



Sicha Summary

Chelek 18 | Behaalosecha | Sichah 4

The Context:

Exactly one month after the 14th of Nissan, which is the day upon which the Paschal lamb was offered, is the holiday of Pesach Sheini — the Second Pesach. When the *Beis Hamikdash* stood, those who were unable to offer the Paschal lamb on the 14th of Nissan due to ritual impurity were able to do so on Pesach Sheini.

The Previous Rebbe had a famous statement: “The theme of Pesach Sheini is that it is never too late. We can always make things right...” (*Hayom Yom*, p. 53)

The Question:

Our Sages disagree about the exact legal definition of Pesach Sheini. Some Sages maintain that Pesach Sheini compensates for the missed opportunity to offer the Paschal lamb on the proper date, the 14th of Nissan.

Rebbi maintains, however, that Pesach Sheini is an “independent holiday.” The sacrifice offered on Pesach Sheini is not an obligation deferred from the first Pesach, but rather, it is its own obligation. In other words, the Paschal sacrifice commemorates the lamb offered at the time of the Exodus, but the Torah set aside two separate times for this obligation — the two Pesachs. If a person missed the first, he has a separate obligation to offer the sacrifice on the second. According to Rebbi, therefore, if a person converts to Judaism in between the two Pesachs, he is obligated to offer the Paschal lamb on Pesach Sheini, even though he was not obligated to do so on the first Pesach, when he was a gentile, because the sacrificial obligation of Pesach Sheini is independent from the first Pesach.

The law follows Rebbi. How, then, are we to understand the Previous Rebbe's statement — that the theme of Pesach Sheini is that “it is never too late, we can always make things right” — in light of the law that Pesach Sheini is an independent holiday, not a correction of something that was missed. The convert, for example, did not miss an obligation on the first Pesach; his only obligation was on the Second Pesach. How is Pesach Sheini a correction and compensation for him?

The Explanation:

According to the position that Pesach Sheini is a compensation for the first Pesach, when a person offers the sacrifice on Pesach Sheini, he is fulfilling his original obligation, albeit on a later date. The correct time for the sacrifice is the 14th of Nissan; he has been given the opportunity to satisfy his original obligation.

According to Rebbi, however, when a person offers the sacrifice on Pesach Sheini, he fulfills the obligation to offer the Paschal sacrifice in its correct time. Pesach Sheini is an independent holiday; it presents a new obligation and opportunity to offer the sacrifice.

Thus, the theme of “it is never too late” is illustrated more so by Rebbi's position than by the other Sages. If Pesach Sheini is only a chance to satisfy one's original obligation on a later date, then it is not a true rectification of what was missed, because the person still lacks the “completion” of offering the sacrifice in its intended time. But according to Rebbi, the person completely rectifies missing the first Pesach, because the Second Pesach is a full-fledged, independent holiday with its own time for offering the sacrifice.

This is a deeper meaning of “compensation.” In Hebrew, the word for compensation, *tashlumim*, can imply filling a lack, or it can imply “completion” (*shalem*). When doing something additional, it can be filling something that was lost, or it can be adding to something already whole, making it even more perfect.

When Rebbi argues that Pesach Sheini is not “compensation” but an “independent holiday,” he is making this point: Pesach Sheini offers the deeper idea of “*tashlumim*/compensation”; it allows a person to achieve perfection and wholeness by fulfilling the *mitzvah* of the Paschal sacrifice in its correct time.

In the context of the convert — the convert was not lacking anything by not offering the sacrifice on the first Pesach; nevertheless, he achieves perfection by offering on the Second Pesach.

The Deeper Dimension:

In a deeper perspective, both meanings of compensation are related. If a higher level of wholeness and perfection is possible, then a person is incomplete and lacking if he does not attain that perfection. By reaching that wholeness, a person compensates for his own lack of what was, until now, unrealized potential.

Kabbalah explains that a convert always had within him a spark of a Jewish soul, yet it only becomes fully manifest when he undergoes conversion. It follows that even during the first Pesach, the convert, who was a gentile at the time, still had a relationship to the command to offer the Paschal lamb because of his innate Jewish spark, even though he was not yet obligated to do so. Thus, missing the first Pesach is considered somewhat of a deficiency for the convert. When he offers the sacrifice on Pesach Sheini, he accomplishes two things: a) he achieves wholeness and perfection by fulfilling the same obligation as other Jews did on the first Pesach; b) and he also remedies the deficiency of not realizing his spiritual potential on the first Pesach, when he was still a gentile.

The Lesson:

Some spiritual tasks, such as the work of reaching out to spread the *light* of Torah to the uninitiated, may seem to be extraneous, non-essential levels of perfection. A person may think that he will only turn to outreach when he has addressed his own spiritual deficiencies. But Pesach Sheini teaches that

the highest levels of perfection are also essential, and if we do not pursue them, we are deficient.

Like the Baal Shem tov taught, an action done in service of others, even if it may seem non-essential to you, can be the very purpose for you being created. Thus, we must grasp every opportunity to share Torah and *mitzvos* with others, because it may be the purpose of our existence.