

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 33

Behaalosecha, Sicha 1

The Context:

Pesach Sheini offers those who were unable to bring the Pesach sacrifice on the 14th of Nissan an opportunity to compensate by bringing the sacrifice a month later, on the 14th of Iyar.

Why, though, is the make-up date for the Pesach sacrifice a month after its designated day? Other holidays have make-up days for the sacrifices in the immediate days after the holiday.

The Explanation:

The Tzemach Tzedek explained that the second Pesach is intrinsically related to the theme of the second month, Iyar, while the first Pesach is connected to the theme of the first month, Nissan.

The first Pesach was offered by the Jewish people who had “fled” from Egypt. They were spiritually impoverished and so sunk in the depravity of Egypt that they could not remain there another moment. The first stage of the spiritual development was for

them to flee the negativity of Egypt, to “turn away from evil.” This is the stage of the “first month,” the basic separation from evil.

The second month, Iyar, is when the Jewish people counted the days in preparation of receiving the Torah at Sinai. This was a period of refinement, where they worked to transform the toxicity of their animal selves into spiritual strengths. The second Pesach alludes to the culmination of this spiritual work of transforming evil into good. This is why the second Pesach occurs only a month later, because it expresses the second stage of refinement during the counting of Omer, while the first Pesach aligns with the first stage of simply rejecting the evil.

But this explanation seemingly does not correspond to the halachic reality. The second Pesach is only offered if one missed the ideal date of the first Pesach. According to the above, however, the second Pesach is a necessary component which builds off of the accomplishment of the first, not just a compensation for missing the first?

The explanation is as follows: even those who do not offer the first Pesach still observe the primary prohibition of Pesach against the consumption and possession of

chametz. This is an effective fulfillment of the theme of the first stage of Pesach, the rejection of evil. They can then proceed to offer the second Pesach and achieve the second stage, the transformation of evil. As for those who did bring the first Pesach — they do not need to bring the second, since the first Pesach has a continuous effect. The sacrifice, korbán in Hebrew which means “to bring close” begins the process of rejecting evil which inevitably leads to the second stage of transformation.

This lends insight into our current practices of celebration the second Pesach by omitting tachnun and eating matzah. If we do not observe the Pesach sacrifice, why are we commemorating this holiday? Because even if the physical act of the sacrifice is missing, the overarching theme of the day — the transformation of evil after its suppression — remains relevant for each of us.
