

If any man will become contaminated through a human corpse or on a distant road. (9:10)

The *Pesach Sheini* dispensation has two aspects: *tamei*, ritual contamination; *derech rechokah*, distance from the Sanctuary. One who, for one of these reasons, missed out on celebrating *Pesach Rishon* appropriately, is granted a second chance in accordance with *halachah*. *Horav Lazar Brody, Shlita*, posits that the laws of *Pesach Sheini* are an allusion to the *baal teshuvah*, penitent, who returns to Jewish observance. One who was born to a family that was distant from observance can return, can have another start at being an observant Jew.

Chazal (Pesachim 95a) ask what the difference is between *Pesach Rishon* and *Pesach Sheini*. They reply that, during *Pesach Rishon*, one may not have any *chametz*, leaven, in his possession, while during *Pesach Sheini*, *matzah* and *chametz* are together in the house. The *Talmud* questions this anomaly. Does the Torah not write, *K'chol chukas haPesach yaasu oso*; "Like all decrees of the *Pesach*-offering shall they make it" (Ibid 9:12)? If they are the same, how can we allow *chametz* in the house? The *Talmud* explains that the law of *k'chol chukas haPesach* applies to *mitzvos she'b'gufo*, those commandments that apply directly to the person who is offering the *korban*. Thus, whatever *halachos* applied to the first offering – i.e., must be roasted; may not break a bone – are in force for the second offering as well. Those laws, however, that are not directly connected to and incumbent on the individual himself – such as *Bal'yeira'eh u'bal yimatzei*, one may neither see *chametz* in his possession, nor own *chametz* – are not incumbent upon the person.

Bearing this in mind, we may suggest that the *halachic* distinction that rules between *Pesach Rishon* and *Pesach Sheini* alludes to the contrast that prevails between a *baal teshuvah* and a *tzaddik*, righteous person, whose background and upbringing played a dominant role in his present devotion to Torah and *mitzvos*.

The *tzaddik*, explains *Rav Brody*, has within his demeanor the aspect of *Pesach Rishon*. Born into a fine, upstanding observant home, raised with the tenets of Torah and *yiraas Shomayim* as part of his lifeblood, studied in the finest *yeshivos* – his entire life has been a continuous spiritual ascent, maintaining for himself the loftiest goals of spiritual achievement. He does not/should not engage in secular/mundane pursuits. His life is one of *matzah*, completely severed from any exposure to *chametz*. Leaven/*chametz* has no place in his home, his mind, his life.

The *baal teshuvah* is a phenomenon. Regardless of his roots, his distance from religious observance notwithstanding, a common thread motivates his/her return. It is the belief that human beings have the power to effect internal change. The ever-present possibility of changing one's life, and altering the direction of that life, is sufficient reason for one who is blessed with a modicum of intelligence to make that change. It does not just happen. *Teshuvah* is a process which takes time, patience and perseverance.

Many transitional stages are required before one reaches the pinnacle: *baal teshuvah*. One goal must remain, regardless of the stages of transition and the time it takes to reach this goal: embracing Judaism in its totality. A *mitzvah* here and there leads to aimlessness and a confused self-image.

Having said this, *Pesach Sheini* represents the *baal teshuvah*. His service to Hashem encompasses the fact that he possesses *chametz*, memories of an earlier life, challenges over which he has triumphed, obstacles within and without which he must patiently traverse. He must take the *matzah* and remove it from the *chametz* environment. He must take everything that he has learned in his past and focus on the positive, using it to buttress the changes in his life. Every attribute, character trait, and strength that he used in order to succeed in his previous life must be gleaned, to be used positively to enhance his return to Torah and *mitzvos*.

The *baal teshuvah* serves Hashem with both *chametz* and *matzah*. Regarding those *mitzvos* which are *b'gufo*, related to his body – such as *Tzitzis*, *Tefillin*, *Krias Shema*, *shemiras Shabbos* – everyone is the same. The *tzaddik* and *baal teshuvah* carry out these *mitzvos* in a like-minded manner. It is with regard to the lifestyle changes that the *tzaddik* and *baal teshuvah* assume divergent paths. The *tzaddik* remains cloistered in the *bais hamedrash* all day and most of the night. The *baal teshuvah* comes from a different world. Thus, if he finds time during his busy day of toiling in a mundane world to have a *seder* to learn Torah, to spend more time devoted to *davening*, then he demonstrates the significance of *Pesach Sheini*. It is not merely a second chance; it is a venue in which he can modify the original stance which he embraced when he was distant from the Sanctuary.