

Torah Tidbits This 'n That

Phil's page



Lessons from Pesach Sheini

The date - 14 Iyar - is on our calendars. On it, we don't say Tachanun. Some have the custom to eat matza in commemoration of the matza that was to be eaten with the Korban Pesach.

Is that all there is to Pesach Sheini?

In the time of the Beit HaMikdash - past and future, there was a lot more to it. What about now?

Many (probably most, or even all) mitzvot that are active only during the time of the Mikdash still have lessons for us - in all times.

The Torah tells us about the men (possibly Misha'el and Eltzafan, cousins of Aharon, who tended to the bodies of Nadav and Avihu) who were TAMEI on the first 14 Nisan in the Midbar and were not able to participate in the Korban Pesach. They 'complained' to Moshe and Aharon. What follows that encounter in Parshat B'haalot'cha are the mitzvot of Pesach Sheini.

G-d could have said to them - sorry, when the day of a timed korban passes, it cannot be brought, regardless of the reason it was missed. (Better luck next year.)

But that's not what G-d told them and all of us for all generations.

When it comes to Korban Pesach (and

only Korban Pesach) there is a second opportunity to do this very significant mitzva. The Torah states that if a person is TAMEI or 'far away' from the Mikdash, and therefore was not able to be part of Korban Pesach on 14 Nisan, then he is commanded to bring Korban Pesach on 14 Iyar. There are some differences in the peripheral details, but the main details of KP are the same.

Is this a make-up for missing KP in Nisan? No, not really. It is a mitzva on its own, and only one who missed the Nisan KP, can bring the Iyar one.

What about if a person missed the Nisan KP for another reason? Yes, says the Mishna, he too must bring KP on 14 Iyar.

Rambam says (not on his own) that even someone who intentionally (and even spitefully) did not participate in the first, brings the second.

The whole thing sounds a lot like missing a davening and doing Tashlumin at the next davening slot.

Halacha allows the one who missed Shacharit, for example - for whatever reason - good (he was sick) or bad (he was drunk) - to say a second Amida at Mincha. The second Amida is called Tashlumin, but it is not Shacharit. That he missed. It's an opportunity to make up the missed T'fila by doubling the next Amida. Sounds like Pesach Sheini.

But there is a difference. The one who intentionally skipped a davening does NOT have permission for Tashlumin. Maybe HaShem's 'patience' is infinite, by Chazal drew the line at intentionally skipping. Pesach 2 teaches us now, too.