



Likkutei Sichos

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Never Too Late

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1.

THE MESSAGE OF PESACH SHEINI

As known, the Previous Rebbe would say regarding Pesach Sheini:¹

The message of Pesach Sheini² is that it is never too late. It is always possible to put things right. Even if one was *tamei*,³ or one was far away, and even in a case of “*lachem*,”⁴ when this {impurity, etc.} was deliberate — nonetheless, he can make amends.

We need to clarify: True, sometimes concepts and explanations in the deeper parts of Torah are based on one opinion found in the revealed part of Torah, even though the *halachah* may accord with another, for “these and those are the words of the living G-d.”⁵ And {to illustrate this principle} a person is obligated to recite the blessing for Torah study prior to learning a teaching of Beis Shammai, despite the fact that when Beis Shammai expresses an opinion with which Beis Hillel disagrees, the opinion of Beis Shammai is considered as if it were not in the mishnah⁶ {i.e., it is disregarded completely}.

Even so, clearly, such concepts and explanations would be more palatable if they also corresponded to the opinion with which the *halachah* accords. This is particularly true in our case, where the wording states unequivocally that this is “**the message**” (of Pesach Sheini).

Seemingly, this maxim of the Previous Rebbe — “the message of Pesach Sheini is that it is never too late. It is always possible to **put things right**... he can **make amends**” — is well understood according to the opinion that Pesach Sheini is “**reparation** for the first Pesach.”⁷

¹ *HaYom Yom*, p. 53 {14th of Iyar}.

² {The *pesach sheini* — the second *pesach* sacrifice — was offered by those who, at the time of the first Pesach, were “defiled (*tamei*) by a corpse or who were on a distant journey.”}

³ {Ritually impure.}

⁴ *Bamidbar* 9:10. {“*Lachem*,” lit., “for yourselves,” alludes to a person who was estranged from Jewish practice.}

⁵ *Eruvin* 13b.

⁶ *Berachos* 36b (top), et al. See at length *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*, “*Iggros*,” p. 266; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 233.

⁷ The opinion of Rabbi Nassan, *Pesachim* 93a.

Similarly, we can impute this understanding to the opinion that Pesach Sheini is a “correction for the first Pesach.”⁸ Meaning, the Torah guides a person how to correct his intentional failure to offer the first *pesach* sacrifice (by his offering the *pesach sheini* sacrifice).

However, according to the opinion of Rebbi — and the *halachah* accords with his opinion⁹ — Pesach Sheini “is an independent festival,”¹⁰ and “Pesach Sheini is not dependent upon the first Pesach. Rather, it is an independent obligation, similar to the other festivals.”¹¹

According to this opinion, how can we say that, “the **message** of Pesach Sheini is that it is never **too late**. It is always possible to **put things right**”?

2.

A MAKE-UP SACRIFICE

On a very simple level, this question poses no difficulty. For even according to the opinion of Rebbi that Pesach Sheini is “an independent festival,” the obligation to offer a *pesach sheini* sacrifice applies only to someone who did not offer the first *pesach* sacrifice. (In fact, someone who offered the first *pesach* is **prohibited** from offering a *pesach sheini*.) Moreover, even a person who intentionally neglected to offer the first *pesach*, “he is to offer on the second {*pesach*},” and thereby, is absolved¹² from *kares*.¹³ It comes out that also according to Rebbi’s opinion, “the message (of Pesach Sheini is that) — it is never too late.”

Indeed, from the outset, the novelty and commandment of Pesach Sheini was for the sake of making **amends**. For those who were “impure through a

⁸ The opinion of Rabbi Chananya ben Akavya, *Pesachim* 93a.

⁹ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Korban Pesach*,” ch. 5, par. 1.

¹⁰ *Pesachim* 93a.

¹¹ Wording of Rabbi Avraham, son of Rambam, in *Sefer Birkas Avraham*, ch. 4.

¹² *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Korban Pesach*,” ch. 5, par. 2.

¹³ {The Torah’s penalty for not offering the *pesach* sacrifice. Lit., “excision” of the soul. For a discussion of *kares*, see: <https://www.chabad.org/1340046>}

human corpse” not to be “left out,”¹⁴ Hashem commanded: “If any man will become impure through a corpse, or {will be} far away, for yourselves... in the second month, on the fourteenth day, in the afternoon, they shall make it.”¹⁵

Rebbe’s opinion that Pesach Sheini is “an independent festival” is relevant primarily with respect to the law that (for {failing to offer} the *pesach sheini* **independent** {of the first *pesach*}, “one is liable for *kares*”). {Rambam explains:}¹⁶ “How so? If a person inadvertently, or because of forces beyond his control, had failed to offer the first *pesach* sacrifice, he is liable for *kares* if he intentionally refrained from offering the second.”¹⁷

The following, however, is still unclear: Since it is “an independent festival,” Rabbi maintains,¹⁸ and Rambam codifies,¹⁹ that also “a convert who converted between the two Pesachs, and similarly, a minor who reached the age of majority between the two Pesachs, are obligated to offer a *pesach sheini*.”²⁰ As such, in the cases of this convert and this minor, how can we explain that the message (of Pesach Sheini) is that “it is never too late”? They were not obligated to offer the first *pesach* sacrifice!

3.

A MINOR

Regarding the law that “a minor who reached the age of majority between the two Pesachs is obligated to offer a *pesach sheini*”: We can explain (albeit with difficulty) how the message that “it is never too late” is also consequential to

¹⁴ {*Bamidbar* 9:7.}

¹⁵ {*Bamidbar* 9:10,11.}

¹⁶ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Korban Pesach*,” ch. 5, par. 1, 2.

¹⁷ In contrast, according to the opinions of R. Nasan and R. Chananya ben Akavya (*Pesachim* 93b), a person is not liable if he missed offering the first Pesach offering due to circumstances beyond his control, but then deliberately failed to offer the *pesach sheini* offering.

¹⁸ *Pesachim* 93a, “*bemai kamifligei*”; Rashi, loc. cit., s.v., “*chayavin*”; see Rashi, loc. cit., s.v., “*chayav kares*,” end.

¹⁹ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Korban Pesach*,” ch. 5, par. 7.

²⁰ {*Pesachim* 93a.}

such a minor. A minor can be included²¹ to {partake of} a *pesach* sacrifice,²² and there is even an opinion that the phrase, “a lamb for each father’s house”²³ obligates a minor biblically.²⁴ Moreover, Rambam codifies²⁵ that “if one slaughtered the first *pesach* sacrifice on his behalf” — for the sake of the minor — “the minor is exempt” (from bringing a *pesach sheini*). Thus, the mitzvah of the {first} *pesach* sacrifice is also germane to a minor. Consequently, if the first *pesach* was **not** slaughtered on behalf of a minor, and he reached the age of majority between the two Pesachs, he is lawfully obligated to offer a *pesach sheini*, which resembles reparation. The message is — “it is never too late” (for the first *pesach*, since had they offered a *pesach* sacrifice on his behalf on the first Pesach, he would have been exempt from offering a *pesach sheini*).

However, a convert who converted between the two Pesachs had no connection to the first *pesach*. So for him, how does the message — “it is never too late” — apply?

4.

THE APPOINTED TIME

We can explain this matter as follows: On the contrary, Rebbi’s opinion that Pesach Sheini is an “independent festival” expresses the message that “it is never too late” even more emphatically than the opinions that Pesach Sheini is “reparation for the first Pesach” or “correction for the first Pesach.”

According to the opinions that Pesach Sheini is “reparation for the first Pesach” or “correction for the first Pesach,” the primary **time** for offering the *pesach* sacrifice is on the first Pesach, on the 14th of Nissan. However, a person can “compensate,” or “correct,” for {failing to fulfill} his **obligation** (to offer the

²¹ {Those partaking of the *pesach* sacrifice must be designated as part of a group at the outset.}

²² {I.e., included in the group of people assigned to offer and consume a particular paschal offering. *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Korban Pesach*,” ch. 2, par. 3.}

²³ {*Shemos* 12:3.}

²⁴ See *Nedarim* 36a.

²⁵ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Korban Pesach*,” ch. 5, par. 7.

first *pesach* sacrifice); but it is not the case that the Torah designated an additional **time** to offer the *pesach* sacrifice.²⁶

In contrast, according to the opinion of Rebbi, and based on his nuanced wording describing Pesach Sheini as “an independent **festival**,” the Torah (also) designated a “festival” (in addition to the designated time of the first Pesach) — a **time**, on the 14th of Iyar, designated to offer the *pesach* sacrifice. Pesach Sheini (also) has an independent message (in addition to compensating for the person’s omission [of not offering the first *pesach* sacrifice]) — the message of offering the *pesach* sacrifice itself. Meaning, the 14th of Iyar is the **time**²⁷ for offering the *pesach* sacrifice, its “appointed time.”²⁸

In other words, according to Rebbi, a person’s obligation {to offer the *pesach sheini* sacrifice} on Pesach Sheini is not based on a lingering obligation on him to offer the *pesach* sacrifice from 14th of Nissan (as would be the case according to the opinions that Pesach Sheini is “reparation” or “correction”). Rather, it is because the 14th of Iyar is the time that triggers his obligation to offer the *pesach* sacrifice (if he didn’t offer it on the 14th of Nissan).

[Nevertheless, a person doesn’t offer a sacrifice on Pesach Sheini if he had offered a *pesach* sacrifice on the first Pesach because only one sacrifice is offered to commemorate the Egyptian exodus, as is readily understood.]

Consequently, the message of Pesach Sheini — “it is never too late” — doesn’t mean (only) that a person can always put things right and make up for a previous deficiency in a general way. Rather, he can make up for his deficiency in all its details, in a complete way.²⁹

²⁶ As the Talmud says explicitly (*Pesachim* 93b) according to Rav Nassan: “*He had not offered Hashem’s sacrifice in its appointed time* (*Bamidbar* 9:13) — on **the first Pesach**.”

²⁷ Rebbi’s wording, “an independent **festival**,” indicates that Rebbi views the **time** {of Pesach Sheini} has independent significance {that produces the obligation}.

²⁸ *Pesachim* 93a {*Bamidbar* 9:13 “in its appointed time, במעדו” — the Talmud derives from this verse that Pesach Sheini is “its appointed time,” as the verse indicates that one who fails to offer the *pesach* sacrifice “in its appointed time” is liable for *kares*}.

²⁹ When the Jews asked, “Why should we be left out?” (*Bamidbar* 9:7), the amends made by their entreaty and its fulfillment were complete, because they were also given a “festival — the **time** of Pesach.”

On this basis, we can also understand the cases of “a convert who converted between the two Pesachs, and a minor who reached the age of majority between the two Pesachs.” {Why are they obligated to offer the *pesach sheini* sacrifice?} (Although they were not **deficient** by having refrained from offering the first *pesach* sacrifice, the *pesach sheini* sacrifice is offered not (only) to compensate for a (past) deficiency, but rather, to fulfill a current obligation — in its {designated} time, the 14th of Iyar — independent {of the first Pesach}. As such, the *pesach sheini* sacrifice also pertains to the above-mentioned convert and minor.) Because given their current status — on the 14th of Iyar — they are obligated to perform mitzvos.

5.

MORE COMPLETE

In light of the above, we can posit that Rebbi also maintains that Pesach Sheini constitutes reparation {for the first missed Pesach}. The term “reparation” has two definitions: a) making up for a deficiency; and b) **completing** something, שלימות — even something not deficient at all can become more **complete** by augmenting it.

We find something similar in the use of the word “complete” in the context of “a year”: The Gemara says,³⁰ “A complete year”³¹ — this serves “to include the intercalated month.”³² This is so even though if an intercalated month were not added, it would still be called “a year,”³³ and lack nothing.

We find something similar regarding the *avodah*³⁴ in the Temple.³⁵ There was a type of *avodah* that is {called} “incomplete” — one that {is only a

³⁰ *Erchin* 31a.

³¹ {*Vayikra* 25:30.}

³² {The additional Adar in a leap year.}

³³ See *Rabbeinu Nissim* on *Nedarim* 63a; Responsa of *Noda BiYehudah*, *Mahadura Kamma*, “*Even HaEzer*,” sec. 20; and see Tzemach Tzedek’s *Or HaTorah (Yahel Or)* on *Tehillim* 19:8 (p. 64-5).

³⁴ {Divine service; in context, this refers to the Temple service.}

³⁵ With respect to the foregoing, see *Yoma* 24a and Rashi’s commentary loc. cit., s.v. “*avodah tamah*” (and see *Zevachim* 115b).

preparatory step and} “has another service after it,” such as “slaughtering the animal, or collecting its blood, or bringing the blood to the altar, which are followed by the sprinkling of the blood on the altar.” [A “complete *avodah*” is “an *avodah* that finishes and completes the service,” such as sprinkling the blood on the altar, burning incense or parts of sacrificial animals on the altar, and pouring the water libation on the altar, etc.]

Although {in the case of an “incomplete *avodah*,”} nothing was lacking in the *avodah* itself, it is not called a “complete *avodah*” because another *avodah* follows that “finishes and completes” it — it finishes and completes a **previous** *avodah*.

[Therefore, “although non-*kohanim* are cautioned not to perform any of the sacrificial services, they would be liable for death only for performing a complete *avodah*.”]

This is also analogous to two enactments regarding *tzedakah*:³⁶ “Enough for his lack³⁷ — you are commanded to support him.... Which is **lacking** for him — even a horse, for him to ride, and a servant, to run in front of him.” And (beyond this) — “to make him wealthy,” even though the absence of wealth is not considered a deficiency.

6.

COMPLETE REPARATION

On this basis, we can posit that the teaching,³⁸ “Pesach Sheini is not reparations for the first, but an independent festival” conveys that Pesach Sheini is not the sort of reparation that makes up for a deficiency. Rather, it is an “independent festival” — it {the Pesach commemoration} is done perfectly.³⁹

³⁶ *Kesubos* 67b.

³⁷ {*Devarim* 15:8.}

³⁸ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Korban Pesach*,” ch. 5, par. 1.

³⁹ {In the succinct Yiddish original, “*di zach vert oifketun be’shleimus*.”}

And in this sense, the idea of reparation also applies to a convert. Prior to his conversion, he was prohibited from offering {the first *pesach* sacrifice}; nonetheless, “it is never too late” — he does not lose the quality of **completeness** in offering the *pesach* sacrifice.

This idea is more palatable based on Chida’s analysis⁴⁰ of the wording “a **convert** who converted” — and not “a **gentile** who converted,” which is syntactically similar to “a **servant** who was released,” “a **child** who reached the age of majority,” and the like — for **in effect**, he was also a convert before he converted. He already had a spark of a holy soul⁴¹ (when he was a gentile), which was only revealed after he converted. It turns out that also on the first Pesach, he had a certain connection to {the first} Pesach,⁴² and Pesach Sheini is reparation, תשלומין — etymologically related to completeness, שלימות — for the first Pesach.

7.

ABLE TO DO BETTER

We may explain this in greater depth and on a more profound level. Since one word — תשלומין — connotes both reparation and completeness, שלימות, clearly, “completeness” is connected to the plain meaning of תשלומין, “reparation” — making up for a **deficiency**.

The explanation: When a situation **can** improve relative to its initial state, then it is also deemed deficient {until it improves}. Thus, completeness means — to achieve the degree of wholeness that something has the capacity to reach.

The same applies materially, as discussed:⁴³ A person who is granted wealth eventually becomes accustomed to it. At that point, he no longer considers his financial circumstance to be one of wealth or excess, but as

⁴⁰ *Midbar Kedeimos*, part 3, sec. 3.

⁴¹ See *Teshuvos Maharam MiRotenburg* (excerpted in *Sefer Teshuvos Baalei HaTosafos MiKesav Yad* [New York, 1954, p. 286, sec. 19]).

⁴² See *Ramban* and *Or HaChaim* on *Bamidbar* 9:14.

⁴³ {Regarding *tzedakah*.}

something which {if he lost} was “lacking for him,” as discussed — even “a servant to run in front of him.”

Spiritually (in a person’s thoughts, the *avodah*⁴⁴ within his soul), just as when someone actually attains his wealth {it becomes a necessity} — the same is true also when his thoughts and aspirations are focused on “wealth.”

Since “a person is found in the place where he desires to be,”⁴⁵ this wealth {he strives for} and the completeness {it brings to him} are something he already {consequently} feels to be “lacking.” When he does become wealthy, he sees it as reparations for what was lacking — making up for what he lacked.

Heaven knows that even earlier, “fifty men running before him,”⁴⁶ etc., is something “lacking for him.” But in the physical world, “a judge relies on only what his eyes see.”⁴⁷ Thus, in this world, and in applied *halachah*, when does his status as someone who is lacking become known? Only after he has become rich and has grown accustomed to wealth.

8.

A CONVERT’S SOUL

Regarding a convert who converted between the first Pesach and the second Pesach — before he actually converted, he was already a convert **from the outset**, as discussed, since he possessed (while still a gentile) a spark of a holy soul. Although this spark was only manifest when he actually converted, it was also revealed that retroactively, from the outset, he also had (by virtue of his soul) a connection to the mitzvos of the Torah.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ {Divine service.}

⁴⁵ See *Kesser Shem Tov*, “Addenda,” sec. 38.

⁴⁶ {*I Melachim* 1:5.}

⁴⁷ *Bava Basra* 131a.

⁴⁸ See *Midbar Kedumos*, part 3, sec. 3, who says that the wording “a convert who converted” teaches that the soul of every convert was present at Mount Sinai when we received the Torah.

Consequently, we see that not only by offering the *pesach sheini* sacrifice did he augment the completeness, but he also made up for a deficiency, since from the perspective of his soul, he was “deficient” in not having offered the *pesach* sacrifice on the first Pesach.

9.

SPREAD YIDDISHKEIT

This serves as a lesson to each and every person in his *avodah* as to how great his involvement should be in spreading Torah and *Yiddishkeit* — particularly in spreading the “wellsprings” {of Chassidus}.

A person may tell himself: True, this *avodah* is very important, but it is only a *hiddur mitzvah*.⁴⁹ Although I do become more complete when I engage in this *avodah*, why is this indispensable? Why must it be done with such urgency?

The response to this line of thinking: Even though from the above perspective, it seems that this *avodah* provides completeness and nothing more, in truth, very possibly, it makes up for a deficiency. Thus, involvement in these areas may very likely be **critical** for a person’s *avodah* and for the root of his soul.

As the Baal Shem Tov taught:⁵⁰ Hashem sends a soul to this world where it lives for seventy or eighty years. And the ultimate purpose of the soul’s mission is to do a Jew a material favor, in general; and a spiritual favor, in particular.

It could be that **this** favor that he is destined to do to **this** Jew on **this** day fulfills the ultimate purpose of his soul’s descent into this world. If, G-d forbid, he fails to fulfill this task, he will not only lack completeness; he will lack the fulfillment of the main purpose of his soul’s descent.

⁴⁹ {An enhanced, optimal observance of a *mitzvah*, above and beyond what is required.}

⁵⁰ *Likkutei Dibburim*, vol. 3, p. 1126; *Sefer HaSichos 5705*, p. 67; *HaYom Yom*, p. 51 {5th (and 6th) of Iyar}.

And since “none among us knows for how long {the exile will last},”⁵¹ and no one know the task for which his soul descended into the world, every person must be involved in spreading *Yiddishkeit* in a manner of “grab and eat; grab and drink,”⁵² since he has the opportunity to do so.

In this manner, we will merit the true and **complete** Redemption in accordance with both definitions of “complete”: All of the deficiencies of exile will be made up; and likewise the completeness of the world will be enhanced, with the world reaching a state loftier than the one prior to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. (*These are the products* {תולדות} *of the heaven and the earth*⁵³ — the world was created complete.)⁵⁴ — “These are the generations {תולדות} of Peretz”⁵⁵ is spelled **in full**.⁵⁶

As Rambam says:⁵⁷ “In that era, there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition” (the era will be characterized by completeness — nothing will be missing). “For good will flow in **abundance**... and the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know Hashem” (completeness — in actuality).

Soon, in actuality, with the coming of our righteous Moshiach, speedily, in our days, in actuality.

— Based on a talk delivered on Pesach Sheini, 5740 (1980)

⁵¹ {*Tehillim* 74:9.}

⁵² See Introduction to *Kuntres U'Maayan*, p. 22; {*Eruvin* 54a: “Shmuel said to Rav Yehuda: Keen scholar! Grab and eat, grab and drink; since the world we are departing is like a wedding feast.”}

⁵³ {*Bereishis* 2:4.}

⁵⁴ See *Bereishis Rabbah*, ch. 14, sec. 7; ch. 13, sec. 3; there, it notes that the world was **deficient** until Shabbos arrived (*Bereishis Rabbah*, end of ch. 10).

⁵⁵ {*Rus* 4:18. Peretz is the progenitor of Moshiach, who will usher in the complete Redemption.}

⁵⁶ *Bereishis Rabbah*, ch. 12, sec. 6. {It is written with a second *vav* — תולדות, connoting completeness, rather than תולדה, as it is written in *Bereishis* 25:19. The Midrash here notes that aside from these two verses quoted in the *sichah*, whenever this word appears in Scripture, it is written with a single *vav*.}

⁵⁷ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” ch. 12, par. 5.