

a **CALL** *to*
ACTION

PESACH SHENI

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

מוקדש
לב"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לזכות

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וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה

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a CALL to ACTION

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Foreword

We are pleased to bring you this newly revised edition of *a CALL to ACTION*. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe's Sichos pertaining to Pesach Sheni.

HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar is a compilation of *hora'os* culled from the Rebbe's talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources (*muga* and *bilti muga*). Great effort has been extended to remain faithful to the Rebbe's calculated and instructive nuance. This English translation is rendered by **Rabbi Yaakov Paley**.

At this time, when Moshiach's arrival is imminent, the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, has emphasized the primacy of action. We are now beginning to experience the era when we will fully appreciate "the superiority of deed" above scholarship. May this take place completely and immediately!

Editorial Office of

HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

Erev Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim, 5769

Table of Contents

Pesach Sheni	5
Let Jews know they can fix their past.....	6
Day of personal reckoning	6
With immediate results.....	7
Correct the distant past.....	7
Perfect youth and infancy.....	7
Focus on the future	8
Interaction and influence.....	9
Educate in self stock-taking	9
Children with spiritual goals	9
Aim for more effective influence.....	10
Continue past achievements.....	10
past and future <i>ahavas yisrael</i>	11
Pesach Sheni gatherings.....	11
Inspirational <i>farbrengens</i>	12
Joyfully repair the past	12
No <i>Tachanun</i>	12
Eat Matzah.....	13

Pesach Sheni

“It’s never too late!”

Pesach Sheni (“the Second Pesach”) is celebrated on Iyar 14 – one month after Pesach.¹

The Torah relates² that in the year following the Exodus from Egypt, the Jews made preparations to bring the Pesach sacrifice. However, a few men were disqualified on the grounds of ritual impurity, as a result of having performed burials.

Disturbed at their inability to partake in the offering, they came before Moshe and cried, “*Lamah nigara* – why should we lose out on bringing the offering of G-d in its correct time?!”

In reply, Hashem instructed the Jews in the laws of Pesach Sheni – “If any man be ritually-impure ... or on some distant journey” on Nisan 14, the day of the Pesach sacrifice, then he may instead bring the offering in the next month, on Iyar 14.

The ability to correct what had seemed to be a lost opportunity extended even to one who *deliberately* transgressed G-d's command to bring the sacrifice on Pesach. Even he received a second chance on Pesach Sheni.

The eternal message of this day, writes the Rebbe (Hayom Yom, Iyar 14), is that *it is never too late*; it is *always* possible to put things right – even if one is [spiritually] “impure” or “distant,” and even when this failing was *deliberate*, nevertheless, he or she can correct it.

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1. [I.e., a month after the Pesach *sacrifice*, which is offered on Nisan 14 and eaten that night (Nissan 15) during the Pesach Seder.]
 2. Bamidbar 9:6-11; see *Sukah* 25a.

LET JEWS KNOW THEY CAN FIX THEIR PAST

- We should endeavor to make all Jews aware that on Pesach Sheni we are granted special powers from Above to correct any shortcomings of the past,³ in all areas of divine service, in Torah and Mitzvos – even if the shortcomings are serious deficiencies that have brought the person to a very low spiritual standing.⁴

DAY OF PERSONAL RECKONING

- [In 1991, the Rebbe instructed:] Each of us should hold a personal reckoning of all that needs correcting from the past year, i.e., from last year's Pesach Sheni until Erev⁵ Pesach Sheni

3. There is the well known adage of the Previous Rebbe, “*Es is nitah kein farfalen, men ken aleh'mal farichten*, “*It is never too late; it is always possible to put things right.*” Even those that are [spiritually] “impure” or extremely “distanced” - and even if they were *intentional* transgressors - are still able to correct their past. (Parshas Behar 5749; *Hisvaaduyos* p.147)

4. **Severing self-made bonds**

... In the above adage, the stress is mainly on the possibility to correct even the *very lowest situations* - the unfortunate situation of being in a state that directly contradicts spiritual purity (or being distanced from the Beis HaMikdash [i.e., G-d's Presence]).

All the more so if this lowly standing is [in the words of the verse] “*lachem*,” lit., “of you,” i.e., of your own making, willfully, and even *deliberately* (*rachmana litzlan* - Heaven have mercy!)

Nevertheless, even a predicament such as this is *not* lost; it *can* be corrected. (Ibid., p.159)

5. **The importance of Erev Pesach Sheni**

There is a well known directive of the Alter Rebbe – “We should ‘live with the times.’” This requires “living” with [the lessons found in] each week's Torah portion ... and it also means “living” with the lessons derived from the “Torah” of the present *time* [i.e., the time of year, significant dates and occasions.]

In our case, this requires living with ... *Erev Pesach Sheni* – despite the fact that we do recite *Tachanun* during the Minchah service on Erev Pesach Sheni” (as recorded in the Alter Rebbe's Siddur, before *Lamnatze'ach ya'anacha*). (Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim 5748; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 278, with fn. 2 and subnote)

Note that the topic of Pesach Sheni is mentioned in Megilas Ta'anis [an ancient text that recorded every date in the year on which Jews would not fast or give eulogies].

Now, “the dates recorded in Megilas Ta'anis impose Halachic implications – such as a prohibition against fasting on the days *prior* to them as well” [which, in this case, includes *Erev Pesach Sheni*].

Although [one could argue that] “the Megilas Sheni have been cancelled” [and we

of this year.

WITH IMMEDIATE RESULTS

- We should seek to make these corrections as soon as possible.⁶

CORRECT THE DISTANT PAST

- Special powers are granted on Pesach Sheni, not only to fix the immediate past, i.e., the most recent days, weeks, months or even the past year; but even the *distant* past – up until the age of Bar/Bas Mitzvah.⁷

PERFECT YOUTH AND INFANCY

- In fact, one should even correct wrongdoings that *preceded* their Bar/Bas Mitzvah (as the Alter Rebbe states in his *Shulchan Aruch*⁸). Indeed, we find that many Sages made an effort to correct “wrongdoings” that had taken place while they did not yet have sufficient understanding to realize what they were doing – including when they were tiny babies; from the moment they entered this world.⁹

no longer observe the dates recorded within] – and therefore the prohibition against fasting and the like on the days *prior* to them have *also* been cancelled.

... Nevertheless, it is plainly obvious that even following this cancellation, the dates recorded in Megilas Ta’anis still bear some residue of their former status – which similarly extends to the days *prior* to them; [they too retain some of their former status. As such, *Erev* Pesach Sheni remains a significant date – a day whose theme we should “live” with]. (Ibid., p.290)

6. **It is never too soon**

The adage of the Leader of our Generation concerning Pesach Sheni is well known; he taught that the lesson that we are to take from this day is "*Es is nitah kein farfalen*," "*It is never too late*."

Therefore, we should make this self-accounting *as soon as possible*, even on this very day of Shabbos - or at least during the following days, starting with Pesach Sheni itself, which begins immediately on Motzei Shabbos (the time of the Melaveh Malka, “The meal of Dovid, King Moshiach”). (Roshei Devarim from Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim, Iyar 13 5751)

7. Parshas Behar 5749; *Hisvaadyos* p. 159.

8. Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim, end of ch. 343.

9. **Not your fault, but your (correctable) imperfection**

In his *Shulchan Aruch* (ibid.), the Alter Rebbe states regarding sins that were

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

- In addition to contemplating actual shortcomings of the past, we should also meditate upon the fact that even a *perfect* Divine service of the past can be brought to an even greater level of perfection. With just brief contemplation, everyone is able to realize how he or she could have done even better.¹⁰

performed when one was a minor: Although he need not do Teshuvah for them now that he is an adult, nevertheless, it would be appropriate to accept upon oneself *something*, at least, in the way of Teshuvah, to gain atonement. (Parshas Behar 5749, *ibid.*)

10. *Ibid.*

Opportunity to climb higher

The message we are emphasizing (that it is possible to correct even an extremely low spiritual standing) comes *in addition* to the self-understood message of Pesach Sheni that is contained in the relevant Torah portion:

In the Torah's description of the origins of Pesach Sheni, the men who were ritually-impure through having come in contact with a corpse and were therefore unable to make the Pesach sacrifice on the correct date, were *not* on a low spiritual level, G-d forbid ... as stated in the Talmud (Sukah 25a.).

... In other words, the cause of their state of ritual impurity was *not* due to a deficiency in their spiritual standing. Quite the opposite! It was due to their involvement in fulfilling G-d's will [by performing the highly exalted Mitzvah of "Meis Mitzvah," attending to the burial needs in a case where no-one else can. Clearly, rather than just making up for past deficiencies, Pesach Sheni is also (or even, *primarily*) about catching up on opportunities to reach ever greater heights]. (*Ibid.*, p. 147)

Pesach Sheni influences Pesach Rishon

[Originally, Pesach Sheni was introduced in order to *make up* for that which was missing on Pesach, i.e., offering and partaking of the Pesach sacrifice. Nevertheless,] even when our divine service on Pesach was accomplished in its *fullest* measure ... the Yom Tov of Pesach Sheni [still] comes as an *addition* ... For it is on Pesach Sheni that our spiritual service regarding the themes of Pesach are accomplished on a far higher level.

This is reflected in the name "Pesach Sheni:" The term "Pesach" means "to jump over"; Pesach *Sheni* is therefore a *dilug sheni*, a *second leap* - one that takes us far higher than our first "leap," which occurred on Pesach.

For during Pesach we merely "leaped" to a station that was far beyond our *prior* spiritual standing, i.e., we attained what could at that point be termed a state of perfection. However, contrasted with our *future* spiritual standing, i.e., when we compare the elevated state we reached on Pesach with the *additional* elevation of Pesach Sheni (the "second leap") - why, our Pesach position is still left lacking!

[And we are not talking about a *slight* lack; rather,] it is a lack which prompts the agitated complaint and demand, "*lamah nigara,*" "Why should we *lose out*...?!"

INTERACTION AND INFLUENCE

- We should contemplate our personal spiritual standing, as well as our behavior towards others – beginning with the way we guide our very own family.
- This also includes our relationship with our older children, who have long completed their period of education as defined by the Torah, i.e., until the age of twenty four¹¹ – and even if they have their *own* children by now.

EDUCATE IN SELF STOCK-TAKING

- In addition to our own soul-searching, we should educate our children to make a personal self-reckoning as well. It is relatively easy to explain to a child how, with a little more effort, he or she could have done many things in an even *better* way – such that the child will be inspired to correct and improve himself.

CHILDREN WITH SPIRITUAL GOALS

- Even regarding children whose service of G-d was *appropriate*, nevertheless, we could still inspire them to cry out [in the words of the verse], “*Why should we lose out?!*” from

Call to action for every Jew

In conclusion, Pesach Sheni carries an innovation in two directions:

On the one hand, even someone on the lowest of spiritual levels needs to be aware that nothing is totally lost and it is *always possible to correct the situation*.

On the other hand, even one whose conduct is as it ought to be (and any spiritual lack is merely due to his involvement in an *alternative* spiritual pursuit), should nevertheless take it to heart until he is *truly bothered* by that “lack.”

In other words: Even one whose divine service is perfect and without deficiencies ought to contemplate how his present perfection is *deficient* in comparison to the even loftier levels of perfection he could attain. This “deficiency” should bother him to the core - until he too *demands*, “*lamah nigara?!*”

He will then strive to do everything possible in order to reach those higher levels of perfection, climbing ever higher.” (Ibid., p. 149 - see there at length.)

11. See *Kidushin* 30a.

... On the contrary – since age brings wisdom, he (the parent or teacher) has gained further wisdom and now knows how to have an even greater effect. (Ibid., fn. 122)

performing on an even *higher* level.¹²

AIM FOR MORE EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE

- The need for soul-searching and resolving to enhance one's performance is of particular relevance to those in positions of influence, such as teachers, Mashpi'im (mentors) and Rabbonim. They should seek ways of making their influence of previous years even *more* effective than it already was.

CONTINUE PAST ACHIEVEMENTS

- They should also endeavor to influence their former students and contacts of previous years, by sending them a letter, phoning them or using other means of contact. They should even reach out to those who have now grown up and already accepted positions as teachers and mentors.¹³
- This connection (between a teacher and his or her former student) should be as enthusiastic as it was in the past, when they

12. Ibid.

Mean it like a child

... And like children, who strongly plead and request a matter that means a lot to them - to the extent that they break out in tearful crying (because the thought of such a desirable matter being withheld is too overwhelming). Through doing so, they arouse their father – [and in this case, through children being inspired to sincerely demand a higher level of spiritual service, they arouse] our "Father in Heaven" – to fulfill their will. (Ibid., fn. 124)

13. **Once a teacher, always a teacher**

... True, these former students are presently studying under *other* teachers, or may have gone to another city altogether. Nevertheless, a teacher does not forget his or her pupils... A teacher always looks for an opportunity – and Hashem grants success to such endeavors – to come in contact with former pupils and to impart something, be it via letter, telephone or personal encounter. After all, since the teacher has acquired *additional* knowledge of Judaism, general positive information, wise words or spiritual insights since then, he or she desires to share this additional knowledge with former students.

"Many years ago," the teacher explains, "we were afforded a limited number of hours to cover a specific (limited) quantity of material. Now that I have advanced in *chochmah, binah veda'as* (wisdom, understanding and knowledge), I'd like to share some additional insight..."

And this is true even when the former pupils have *themselves* become teachers... (Address to Neshei Chabad [Chabad Women's Organization], Iyar 23 5749; *Hisvaaduyos* pp. 206-207)

had a formal teacher-student relationship.

However, the teacher should take into account that both teacher and student will have advanced intellectually since then, and endeavor, using more advanced methods, to expand his or her knowledge accordingly.¹⁴

PAST AND FUTURE AHAVAS YISRAEL

- A key focus of our soul-reckoning on Pesach Sheni should be the Mitzvah of *ahavas yisrael* (loving one's fellow Jew). As above, we should contemplate our past shortcomings in this area, as well as formulating ways in which to increase our *ahavas yisrael* in practical, day-to-day life.¹⁵

PESACH SHENI GATHERINGS

- Ideally, we should begin rousing ourselves to fulfillment of Pesach Sheni's message and directives with a well-attended and joyful public gathering (*farbrengen*); such a setting permits each person to give support to his fellow, amid a spirit of *ahavas yisrael*.¹⁶

14. Address to Neshei Chabad, *ibid*.

If not in quantity, then certainly in quality

Say, for example, that the teacher studied the laws of Kashrus, Shabbos and Yom Tov candle-lighting or the laws of family purity (*Taharas HaMishpachah*) with her students. Later, when the teacher acquires *further* knowledge in these fields, or *greater* awareness of the importance of these laws – she should, and is obligated, to inform her students of this additional information (even if they are by now teaching their own classes brimming with students).

She should now teach them the extent of the spiritual or physical goodness of observing those laws and how crucial such observance truly is, i.e., that it connects a Jew with Hashem, the Source of all blessings... (*Ibid*.)

15. **Don't just feel *ahavas yisrael* - perform it**

[The Sefirah period also marks the death of Rabbi Avika's students, who were punished by Heaven for "not conducting themselves respectfully to each other." Thus the current stress on *ahavas yisrael*] in practical, day-to-day life and in a manner of "they *conducted* themselves with respect towards one another" - actual conduct and not merely *feeling* respect within our hearts... (Parshas Behar 5749; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 157-158)

16. **Among brothers and sisters**

In the spirit of **יחד עם אחים** גַּם יָחַד – Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together (Tehilim 133:1). (*Ibid*. p. 160)

INSPIRATIONAL *FARBRENGENS*

- In the auspicious days between, or in proximity to, Pesach Sheni and Lag B'omer, we should hold a special *farbrengen* in every location.
- In the joyful atmosphere of these *farbrengens*, we should seek to inspire others to correct and improve all areas of their divine service.¹⁷

JOYFULLY REPAIR THE PAST

- However, we should ensure that even discussions on ways to fix the past are not conducted in a negative or depressing manner, G-d forbid; but rather, in a spirit of *joy*.¹⁸

NO *TACHANUN*

- We do not recite *tachanun* (penitentiary supplications) on Pesach Sheni; although *tachanun* is recited during Minchah of the previous day.¹⁹

17. Ibid.

Meet and mend with joy

It is customary to conclude a *farbrengen* with a practical instruction, since *HaMa'aser Hu Halkar* – "The main thing is the deed":

For a start, we spoke about arranging *farbrengens* in every location, in connection with the lesson and directive of Pesach Sheni. Our efforts at *Tikun* (correction) and *Teshuvah* (repentance) should also be done, not amidst despondency, G-d forbid, but rather, specifically with joy - and through a Chassidishe *farbrengen*.

In addition, there is great practical superiority to be gained by *gathering together* to discuss the way to correct and complete all aspects of divine service to the most perfect extent. (Ibid., p. 164)

... However, regarding the actual matter that needs to be corrected or completed, one does not require another to rouse him to take action - but rather, he arouses himself, on his own initiative. That is how it was in the original episode of Pesach Sheni [as recorded in the Torah], where the men came forward on their own initiative, without anyone prompting them, and complained to Moshe, "*lamah nigarah* – why should we lose out?!" (Ibid., fn. 32)

... There are many special customs associated with Pesach Sheni, including the marvelous opportunity of an additional *farbrengen* together with many Jewish men, women and children; held in an atmosphere of *ahavas yisrael* and *achdus yisrael*. (Pesach Sheni 5748; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 300)

18. Parshas Behar 5749; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 160.

19. Siddur of the Alter Rebbe.

EAT MATZAH

- We should make a point of eating Matzah during the *daytime* meal of Pesach Sheni.²⁰

[The Rebbe's custom (in the majority of years) was to also eat Matzah on the *night* of Iyar 15 (Motzei Pesach Sheni).]²¹

Before and after

We should already begin to "live" with the spirit of Pesach Sheni during the afternoon of Iyar 13. (Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim 5748; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 278)

Whether or not *Tachanun* is recited in *kri'as shema she'al hamitah* [said before retiring at night] on the eve of Iyar 15 remains unclear. (Pesach Sheni 5743)

20. The Pesach Sheni sacrifice was actually eaten with Matzah on the eve of the Iyar 15. Nevertheless, the sacrifice was *offered* on the day of Iyar 14. Hence the custom to eat Matzah during the day of Iyar 14, commemorating the *beginning* of the festival. (See Igros Kodesh vol.2, pp. 352-353)

[See Parshas Shemini 5740, regarding some who have additional *hiddur* of eating Matzah on the *eve* of Pesach Sheni (Iyar 14) as well.]

21. Rabbi Groner. See also Sichas Pesach Sheni 5740 and 5743.

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