

The Second Passover  
A God of Second Chances

By Hannah Neshet

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Have you ever had the experience of finding out that for some reason, maybe through no fault of your own, you missed out on something really, really important? Maybe you feel left out, cheated, excluded.

You get this sinking feeling in your gut, knowing that others received the blessing but you did not. You may say, "Why should I be deprived?" I know I have felt this at times.

Isn't it a wonderful feeling to discover that, much to our surprise, we have received a second chance?

This is exactly what God, in His mercy, did for the people of Israel in ancient times; but the good news is that we serve the same kind and merciful God today – a God of second chances.

Those who, for reasons of ritual impurity, had missed the celebration of Passover, were allowed the opportunity to observe the feast one month later, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the Hebrew month of Iyar.

**"There were, however, certain persons who had become ritually impure through contact with a dead body, and could not, therefore, prepare the Passover offering on that day.**

**They approached Moses and Aaron . . . and they said: ' . . . Why should we be deprived, and not be able to present God's offering in its time, amongst the children of Israel?'" (Numbers 9:6–7).**

Moses inquired of the Lord regarding the petition of the people and God answered with an abundance of mercy:

**"Tell the Israelites: 'When any of you or your descendants are unclean because of a dead body or are away on a journey, they are still to celebrate the LORD's Passover, but they are to do it on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight. They are to eat the lamb, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.'" (Numbers 9:10-11)**

Today, in modern times, because of the destruction of the Holy Temple, the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb may no longer be performed, either on the first or second Passover.

However, Matzah and bitter herbs are usually eaten on Pesach Sheni (The Second Passover) in remembrance of the sacrificed lamb.

This special day represents the 'second chance' that we can receive when we repent and return to God. Therefore, according to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, 1880–1950), the Second Passover (Pesach Sheni) reminds us that with God, there is always hope – it is never too late – he can give us a second chance.

God had commanded the people of Israel, on the first anniversary of their exodus from Egypt, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month of Nissan, to celebrate the Passover at the appointed time and according to all the specific rules and regulations of the Torah.

“The LORD spoke to Moses in the Desert of Sinai in the first month of the second year after they came out of Egypt. He said, **“Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. Celebrate it at the appointed time, at twilight on the fourteenth day of this month, in accordance with all its rules and regulations.”**”  
(Numbers 9:1-3)

Yes, there are rules and regulations; there are proper ways and times of doing things; and yet we serve a God who is called 'Rav Chessed' – Great in Mercy – Master of KINDNESS.

In the Temple they sang, “Give thanks to the Lord, for His mercy (chessed) is forever.”

The children of Israel who were ritually impure (tameh) through contact with a dead body, or too far from Jerusalem, travelling on a distant road, should have missed the Passover celebration.

These people, however, refused to accept their exclusion. They said, “*Why should we be denied the fulfillment of the Mitzvah of Passover simply because of circumstances?*”

And God gave them the desires of their hearts, which was to honor Him and keep His commandments.

**“Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.”**  
**(Psalm 37:4)**

Like these determined Israelites, we must never think that because of something we've done that has made us impure or unclean, that we must always be on the outside looking in.

We may have broken the rules and regulations, or missed an important opportunity, but this is never an excuse for despair.

Perhaps we have also travelled a distant path that has led us far from intimacy with God and fellowship with other Believers. We must always remember that there is nowhere we can run or hide from God; no place can be far enough away, that God cannot find us, catch us, and bring us back to Himself.

Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.” (Psalm 139:7-10)

We may ask for the mercies of God to give us another chance and bring us back into full fellowship and union with Him and with the community of God through Messiah Yeshua.

**“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known your faithfulness to all generations.”** (Psalm 89:1)

Yeshua taught us that we are to ask for what we desire and not to give up asking:

**"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.**

**For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”** (Matthew 7:7-8)

Some of us are simply too timid. If someone says no, then we accept that the door is closed; but here in Israel, I am learning that no does not necessarily mean no. It may just mean “ask again”.

One night, I heard such a wonderful testimony from a brother in the Lord, who found out that he and his wife would not be able to have children of their own because of fertility problems. But God gave them another chance. They have become spiritual parents to many children here in Israel and around the world and now take in troubled Israeli youth, giving them the loving, stable home they never had.

I love what this brother said about his experience with God: *“God is not the God of No! He is the God of ‘instead of’. When one door closes, He always opens another.”*

When we will let go of the past failures – things that didn’t work out as we had hoped – God will bring us a second chance in another way.

Another brother who came from a very difficult and dysfunctional past as an orphan, lamented on all the years he wasted without hope or purpose. But the good news is that God promises to make up for the years that the devouring locusts have eaten. (Joel 2:25)

Instead of our former shame, we shall have a double portion in our land; instead of lamenting with regret, we will shout for joy! .

**“ Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs.” (Isaiah 61:7)**

There was one thing, however, that the Israelites who had missed the Passover needed to do in order to receive the blessing – they had to be bold enough not to settle for being left out; but to ask for their portion!

The apostle Yaacov (James) said that **“we have not because we ask not.”** (James 4:2)

Therefore, let us remember the lessons of Pesach Sheni, and refuse to be excluded from the fullness of life simply because of circumstances or the mistakes of our past.

May the righteous in Yeshua be bold enough but to ask God for a Second Chance.

**“The righteous are bold as a lion.” (Proverbs 28:1)**

Happy SECOND PASSOVER !

Love Hannah

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