

# A Second Chance

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May 7, 2014



Do you ever find yourself saying, “I really messed up! I blew it! What a missed opportunity!” Those negative emotions plant themselves in our brains and nag at us constantly, especially at this time of year.

We’ve just finished observing Pesach and rediscovering that we are a Godly People. We realized that we’re not really enslaved to our lusts and deficiencies, and that we can achieve true freedom from everything that weighs us down. In order to actualize these revelations, God gave us a 49-day period during which, by counting each day and taking advantage of its special spiritual potential, we receive the necessary “soul correction.” We rise one level each day, moving from the 49th level of impurity to the 49th level of holiness and beyond.

You may wonder if this process is just a fairy tale; after all, you've never felt yourself either physically or spiritually leave the servitude of Egypt or advance towards the towering spiritual heights of Mt. Sinai. Because of the physical nature of our identities, it's extremely difficult to perceive the levels we achieve in our souls. Most of what we attain comes through having faith in the processes prescribed by our great Rabbis. Only after we've left this physical world do we truly experience and appreciate how much every single good action or thought is worth! But sometimes, if we're very sensitive to our growth and can identify the small, positive changes, we can glimpse the very real changes that take place in our souls.

But what if I messed up? What if I didn't take advantage of Pesach, the Counting of the Omer, or any other opportunity for connection with God?

Next Wednesday is *Pesach Sheini*, the Second Pesach, perhaps the most unique holiday on the Jewish calendar. For most people, it just means that we eat some more matzah (as if we haven't eaten enough already) on a regular weekday. But for those of us seeking a second chance, it's an eye-opener.

The Torah recounts that when it was time to bring the first Pesach offering in the desert, some Jews weren't able to participate because their "souls were impure" (Numbers 9:7). Simply understood, they had come in contact with a corpse. But these Jews were not satisfied with being exempt. They complained to Moses, "Why should we be left out?" (ibid.). Moses relayed their request to God, and lo and behold, a new mitzvah was added to the Torah. From then on, "any man whose soul is impure or who is on a distant path" (ibid., 9:10) could bring the offering on the Second Pesach.

This proves that there's no such thing as despair! As Rebbe Nachman taught, if you believe that you can damage, believe that you can fix. Even if someone missed out on Pesach because

he was sunken in impurity or imperfection, he can still eat matzah on a regular Wednesday! A Jew should never feel that he's too distant; his negative feelings should only prompt him to cry out to God, "Where are You? I don't want to be left out!"

Even more, our descent can become the means to reveal God's presence. Even in the distant places of our depression and sadness, even if a Jew has sunken to the lowest spiritual places, God is right there with him! This revelation is a new Torah insight of the highest caliber. Just as those Jews in the desert had a new mitzvah revealed because of their fortitude, we, too, can persevere and transform our descents into the greatest Torah revelations, as we merit an amazing second chance.

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Geviyat Chov M'HaYesomim 3*