
Sichos in English Classics 14

The Courage to Cry Out



PESACH SHENI, 5744 (1984)



Sichos In English
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IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION

At the Shloshim of R' Yonah Avtzon A"H, Director of Sichos in English, a resolution was taken to reprint the original weekly Sichos in English publications.

To fulfill this, a weekly booklet including a translation of a *farbrengen* as it was first published will be distributed. Our intention is to reprint the entire set in the near future.

Following the Sichos we will include an addendum with pictures, notes, and insights into the process of its publication.

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THE COURAGE TO CRY OUT

THE PURPOSE OF TIME

The Zohar states (III, 94):

“Every day has its own service.” Time is also a creation, and its purpose is that every day be wholly utilized by fulfilling its particular service. The first seven days of creation are repeated every week, with the creation of each day renewed on that day of the week (i.e., the creation of the first day is renewed every Sunday, that of the second day every Monday, etc.). Further, the Baal Shem Tov said that creation *ex nihilo* is renewed not only every day, but every moment, as said: “He renews ... continuously the work of Creation.” Since “G-d did not create anything in this world for naught,” we must conclude that the creation of any particular day is for a special purpose: it must possess some aspect not present in other days — its “own service.”

The rule that G-d did not create anything for naught applies particularly to the creation of time. Once time was created, it is very difficult, or even impossible, for a person to imagine the absence of time. One can imagine a world without any one of the creations of the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms; but it is impossible to understand what it means to have no time. Because the creation of time is thus so powerful, the rule that G-d creates nothing for naught applies most forcefully to time: it certainly must have a purpose.

Since each day (and each moment) of the time spectrum is an individual creation, it follows that the service of each day is different from every other day. In other words, the service of any one day is unique to it not just in regards to the other days of that week or month or year, but in regard to *all* days of the entire spectrum of time.

The task of a Jew, who was created to serve G-d, is to utilize each day consonant to G-d's will — by carrying out the service peculiar to that day. In the words of Scripture (Koheles 3:11): “He has made everything beautiful in its time.”

AUSPICIOUS DAYS

In addition to the fact that each day possesses its unique service, there are days which are of a loftier nature than others (i.e., not just different, as all days are one from another, but loftier). In the well-known term: “Auspicious days.” One may ascertain which are these special days by looking in Torah, the source of all things, as stated (Zohar III, 161b): “He looked into the Torah and created the world.” And because “Torah” is from a root meaning “directive,” by looking into Torah one also derives directives for service to G-d concerning these days.

Looking into Torah, we see there are certain days, Shabbosim and festivals, which are far loftier and removed from the other days of the year. Although these “auspicious days” are but few in number, their inner meaning and the lessons derived from them are eternal, applying to the whole year. The concept of Shabbos, for example, must be extended to all the days of the week. Pesach, which celebrates the exodus from Egypt and is the “Season of Our Freedom,” extends to the whole year, for one is obligated to remember the exodus every day. Shavuot, the “Season of the Giving of Our Torah,” also extends throughout the year, for one is constantly obligated to learn the Torah. Sukkos is the “Season of Our Rejoicing,” and service to G-d throughout the year must be with joy, as written (Tehillim 100:2): “Serve the L-rd with joy.” Thus each of these festivals has a property not possessed by the other festivals, which, although emphasized on the particular festival, extends also to the rest of the year.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF PESACH SHENI

One of the special days of the year is Pesach Sheni (the second Pesach). If a person could not bring the Pesach offering in its

proper time — on the first Pesach (because he was unclean or on a distant journey) — he is given the opportunity to do so on Pesach Sheni. According to what we noted above that each festival has its own unique aspect, it follows that Pesach Sheni too possesses features not contained by the other festivals (even the first Pesach), which are then extended to the whole year.

Although this day is called the “second Pesach,” thereby emphasizing that it is second in status to the principal Pesach — and particularly since it is only for those who were unable to bring the first Pesach — nevertheless, since it is one of the special days in the year, it must possess a quality that not even the first Pesach has.

Everything in the world has the dual aspects of being both a “giver” and “receiver.” Even the lowliest thing has some quality which everything else does not, which it “gives” to the other things (who in regard to this quality are “receivers”). This quality is an integral part of the whole of creation, making it whole and perfect. Thus, although Pesach Sheni in most aspects is second to the first Pesach, it must possess some quality which the first Pesach and other festivals do not. The latter then “receive” this quality from Pesach Sheni.

CAME FROM THE PEOPLE

G-d’s command concerning Pesach Sheni differs from all others in the Torah in that it came into being through the complaint and demand made by Jews (who couldn’t bring the first Pesach) to Moshe Rabbeinu: “Why should we be deprived of bringing the offering of the L-rd?” (Bamidbar 9:7). All other commands in Torah were given by G-d without the Jews’ demand. What does this symbolize?

A Jew’s task regarding all aspects of Torah and mitzvos is to be a “receiver” — he does what G-d commands him to do or doesn’t do what G-d forbids. Yet we have said that everything in the world is both a “receiver” and a “giver.” It is Pesach Sheni which emphasizes Jews’ role as a “giver” — it was through their efforts,

by demanding “why should we be deprived,” thereby indicating their great longing to offer the Pesach sacrifice, that brought about the commandment of Pesach Sheni.

In greater clarification: It is written concerning the creation of the world: “All His work which G-d created to function.” Our sages interpret “to function” to mean “to rectify,” intimating that G-d deliberately created the world such that it should be rectified by a Jew’s service, thereby making the Jew G-d’s partner in creation.

Similarly, all aspects of Torah and mitzvos were given to Moshe at Sinai. Nevertheless, there are some concepts in Torah which future disciples will reveal (for “that everything in Torah was given at Sinai to Moshe,” refers to the general principles and rules of deduction: the actual concepts derived from these principles and rules are revealed by successive generations). Indeed, every Jew has a portion in Torah which only he can reveal, as stated: “Grant us our portion in Your Torah.” This is particularly emphasized by the mitzvah of Pesach Sheni, which came into being purely as a result of the Jews’ claim, “Why should we be deprived.”

THEIR BIZZARE COMPLAINT

The claim “Why should we be deprived” seems to be most bizarre. The people who made this claim could not bring the Pesach offering in its right time for they were unclean. Now, if G-d desired that they should offer the Pesach sacrifice, He certainly would have commanded Moshe to tell them to do so (on Pesach Sheni) without them having to demand it. And if Moshe told them nothing, it means that they need not fulfill the mitzvah of offering the Pesach sacrifice!

Furthermore, our sages say (Sukkah 25a) that these people who could not bring the offering on the first Pesach were unclean because they were the ones who carried Yosef’s coffin from Egypt, or who had become unclean from contact with Nodav and Avihu (Aharon’s sons who died). This implies that these people were of

the great men of that time, with the utmost faith in Moshe Rabbeinu. If they heard nothing from Moshe Rabbeinu or G-d concerning their obligation to offer the Pesach sacrifice, it could only mean that they were not obligated to. How then could they demand from Moshe Rabbeinu that they wanted to keep this commandment — when it should have been clear that if Moshe did not command them about it, it meant that it didn't apply to them? How could they demand to keep something they weren't commanded about?

From the fact that they nevertheless did demand, “Why should we be deprived” we learn a wonderful lesson. When a Jew feels that he is missing something in Torah and mitzvos, some aspect of fear of Heaven, he relies on no one — not on Moshe Rabbeinu and not even on G-d (so to speak). Instead, he cries out and demands, “Why should we be deprived!”

HASHEM WANTS US TO CRY OUT

Torah says (Berachos 33b): “Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for fear of Heaven.” G-d therefore wants that a Jew, when he feels he is missing out on fear of Heaven, should cry out and demand that he have it. And when he thus shows his intense longing for it, G-d fulfills his desire — as we see, G-d gave the mitzvah of Pesach Sheni as the result of Jews' demand, “Why should we be deprived.”

A LESSON FOR THE HIGHEST JEW /

A LESSON FOR THE SIMPLEST JEW

This teaches a wonderful lesson for Jews of both the highest caliber (“the heads of your tribes”) and of the simplest level (“the choppers of your wood and the drawers of your water”).

A plain Jew may think that he is unworthy of making demands, and that his demands wouldn't be accepted anyway. Pesach Sheni teaches otherwise: The gulf between Jew and G-d is immensely wider than that between a plain Jew and one who is “the head of your tribe.” Yet, despite the vast gulf between a Jew

and G-d, Jews demanded of G-d, “Why should we be deprived” — and their demand was accepted and Pesach Sheni was given as a mitzvah.

THE POWER OF A JEW

A Jew can learn from this how much power he has: Although there is such a gulf between him and G-d, he is able to demand something that concerns him — and G-d will accept the demand. Although this power is not of the Jew’s making but comes from G-d, he must know that G-d wants that a Jew should show that the lack of something concerning fear of Heaven affects him deeply.

Likewise, Pesach Sheni contains a lesson for the “heads of your tribes.” A Jew who spends all his life in Torah study or good deeds may think that because he lacks nothing there is no reason to demand “why should we be deprived.” However, a true Torah sage has no rest, as our sages say, “Torah sages have no rest in this world nor in the World to Come, as written: ‘They shall go from strength to strength.’” Even a Jew who studies Torah day and night, never wasting a moment, and observes mitzvos with the utmost meticulousness, never finds rest for his soul because he is always longing to go from “strength to strength” — to a yet higher level. Why can he find no rest? Because of the feeling “Why should we be deprived”: Knowing that he can go yet further allows him no rest until he reaches that higher level — and then, he once again wants to go yet higher, ad infinitum.

A LESSON ABOUT DEMANDING MOSHIACH

That Pesach Sheni resulted from the demand by the Jews teaches us another lesson. Some people question why we speak incessantly about Moshiach, that “I believe with perfect faith in the coming of Moshiach ... I will wait for him that he shall come every day.” One should rely on G-d to redeem the Jews when He wants, these people say. G-d sent the Jews into exile and He is the one who should redeem them. Why then the demand and outcry for the redemption?

Pesach Sheni teaches us why: Although this mitzvah, as all other mitzvos, should have been given directly by G-d, it in fact came into being as a result of the Jews' demand, "Why should we be deprived." Not only did a new mitzvah thus come into being, but it made all the mitzvos more complete — for the mitzvah of Pesach Sheni brought the number of mitzvos to their full totality — 613. Pesach Sheni is one of the 248 positive mitzvos corresponding to the 248 limbs of a person. Thus, even a Jew who all his life brought the Pesach sacrifice on the first Pesach, has 248 limbs whose wholeness depends on the fulfillment of all the 248 positive mitzvos, including that of Pesach Sheni. And since the integrity of Torah depends on the actual fulfillment of mitzvos, for "study is great that it leads to deed," it follows that Jews, through their demand not to be deprived, effected that the Torah too (as well as the mitzvos) should be whole.

We learn from this that our outcry for the redemption is not only not contrary to Torah, G-d forbid, but the reverse: Torah commanded us to act thus, via the Men of the Great Assembly who ordained that a Jew should say in his prayers: "Speedily cause the scion of Dovid Your servant to flourish ... for we hope for Your salvation every day." Indeed, a Jew is not satisfied with making this request once a day, but repeats it at each prayer — three times a day!

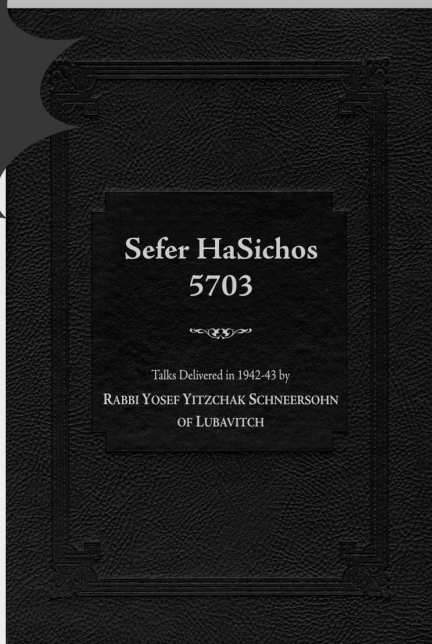
Jews, together with King Dovid, cry out, "Until when?" They plead: "G-d, do not hold Yourself silent; do not be deaf and do not be still, O G-d!" (Tehillim 83:2). Midrash Tehillim on this verse states: "The righteous tell the Holy One, blessed be He, what to do: They say to Him, 'Arise,' and He arises ... they say to Him, 'Do not slumber,' and He awakens ... they say to Him, 'Do not be silent,' and He listens...." The Mezritcher Maggid explains that the above Midrash is "similar to Choni the Circle Maker's prayer, which changed, as it were, G-d's will ... as one takes his friend by the hand and does not let him go, and changes his will."

It follows from the above that when Jews plead for the redemption they effect that it come more quickly than without their heartfelt cries.

The same concept is behind the prayer: “Speedily cause the scion of Dovid Your servant to flourish ... for we hope for Your salvation every day.” Rambam rules (Laws of Prayer 1:2) that the positive mitzvah of prayer is that “a person ... shall request his necessities which he needs.” When a Jew feels he lacks something, he should request it from G-d. If this applies to asking for abundant livelihood (i.e., not just basic needs), it certainly applies to asking for the redemption to come quickly. Although a Jew is sure the redemption will come, he cannot serenely wait for it to come in two days time when he can bring it tomorrow. Moreover, if a Jew but wants it, he can bring the redemption today, as Rambam rules (Laws of Repentance 3:4): “A person throughout the whole year should view himself as if he were half innocent and half guilty; and should likewise view the whole world as half innocent and half guilty.... If he fulfills one mitzvah, he turns the scale of merit in his and the whole world’s favor, and brings salvation and deliverance to himself and to them.” The “salvation and deliverance” thus effected comes immediately, not tomorrow or the next day. In the words of Rambam (Ibid., 7:5): “Immediately they are redeemed.”

The lesson, then, from the unique service of Pesach Sheni compared to the other days of the year, is that it came into being as a result of the Jews’ claim, “Why should we be deprived.” Even the other special days of the year do not possess this element: Shabbos is “sanctified of itself,” without any act on the part of Jews; and the sanctifying of the festivals, although done by Israel — through their establishing the day of Rosh Chodesh — is a result of G-d’s command to sanctify the months.

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