



## HOW TO AVOID BECOMING THE PESACH SACRIFICE

*Erev Shabbos Parashas Vayikra 5783*

Dear Parents,

The theme running through the entire observance of Pesach is the expectation that we view ourselves as having experienced personally the salvation from Egypt. Undoubtedly, the days and weeks leading up to the moment of freedom 3300 years ago were filled with stress and anxiety. However, nowhere is it written that we are obligated to re-experience their high stress levels in the lead up to Yom Tov!

**“...– the womenfolk are the most likely to re-experience pre-holiday stress!”**

Far be it from me to lecture anyone concerning how to prepare properly for Pesach. While we all have our role, let's face it – the womenfolk are the most likely to re-experience pre-holiday stress! It is therefore most prudent to quote and paraphrase liberally from a letter from Mrs. Perl Abramovitz, a highly acclaimed speaker and parenting educator, entitled “Purim/Pesach Parenting Pointers.” She addresses the challenge of maintaining calm.

Despite all the efforts to make our home an island of calm, where peace reigns, and our attempts to focus on preparing for and bringing the Geula, the final redemption, we may find ourselves ready to explode. We've put so much effort into building our homes, and now we seem poised to tear it down, in one, full, sleep-deprived swoop of anger.

Mrs. Abramovitz advises, *“Don't think of everything you have to do. Don't think of tonight, tomorrow or even five minutes from now. Stay in the moment. For a moment you can control yourself. Then, when you've held yourself back for just a moment, when you stifled the yell that was about to erupt, congratulate yourself. In just one moment, you are giving yourself and giving your children as well, the ability to succeed in maintaining self-control.”*

Mrs. Abramovitz provides practical suggestions. *When necessary to critique one's child:*

1. *In private*
2. *In a low voice*
3. *With love in your heart*
4. *Only if the child knows you love him/her*
5. *With a solution in mind*
6. *For something he/she is capable of changing*
7. *For a trait you yourself overcame*

**“For a moment you can control yourself.”**

*Getting our children to cooperate without negativity:*

1. *State rules in 30 seconds or less*
2. *Speak in a firm, matter-of-fact way*
3. *Connect before you direct; bend down to eye level*
4. *Address the child by name*
5. *Use the “I” message*
6. *Say please and thank you*
7. *Make it light*
8. *Talk the child down; the louder the child yells, the softer you respond*
9. *Give advance notices*
10. *Give choices*
11. *Ask your child to repeat the request back to you*

So many of our challenges in personal growth come from focusing all our attention on the details of the task at hand, and losing sight of the big picture. Pesach is the glorious celebration of being a Jew, taking pride in being a part of the Jewish People and appreciating to the very depths of our being the fact Hashem intervenes in the affairs of mankind for our ultimate good. What will enhance that celebration more – removing that last (non-chometz) streak of dirt from our front window, or maintaining our equilibrium with our spouse and children for even one more moment?

May Hashem grant you the strength to persevere, the fortitude to keep smiling and the patience to enjoy your children throughout your upcoming exodus experience.

**“So many of our challenges in personal growth come from ... losing sight of the big picture.”**

Best wishes for a peaceful Shabbos, and a month of well-earned personal victories



Rabbi Kalman Baumann  
Principal