall he do. There shall be one statute for you and for the sojourner and the citizen of the land.” (Bamidbar 9:14).

This is referring to Pesach Sheini. Why does the Torah emphasize that there shall be one statute for all people in the Land?

There is “one law” for both the native-born Yisroel and the *ger* (sojourner, resident alien) living among them, for Pesach sheini. However, it is not so clear if this applies to all of the Torah. One would think if one wants to offer or partake in a Pesach offering, he must follow the same rules as a Yisroel. This may have been obvious. The Torah already said that a simple resident-alien – a toshav – or a seasonal hired hand, may not partake in the korban Pesach. (Shmos 12:45). Further, the stranger that wants to participate must have bris mila. (Ibid 12:48). “There shall be one law for the citizen and the stranger that lives amongst you.” (Ibid 12:49). As this law was already stated in relation to korban Pesach, and the Torah says Pesach sheini has to be the same as korban Pesach, why was it repeated?

The Torah states this rule elsewhere, too. Another example is, “As for the congregation, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you... one law and one ordinance shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.” (Bamidbar 15:15–16). There the discussion concerns korbanos brought to the Mishkan. The Torah insists upon ritual uniformity. If a resident stranger chooses to worship Hashem he had to do so according to the same divine standards. There is, only one way to serve Hashem. This is very important when dealing with the nations of the world who claim they are also worshiping the “same god” and they are monotheists. If they do not do it per the Torah then they are not worshiping Hashem. they are “monotheists” to some other entity. There is only one Torah with the same set of instructions for all.

Aside from ritual laws, another major occurrence appears, “You shall have one law for the stranger and for the native, for I am the Lord your God.” (Vayikra 24:22). The context there is civil and criminal law, specifically penalties for blasphemy and bodily injury. Earlier in that segment, the Torah repeats the principle of “fracture [payment] in lieu of a fracture, eye [payment] in lieu of an eye, tooth [payment] in lieu of a tooth.” (Ibid 24:20). The inclusion of the *ger* in this legal framework is striking because it establishes equality before the courts. A foreign resident was not subject to different or arbitrary

treatment. Justice was to be applied consistently. If you lived in the Land, be you a born Yisroel or a stranger that came to settle, it is one rule of law.

The Torah also applies this principle in areas of accidental sin and atonement. “You shall have one law for him who acts unintentionally, for him who is native among the children of Israel and for the stranger who sojourns among them.” (Ibid 15:29). That pasuk emphasizes equal accountability. Ignorance or error is handled through the same ritual mechanism regardless of the sinner. Again, one Torah. Also of note, is that these four times when the Torah said there is one rule of law for all, are all connected to times when Moshe had to ask Hashem for clarification. Moshe had to ask Hashem about Pesach sheini. (Bamidbar 9:8). Moshe required clarification on how to deal with the blasphemer. (Vayikra 24:13). Moshe also required specification on how to deal with a public mechalal Shabbos. (Bamidbar 15:35). While the Torah did not say that Moshe asked about the laws of korban Pesach, the Torah contextually reads that this was answered because of Moshe’s questions. The particulars of korban Pesach are written (Vayikra 12:43) after Bnei Yisroel left Mitzrayim (ibid 12:41). Moshe asked Hashem how he should respond to Bnei Yisroel to prove that he was their redeemer. (Ibid 3:13). In response, Hashem tells Moshe all that will occur, up to them asking for valuable object from the Egyptians. (Ibid 3:22). Just before the final mako, Hashem again told Moshe to tell Bnei Yisroel to go and borrow valuable goods from the Egyptians. (Ibid 11:2). That is why the particulars of korban Pesach are given after Bnei Yisroel left. It is not an afterthought, but a way of providing the details without previously interrupting the narrative.

The Torah did make an exception. “You shall dwell in booths seven days; every citizen in Israel shall dwell in booths.” (Vayikra 23:42). This is only for citizens – Bnei Yisroel. The ger (without formal naturalization and bris) is not required. This exception helps prove the rule that “there is one Torah (set of laws) for the citizen and resident alien. (Bamidbar 15:29). The Torah provided a unified legal order in Eretz Yisroel. Ancient societies often maintained separate legal systems for ethnic groups, social classes, or foreigners. The Torah moves in a different direction because it is one Torah for all humanity. While distinctions certainly existed between Yisroel and non-Yisroel populations, if you lived in Eretz Yisroel you abided by its Torah. The courts and religious institutions were not supposed to operate with arbitrary double standards. The repeated phrase “one law” establishes consistency and predictability.

The Torah links legal unity to the holiness of the Land. Eretz Yisroel was not merely a political state; it was meant to be a covenant society under divine law. Multiple competing religious legal systems would undermine that theological unity. The land was viewed as belonging to Hashem, and therefore all who lived within were to abide by the Covenant. Also, these laws protected the *ger* from exploitation. (Shmos 22:20). A stranger would be vulnerable because they lacked clan protection and citizenship status. By repeatedly reminding Bnei Yisroel that there is one law, the Torah creates a measure of legal security for outsiders living among them. This fits the broader command in the Torah not to oppress the stranger, “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Ibid 23:9).