

The eve of *P'sochim*

ערב פסחים –

Overview

The משנה discusses the laws of ערב פסח. However the text of 'ערב פסחים' is slightly confusing, for ערב is in the singular while פסחים is plural.

אי גרסינן ערבי ניחא¹ ואי גרסינן ערב² הכי קאמר ערב ששוחטין בו³ פסחים⁴ –

It is preferable that the text reads פסחים 'ערבי', however if the text reads 'ערב', it means an eve where [many] קרבנות פסחים are slaughtered then –

An alternate understanding of ערב פסחים:

אי נמי ערב פסח ראשון ושני⁵:

Or you may also say the evening when we offer either the first פסח or the second פסח קרבן פסח (on אייר).

Summary

The desirable גירסא would be ערבי פסחים; however ערב פסחים can be referring to the many קרבנות פסח that were offered, or to either פסח ראשון and פסח שני.

Thinking it over

If the reason why not to eat on ערב פסח is because of the מצה⁶, why mention the קרבנות פסח?

¹ It is preferable, for then both ערבי and פסחים are in the plural. It would (presumably) mean all the evenings preceding all the ימים טובים of פסח, in all the years.

² The difficulty is that ערב is singular and פסחים is plural.

³ The הגהות הב"ה amends this to read, בו הרבה פסחים (instead of פסחים).

⁴ This would then (presumably) mean the evening (late afternoon) when the (many) קרבנות פסח are offered.

⁵ This indicates that the laws of the משנה (not to eat, etc.) apply to פסח שני as well.

⁶ See ד"ה לא יאכל רש"י ורשב"ם here.