

# PHILOTORAH

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## תזריע ♦ ראש חודש ● החודש



7+33



14+66

April 1-2, '22 • א' ניסן ה'תשפ"ב

**YERUSHALAYIM**

in/out times for

**TAZRI'A - ROSH CHODESH - HACHODESH**

**A Three-Torah (3-kugel) Shabbat**

🕯️🕯️ **6:23PM** Earliest **5:41PM** • 🕯️🕯️ **7:36PM** R"t **8:16PM**

For other locales, click on Z'MANIM link

## Shabbat - Rosh Chodesh

When Rosh Chodesh Nissan is on Shabbat, then that Shabbat is also Parshat HaChodesh.

The sedra of the week is adjusted to six aliyot rather than the usual seven. This is accomplished by combining Shishi and Sh'VII into a single aliya - SHISHI.

The Shabbat Rosh Chodesh portion is read in the second Sefer Torah and constitutes SH'VII.

Parshat HaChodesh is read from the third Torah for the Maftir, who will follow his aliya with the reading of the haftara for HaChodesh.

S'faradim (Eidot Mizrach) often will follow the HaChodesh haftara with the first and last p'sukim of the Rosh Chodesh haftara (which would have been read in its entirety had HaChodesh not pre-empted it. Got that? The wording is a bit confusing.

FYI: The following situation is not likely to arise in large congregations - or even small ones with someone paying careful attention, but it can happen.

Picture this: After Parshat HaShavua, the shul mistakenly reads the Maftir

of HaChodesh and then someone says the magic word: OOPS!

They then read the Shabbat Rosh Chodesh portion and the haftara is the one for Rosh Chodesh (not for HaChodesh). The haftara is linked to the last read portion.

Doesn't happen often - but it could.

## Musaf for Shabbat R"Ch

Special Musaf for the combined Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh - usually found in siddurim "below the line".

Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh represent the two aspects of sanctity of time - The Shabbat, which G-d made by Himself (so to speak) and the calendar and its festivals which G-d brought is in as His junior partners. He created the heavenly bodies and He commanded the Chagim - but we must act first in sanctifying the calendar.

## Parshat HaChodesh

The 20-pasuk maftir begins with two p'sukim which command the setting up of our special Jewish Calendar. The remaining 18 p'sukim deal with Korban Pesach, the holiday which we call Pesach and which the Torah calls Chag HaMatzot, and several mitzvot related to Chameitz and Matza, the Seder, and more.

See Sedra Summary for more.

# TAZRI'A

## HaCHODESH

27th of 54 sedras;  
4th of 10 in Vayikra



Written on 128 lines (rank: 48)

9 Parshiyot; 5 open and 4 closed

67 p'sukim - ranks 48th - 8 in Vayikra

1010 words - 48th - 8th in Vayikra

3667 letters - 48th - 8th in Vayikra

Tazria is small. Only 6 other sedras are shorter - 2 others in Vayikra and the last 4 of D'varim

## MITZVOT

7 mitzvot; 5 positives; 2 prohibitions

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is [Perek:Pasuk](#) of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [\[square brackets\]](#) are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

Tazria is read alone in all SHANA M'UBERET (7/19) and together with Metzora in all SHANA P'SHUTA (12/19).

## Kohen - First Aliya

### 13 p'sukim - 12:1-13:5

[P> 12:1 (8)] Perek 12, the shortest in the Torah with 8 p'sukim, deals with "birth". A woman becomes T'MEI'A (ritually unclean) following a (normal) birth - one week for a boy - and on the 8th day the boy is circumcised - and two weeks for a girl. This period of TUM'A is followed by a special "waiting time" of 33 or 66 days for boy or girl respectively, after which the mother is to bring the korbanot of a YOLEDET. The whole issue of the "ritual impurity of a woman having given birth" constitutes a mitzva [\[166, A100 12:2\]](#), as does the bringing of the sacrifices [\[168, A76 12:6\]](#). This portion of the Torah is also the source of the general prohibition of eating "sacred meat" while in a state of "ritual impurity" [\[167, L129 12:4\]](#).

## MITZVAnotes

The mitzva of Brit Mila is found back in Parshat Lech L'cha and in this week's sedra of Tazria. Most mitzva counters point to Lech L'cha as the source of the mitzva, and not the more "logical" source in Tazria - logical because we find the language of a command: "Speak to the children of Israel saying..." In Lech L'cha, the mitzva is in the context of the story of G-d's commanding Avraham to circumcise himself and the males of his household. True, the

p'sukim there contain the language of a command that is defined as the mitzva in perpetuity, but the story is of a 99 year old man, his 13 year old son, Yishmael, and various non-Jewish slaves being circumcised. Why count it from Lech L'cha rather than Tazri'a?

The answer is fairly obvious, but let's say it anyway. BRIT MILA is a two-part mitzva whose two-word name tells us so. MILA is the physical removal of the foreskin and whatever else is done by the MOHEL on the 8th day - or whenever thereafter. The Mohel says the mitzva-b'racha AL HAMILA and then in a matter of seconds, that aspect of the mitzva is accomplished. The BRIT part of the mitzva takes much longer. As soon as the AMENs fade from the Mohel's bracha, the father of the boy makes a second bracha of mitzva - to enter him (the baby) into the covenant of (BRITO SHEL) Avraham Avinu. This is the multifaceted, long-term aspect of the mitzva that the parents continuously and variously fulfill as they raise their son to Torah, Chupa, and Maasim Tovim. The MILA part of circumcision comes from Tazri'a. The commitment part, the BRIT part, is from Lech L'cha. That's why our Sages pointed to Lech L'cha as the (primary) source of the mitzva.

Here's a 'nice' way to sum up the above. BRIT MILA. MILA is one of the Torah's mitzvot. BRIT represents all the rest of the mitzvot that go along with living a Torah life. Numerically, BRIT = 612, plus

Mila = 613.

More. Because we have already been commanded on MILA back in Lech L'cha, the Gemara teaches us some "new" aspects of the mitzva from the "repetition" of the mitzva here. E.g. that an 8th day Mila can be performed on Shabbat. (And that this applies only to a birth through the birth-canal, as opposed to a C-section delivery whose Mila is not done on Shabbat.) That Mila cannot be done at night. And other details.

**Ponder this...** To over simplify: one aspect of the rules of ritual purity and impurity for a Yoledet (a woman who have given birth) is to show the sharp contrast between life and death. This can be seen in the Tum'a of a dead body, in the laws of Nida, the rules of pregnancy, as well as the Yoledet. A woman's period signifies that life has not begun within her - there is TUM'A. A pregnant woman has life developing within her - TAHARA. When that life emerges into the world, she is no longer carrying that extra life - TUM'A.

Another aspect of the procedures for the new mother is geared to help her recoup her physical, psychological and emotional identity and well-being.

[P> 13:1 (8)] After the parsha of BIRTH, the Torah moves on to the topic of NEGA'IM (various skin afflictions). The rest of Tazria (and most of Metzora) deals with these topics.

A person with an affliction that MIGHT be Tzora'at (in one of its many forms) is to be examined by a kohen (expert in the laws and identification of N'GA'IM, with a degree, perhaps, in dermatology, as well). Under certain circumstances, the kohen might declare the individual he is checking, a M'TZORA rendering him immediately TAMEI (ritually unclean). Or, a kohen might order a week-long quarantine with an additional examination to determine the status of the individual, to take place on the seventh day of said quarantine.

## Levi - Second Aliya 12 p'sukim - 13:6-17

That second inspection can result in the person being declared "clean", or "Tamei", or an additional week of quarantine can be ordered.

[P> 13:9 (9)] A kohen must examine a case of suspected Tzora'at. He looks for changes in coloration of skin and hair, raised or sunken appearance of the blemished area, increase, decrease or no change in size, and other signs. Sometimes he declares immediate Tzora'at. Sometimes "ritual purity" is declared immediately, in which case a trip to the pharmacy for a salve might be the best thing. And sometimes a quarantine period is declared.

The expertise of a kohen in the area of Nega'im is both an art and a science. And more. Dozens of shades of white and other colors must be distinguish-

able to the inspecting kohen. An error in perception of a white like the shell of an egg as opposed to the color of the thin membrane under the shell (for example) can make the difference between declaring the examinee Tahor or Tamei. Only certain times of the day are permitted for examining a NEGA, because of the different effects of light and shadow.

The laws of Nega'im are unbelievably difficult and complex. And, in addition to everything else, the kohen has to know the psychology of the cases and be sensitive to the personal situations of the afflicted. One example is that a new bride or groom is not examined by the kohen, so they cannot be declared TAMEI. That could spoil their moods. Which puts an obvious subjective twist to the topic of N'GA'IM.

A look at some of the Mishnayot in TAHAROT, even without going in depth, can give one an appreciation of what is involved in this topic. Once again, learning comes to the rescue and allows us to get "involved" in mitzvot even when they aren't active.

## Shlishi - Third Aliya 6 p'sukim - 13:18-23

[P> 13:18 (6)] The Torah presents further details on what the kohen looks for when inspecting boils and similar afflictions on the skin. The elaborate checking and time delays from inspection to inspection serve to

give the afflicted person ample time for introspection. A NEGA on the outside mirrors a character blemish or a religious shortcoming on the inside. While the kohen examines the external, the Metzora does a thorough job of seeing his own inner being.

## MITZVAnotes

**Why all the detail?** Why are there so many different types of N'GA'IM? Perhaps it is because WE are all different. So many different types of people. So many different temperaments. So many different sins. And so many different personal reactions to our individual situations. We need to feel this individuality. It helps us be responsible for our own deeds. One imagines that the kohen-examiner played the role of counselor too. Maybe sensing a disturbed soul that needs TIPUL along with the NEGA.

Keep in mind that the whole topic of TZORA'AT and N'GA'IM tells us that the body and soul are intimately connected. Of course, we should know that already, but these mitzvot and details bring the point home.

**As an analogy - something to think about** - modern psychology recognizes a connection between the physical and the mental. Physical and emotional. The word that sums up this idea is "psychosomatic" - Of, or relating to a disorder having physical symptoms but originating from mental or

emotional causes; Relating to or concerned with the influence of the mind on the body, and the body on the mind... Now just substitute the word spiritual for mental and you get a good picture of what N'GA'IM are about.

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 5 p'sukim - 13:24-28

[S> 13:24 (5)] This portion discusses burns on the skin and different colorations within the affected area. Keep in mind that a blemish of any sort is NOT Tzora'at unless declared so by a kohen. It could look like Tzora'at, but it isn't unless declared "Tamei" by a kohen. In fact, two people can have identical signs and one can be declared a Metzora, the other not so. And the treatment of each case is completely different as a result.

## Chamishi 5th Aliya 11 p'sukim - 13:29-39

[P> 13:29 (9)] This next portion deals with yet another type or two of N'GA'IM - sores on the head, neck, or face, and blotches on the skin. As was mentioned before, we are dealing here with a complex issue of a bridge between the physical and the spiritual. Or, to put it differently, of physical manifestations of spiritual problems.

To help understand this idea better, let's carry the above analogy a little further: There are physical afflictions and psychological problems that people

can suffer. Sometimes, each type is treated independently. But sometimes, a trained professional in the field will see the physical problems as manifestations of the psychological problems. And sometimes, vice versa. In those cases, it is very important for the professional to decide what gets treated and what will improve when the other does, even without special attention. In N'GA'IM, the kohein is the expert who decides. And not every kohein is qualified, by the way. N'GA'IM is like a second degree for a kohein.

This was only an analogy, but this is one of the lessons, of Torat HaM'tzora, the laws of N'GA'IM.

The laws regarding the state of ritual impurity resulting from Tzora'at constitute a positive commandment [169, A101 13:29]. In other words, we would be doing the wrong thing to ignore these laws and details. Additionally, there is a specific prohibition of cutting the hair of a Tzora'at area on the body [170, L307 13:33]. Among other reasons, this would remove an important indicator for the inspecting kohen (and more importantly, perhaps, for the afflicted individual.)

Let's run with the analogy. If a doctor feels that a rash on a patient who came to him might be the result of stress and tension in the workplace, then it would serve no purpose to merely treat the rash. In fact, the rash might clear up after some stress-reduction measures

without any treatment of the specific rash. In the case of N'GA'IM, it would be prohibited to treat the NEGA with physical means. Welts, burns, blemishes, boils, etc. might go away after T'shuva and the Tzara'at procedures. How can a korban heal an affliction? How can T'shuva heal it? Same question as, How can psychological counseling cure asthma. But it can (sometimes) and so can all of the "remedies" in this week's sedra. Mind, body, soul - they are all connected and interrelated.

[S> 13:38 (2)] In this small parsha, the Torah gives an example of a rash of white spots erupting on the body. In this case, a rash is a rash. TAHOR.

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya 15+5 p'sukim - 13:40-59

*Note that for a 3-Torah Shabbat, the 6th and 7th Aliya of the weekly sedra are combined into SHISHI, the Shabbat-R"Ch reading in the second Torah is SH'VII, and the special maftir (HaChodesh or Sh'kalim or Chanuka - as the case may be) is read from the third Torah.*

[S> 13:40 (7)] Certain cases of baldness are discussed in the first part of this portion. Usually, baldness is just baldness. But occasionally, the skin that is exposed when the hair falls out is blemished in specific ways which might mean Tzora'at. A person who has Tzora'at, tears his clothes, lets his

hair hang loose, and must announce in public that he is TAMEI. The proper conduct of the Metzora is a mitzva [171, A112 13:45].

[S> 13:47 (13)] The rest of this Aliya deals with infection of Tzora'at on garments. Wool, linen, and leather are the materials that are subject to Tzora'at HaBeged. The laws of infected garments also constitute one of the 613 mitzvot [172, A102 13:47].

The topic of "afflictions of garments" continues for the rest of the sedra. The fact that there is such a thing as an affliction of a garment tells us something. We are dealing with different ways that G-d communicates his "displeasure" with us, as individuals. Today, we might say, His communication is more subtle - but we must see it.. and react appropriately.

## Sh'VII Seventh Aliya 2nd Torah - 7 p'sukim - Bamidbar 28:9-15

Chapters 28 and 29 in Bamidbar (Parshat Pinchas) deal with the daily and Musaf korbanot in the Mikdash.

The two Shabbat p'sukim followed by the five that deal with Rosh Chodesh combined for the Maftir of Shabbat Rosh Chodesh. Or, in this week's case, for Sh'vii.

Note that when any holiday is on Shabbat, the maftir is only about the

Musaf of the holiday, and Shabbat's Musaf is not mentioned. The plain reason is that the two p'sukim about Shabbat Musaf are not continuous with any other Musafim besides that of Rosh Chodesh. And the skipping that would be necessary on any of those other days is not sanctioned.

But perhaps, we can see something additional in the Shabbat - Rosh Chodesh situation, namely that Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is not just Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh that coincide, but it is a fusion of the two days, each of which represents a different facet of K'dushat Z'man - Sanctity of Time.

Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh cover everything. Shabbat is the culmination of the week. It belongs to the week. Its Musaf is an extension of the daily korbanot - two lambs. Rosh Chodesh is the starting point for all the holidays. All holiday exists because the first day of the month of each holiday was sanctified as Rosh Chodesh. No Rosh Chodesh - no holiday in that month.

Rosh Chodesh is linked to the holidays by its Musaf, as Shabbat is linked to the days of the week. Two bulls, one ram, seven lambs plus one sin-offering goat - identical to some of the holidays and similar enough to the rest.

*The pasuk that we read twice at the end of the Shabbat-R"Ch haftara (which is pre-empted this week) joins Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh in a way that we do not find for any of the*

*holidays: "And it shall come to pass, that every new moon, and every Shabbat, shall all flesh come to worship before me, says HaShem."*

## **Maftir - 3rd Torah** **20 p'sukim; Sh'mot 12:1-20**

**This Maftir adds to the Sedra Stats:**

**1 parsha (S), 20 p'sukim, 313 words, 1208 letters, 9 mitzvot - you do the totals for this week (if you want)**

This is the fourth of the Four Parshiyot. Parshat HaChodesh is the Shabbat of or the Shabbat right before Rosh Chodesh Nissan. We read of the mitzva to establish the Jewish Calendar (the first two p'sukim), followed by the commands concerning Pesach, including Korban Pesach, Matza, Chametz, and more (the rest of the 20-pasuk maftir). The main theme of the Maftir is Korban Pesach. KP is different from all other korbanot. All korbanot were brought in the Beit HaMikdash between the two daily T'midim, except for KP which was brought after the afternoon Tamid. KP can be brought and eaten in a state of ritual impurity (in certain circumstances). This can be seen as a "compromise" by G-d to facilitate our performance of this mitzva. (An individual is postponed until Pesach Sheni because of TUM'A, but the community brings and eats KP while TAMEI, rather than wait the month.)

The Maftir contains several mitzvot --

the making of the Jewish Calendar [4], to slaughter the KP [5], to eat it [6], not to eat it rare or cooked [7], not to leave over any of KP to the morning [8], to destroy Chametz from one's possession [9], to eat matza on Seder night [10], not to possess Chametz on Pesach [11], not to eat any foods that contain Chametz [12]. We also find the source of SHMURA MATZA and the source of the permitted M'LACHOT on Yom Tov. Other mitzvot related to KP and chametz are found elsewhere in Parshat Bo and elsewhere in the Torah. This maftir is a perfect preview of what's coming soon.

## **Haftara 28 p'sukim** **Yechezkeil 45:16-46:18**

*S'faradim start 2 p'sukim later and end  
3 p'sukim earlier than Ashkenazim*

The Haftara contains the prophecy of the building of the Beit HaMikdash and the restoration of Korban Pesach - hence the connection to the Maftir. Both the Torah and Haftara announce the holiday of Pesach, in very similar words, and both speak of putting blood on the doorpost. Not only do both readings talk about Pesach, but both focus on Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

# Bringing the Prophets to Life

**Weekly insights into the Haftara by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler**

*Author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)*

## **Tazri'a-R"Ch-HaChodesh**

**HACHODESH HAZEH LACHEM ROSH CHODASHIM...**

This week's special Maftir reading taken from the 12th perek in Sh'mot, opens with Hashem's declaration that "THIS month", i.e. the month of Nisan, will be the first of the months. It is, therefore, quite understandable that this statement is read on the Shabbat of - or before - Rosh Chodesh Nisan. This day is considered so important that the Gemara (Shabbat 87b) tells us that it was honored with ten crowns - enumerating ten historical events that occurred on this one day. Additionally, the very observance of Rosh Chodesh was considered quite important in ancient Israel as seen not only by the story of David and Sha'ul (Sh'muel Alef 20) but by the fact that it was one of the three observances that the Syrian-Greeks attempted to nullify.

Given these facts, we well understand why our Tana'im chose these p'rakim (Sefer Yechezkel 45 & 46) to be read as the haftara on this

Shabbat. The reading details the rituals that would be followed in the future Beit HaMikdash - especially as they pertain to the functioning of the kohanim - but primarily, Yechezkel describes the service to be followed on Rosh Chodesh, and, specifically, on the first of Nisan. These laws are not found in the Torah but would be observed in the future - a clear reminder to the future generations of the importance of the day.

But we would be remiss were we to ignore the fact that this week's special Maftir also commands our reliance on the lunar calendar and, for that reason, Yechezkel includes in our haftara the rituals that were to be observed on every Rosh Chodesh.

The yeshivot in which I taught insisted that the students wore white shirts on Rosh Chodesh - not because it was a halacha but because it was a reminder. Today, Rosh Chodesh often passes with hardly any notice or impact on our lives - beyond the additional tefillot that we recite. And, although we declare the approach of Rosh Chodesh on the previous Shabbat, we find no ritual, no special meal and nothing significant to mark the day as being a "mini" Yom Tov.

And this is unfortunate.

Chazal saw Rosh Chodesh and the lunar calendar as a symbol of Israel

herself. The reappearance and growth of a new Moon after its decline and disappearance was considered the story of Am Yisrael whose strength and vibrancy might decline but whose renewal and growth is inevitable. How beautiful is the idea expressed by Rav Yigal Ariel that the first mention of a Rosh Chodesh holiday family sacrifice is found regarding David (Sh'muel Alef 20:29) who, as one who brought the glorious days Israelite kingship and rehabilitated the nation's strength, clearly reflected the Rosh Chodesh renewal of the Moon (note the addition of DAVID MELECH YISRAEL in the Kiddush L'vana tefilla).

Rosh Chodesh is not a day that should be ignored. It is a day that should be remembered, understood and appreciated. It must be seen as a time of potential renewal - for ourselves and for our people. And Rosh Chodesh Nisan must be recognized as that special day that was crowned with yet another crown - the mitzva of following the Moon!

HACHODESH HAZEH LACHEM ROSH CHODASHIM... ✨



**ParshaPix**  
explanations



*The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests*

## **SH'MINI and PARA**

nine representations of the name of the sedra. Take them as unexplained (except that you know the explanations already - SH'MINI. Your challenge is to say why for each one). Some are easy; some not so. The 8th one down is the most challenging - so consider yourself challenged <> and one late entry for you to figure out

**Henry the Eighth**

**an eighth note**

**eighth night of Chanuka**

**slice of pizza is an 8th of a pie**

**CHET - 8th Hebrew letter**

**H - 8th English letter**

**theta - 8th Greek letter**

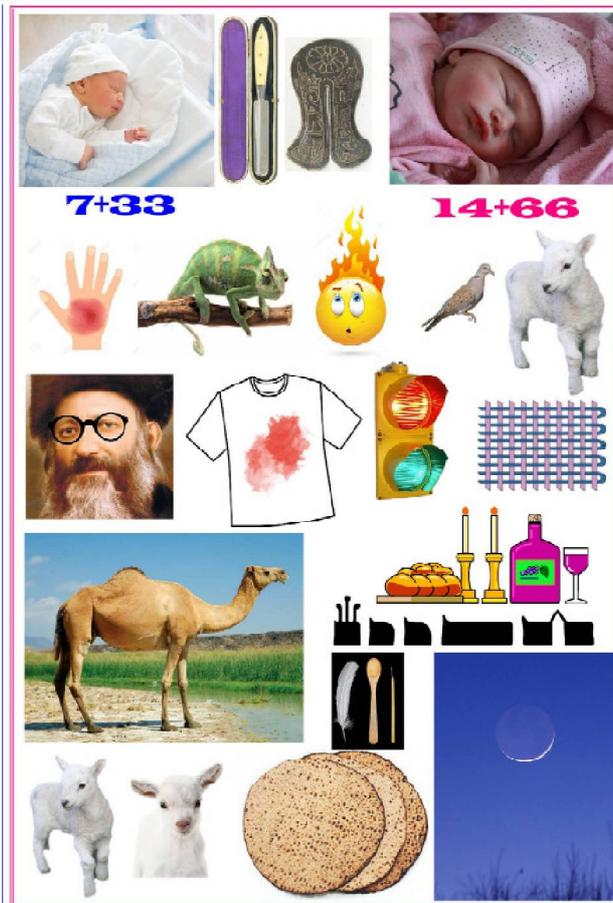
**cruel & unusual punishment**

**banned by the 8th ammendment**

**circumcision guard - 8th day**

**arrows going both ways - the property of Para Aduma purifying the impure and rendering the tahor person, tamei**

# TAZRI'A & HACHODESH



Across the top and a bit down on the right we have a summary of perek 12 (shortest perek in the Torah - 8 p'sukim) - there's a baby boy, who makes his mother t'mei'a for 7 days, and on the 8th day, he shall be circumcised. Followed by 33 y'mei tahara. If the newborn is a girl, the mother is t'mei'a for 14 days, which are followed by 66 y'mei tahara. After which, the mother brings the korbanot of a yoledet - a lamb in its first year and a turtle dove (or b'nei yona)

Then we have afflictions of the body <> nega'im change colors like the chameleon <> burns on the bald scalp <> Rav Kook with glasses for V'RAA HAKOHEN, a kohein shall inspect the possible signs of TZORAAT <> affliction of garments (wool, linen, leather) <> the sh'ti and orev of a weave, warp and weft <> red

and green are common colors of nega'im <> the big camel, gamal, is for the big GIMMEL in the word V'HIT-GALACH <> Shabbat symbols plus - you figure it out <> KAZEH R'EI V'KADEISH <> korban Pesach candidates <> matzot as commanded in the reading for HACHODESH <> b'dikat chameitz, which starts the process of BI'UR CHAMETZ (commanded in Parshot HaChodesh

לע"נ  
 הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה  
 ז"ל  
 Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ז"ל

*The plan for the new cycle of Torah readings is to continue to share a weekly piece from Rabbi Sacks's past Covenant & Conversation essays.*

## The Circumcision of Desire

### Tazri'a

It is hard to trace with any precision the moment when a new idea makes its first appearance on the human scene, especially one as amorphous as that of love. But love has a history. There is the contrast we find in Greek, and then Christian, thought between eros and agape: sexual desire and a highly abstract love for humanity in general.

There is the concept of chivalry that makes its appearance in the age of the Crusades, the code of conduct that prized gallantry and feats of bravery to "win the heart of a lady". There is the romantic love presented in the novels of Jane Austen, hedged with the proviso

that the young or not-so-young man destined for the heroine must have the right income and country estate, so as to exemplify the "truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." And there is the moment in Fiddler on the Roof where, exposed by their children to the new ideas in pre-revolutionary Russia, Tevye turns to his wife Golde, and the following conversation ensues:

Tevye: Do you love me?

Golde: I'm your wife!

Tevye: I know! But do you love me?

Golde: Do I love him? For twenty-five years I've lived with him, fought with him, starved with him. Twenty-five years, my bed is his...

Tevye: Shh!

Golde: If that's not love, what is?

Tevye: Then you love me!

Golde: I suppose I do!

Tevya: And I suppose I love you too.

The inner history of humanity is in part the history of the idea of love. And at some stage a new idea makes its appearance in biblical Israel. We can trace it best in a highly suggestive passage in the book of one of the great Prophets of the Bible, Hoshei'a.

Hoshei'a lived in the eighth century BCE. The kingdom had been divided

since the death of Shlomo. The northern kingdom in particular, where Hoshei'a lived, had lapsed after a period of peace and prosperity into lawlessness, idolatry, and chaos. Between 747 and 732 BCE there were no less than five Kings, the result of a series of intrigues and bloody struggles for power. The people, too, had become lax:

"There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery; they break all bounds and murder follows murder" (Hoshei'a. 4:1-2)

Like other Prophets, Hoshei'a knew that Israel's destiny depended on its sense of mission. Faithful to God, it was able to do extraordinary things: survive in the face of empires, and generate a society unique in the ancient world, of the equal dignity of all as fellow citizens under the sovereignty of the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Faithless, however, it was just one more minor power in the ancient Near East, whose chances of survival against larger political predators were minimal.

What makes the book of Hoshei'a remarkable is the episode with which it begins. God tells the Prophet to marry a prostitute, and see what it feels like to have a love betrayed. Only then will Hoshei'a have a glimpse into God's sense of betrayal by the people of Israel. Having liberated them from slavery and brought them into their land, God saw them forget the past, forsake the

covenant, and worship strange gods. Yet He cannot abandon them, despite the fact that they have abandoned Him. It is a powerful passage, conveying the astonishing assertion that more than the Jewish people love God, God loves the Jewish people. The history of Israel is a love story between the faithful God and his often faithless people. Though God is sometimes angry, He cannot but forgive. He will take them on a kind of second honeymoon, and they will renew their marriage vows:

"Therefore I am now going to allure her;  
I will lead her into the desert  
and speak tenderly to her . . .  
I will betroth you to Me forever;  
I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,  
in love and compassion.  
I will betroth you in faithfulness,  
and you will know the Lord."

(Hoshei'a 2:16-22)

It is this last sentence - with its explicit comparison between the covenant and a marriage - that Jewish men say when they put on the hand-tefillin, winding its strap around the finger like a wedding-ring.

One verse in the midst of this prophecy deserves the closest scrutiny. It contains two complex metaphors that must be unraveled strand by strand:

"On that day", declares the Lord,  
"you will call Me 'my Husband' [ISHI];  
you will no longer call Me 'my Master'  
[BAALI]. (2:18)

This is a double pun. Baal, in biblical Hebrew, meant 'a husband', but in a highly specific sense - namely, 'master, owner, possessor, controller'. It signalled physical, legal, and economic dominance. It was also the name of the Canaanite god - whose prophets Elijah challenged in the famous confrontation at Mount Carmel. Baal (often portrayed as a bull) was the god of the storm, who defeated Mot, the god of sterility and death. Baal was the rain that impregnated the earth and made it fertile. The religion of Baal is the worship of god as power.

Hoshei'a contrasts this kind of relationship with the other Hebrew word for husband, ISH. Here he is recalling the words of the first man to the first woman:

"This is now bone of my bones  
And flesh of my flesh;  
She shall be called "woman" [ISHA],  
Because she was taken from man [ISH]."  
(B'reishit 2:23)

Here the male-female relationship is predicated on something quite other than power and dominance, ownership and control. Man and woman confront

one another in sameness and difference. Each is an image of the other, yet each is separate and distinct. The only relationship able to bind them together without the use of force is marriage-as-covenant - a bond of mutual loyalty and love in which each makes a pledge to the other to serve one another.

Not only is this a radical way of reconceptualizing the relationship between man and woman. It is also, implies Hoshei'a, the way we should think of the relationship between human beings and God. God reaches out to humanity not as power - the storm, the thunder, the rain - but as love, and not an abstract, philosophical love but a deep and abiding passion that survives all the disappointments and betrayals. Israel may not always behave lovingly toward God, says Hoshei'a, but God loves Israel and will never cease to do so.

How we relate to God affects how we relate to other people. That is Hoshei'a's message - and vice versa: how we relate to other people affects the way we think of God. Israel's political chaos in the eighth century BCE was intimately connected to its religious waywardness. A society built on corruption and exploitation is one where might prevails over right. That is not Judaism but idolatry, Baal-worship.

Now we understand why the sign of the covenant is circumcision, the commandment given in this week's parsha of Tazri'a. For faith to be more than the

worship of power, it must affect the most intimate relationship between men and women. In a society founded on covenant, male-female relationships are built on something other and gentler than male dominance, masculine power, sexual desire and the drive to own, control and possess. BAAL must become ISH. The alpha male must become the caring husband. Sex must be sanctified and tempered by mutual respect. The sexual drive must be circumcised and circumscribed so that it no longer seeks to possess and is instead content to love.

There is thus more than an accidental connection between monotheism and monogamy. Although biblical law does not command monogamy, it nonetheless depicts it as the normative state from the start of the human story: Adam and Eve, one man, one woman. Whenever in B'reishit a patriarch marries more than one woman there is tension and anguish. The commitment to one God is mirrored in the commitment to one person.

The Hebrew word EMUNAH, often translated as "faith", in fact means faithfulness, fidelity, precisely the commitment one undertakes in making a marriage. Conversely, for the prophets there is a connection between idolatry and adultery. That is how God describes Israel to Hoshei'a. God married the Israelites but they, in serving idols, acted the part of a promiscuous woman (Hoshei'a 1-2).

The love of husband and wife - a love at once personal and moral, passionate and responsible - is as close as we come to understanding God's love for us and our ideal love for Him. When Hoshei'a says, "You will know the Lord", he does not mean knowledge in an abstract sense. He means the knowledge of intimacy and relationship, the touch of two selves across the metaphysical abyss that separates one consciousness from another. That is the theme of The Song of Songs, that deeply human yet deeply mystical expression of eros, the love between humanity and God. It is also the meaning of one of the definitive sentences in Judaism:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (D'varim 6:5).

Judaism from the beginning made a connection between sexuality and violence on the one hand, marital faithfulness and social order on the other. Not by chance is marriage called KIDDUSHIN, "sanctification". Like covenant itself, marriage is a pledge of loyalty between two parties, each recognizing the other's integrity, honouring their differences even as they come together to bring new life into being. Marriage is to society what covenant is to religious faith: a decision to make love - not power, wealth or force majeure - the generative principle of life.

Just as spirituality is the most intimate relationship between us and God, so sex is the most intimate relationship between us and another person. Circumcision is the eternal sign of Jewish faith because it unites the life of the soul with the passions of the body, reminding us that both must be governed by humility, self-restraint, and love.

Brit Mila helps transform the male from BAAL to ISH, from dominant partner to loving husband, just as God tells Hoshei'a that this is what He seeks in His relationship with the people of the covenant. Circumcision turns biology into spirituality. The instinctive male urge to reproduce becomes instead a covenantal act of partnership and mutual affirmation. It was thus as decisive a turn in human civilisation as Abrahamic monotheism itself. Both are about abandoning power as the basis of relationship, and instead aligning ourselves with what Dante called "the love that moves the sun and other stars." Circumcision is the physical expression of the faith that lives in love.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- (1) Does this week's Covenant & Conversation alter the way you think of love and marriage?
- (2) Does this week's Covenant & Conversation alter the way you think of God's relationship with His people?

- (3) "More than the Jewish people love God, God loves the Jewish people." What evidence can you find in Jewish history to support this statement?

יהי זכרו ברוך

**PTDT**

PhiloTorah D'var Torah

## Which is better? Plan A or Plan B

### Shabbat Parshat HaChodesh

G-d created Time. Time is precious. Time is holy, as are all of G-d's creations.

At the end of G-d's creation of the world, he chose a 'piece of time' and sanctified it further. That piece of time is Shabbat. The KEDUSHAT Z'MAN of SHABBAT was G-d's doing, alone. He made Shabbat holy and commands us to keep the Shabbat, to remember the Shabbat, and to add our sanctity to it, so to speak, with Kiddush as Shabbat enters, with Havdala, as it ends (each in prayer and with wine).

And then, with the first mitzva that was commanded to the People of

Israel - when we were still in Egypt, poised to be taken out by Him - we were charged to sanctify time and become partners with G-d in the process.

Plan A operates when we have a Sanhedrin. A vital component of Plan A for sanctifying time and creating our Calendar, is active participation on our part. That is, seeing and testifying to the seeing of the first visibility of the lunar crescent - the L'VANA B'CHIDUSHAH.

The committee of Sanhedrin members in charge of Kiddush HaChodesh were required to know well the cycles of the heavenly bodies so that they could determine when and where in the sky the Moon would be visible for the first time after it 'disappeared' from sight for a night or two at the month's end.

Plan A has a few 'problems'. Eye-witness testimony requires a clear sky and good conditions. It requires the potential witnesses to travel to Jerusalem - even from far away. Other mistakes can be made.

Plan B, on the other hand, the system in use today, when we don't have a sitting Sanhedrin, is flawless. No human error. Cloudy skies and rain are not a problem. The mathematical calculations for each year and all of its months and holidays works well.

And we can know what the calendar looks like for the whole year in advance (not so for Plan A). Even many years ahead.

HOWEVER, HKB"H wants our active participation in the process of setting up our calendar. For Plan B, we are observers. Plan A we are active partners with HaShem in this most special of tasks - Sanctifying Time.

*Walk through the Parsha*

with **Rabbi David Walk**



## SKIN CARE

Tazri'a

The connection between dermatology and emotional well-being is well documented. These Torah readings which discuss the various forms of TZARA'AT always cause me to start scratching my hands and arms. During the second Intifada, I developed an eruption of psoriasis. My dermatologist wanted to know if I had any stress in my life. I wanted to ask him what country he lived in. So, it should come as no surprise that when the Torah described a physical reaction to certain negative behaviors, it was the skin, specifically, which was affected.

Having stated this reality, I must

admit that we have to be very careful when comparing dermatology to the TZARA'AT issues in the Torah. Rav Ovadya S'forno states clearly: None of these phenomena correspond to the skin diseases we read about in medical text books. I agree. So, don't check TZARA'AT on WebMD. But it is fascinating and informative that mental or spiritual health and skin care can be seen as related issues, and the Torah uses that connection.

Bearing all of this in mind, we must remember that these Torah ailments only occurred in Eretz Yisrael, and in times gone by. Our Sages have recognized this non-medical reality, and have spent a lot of intellectual effort to understand these phenomena. We will stick to this week's Parsha and the TZARA'AT which affected human skin.

Even though the Talmud says that there are seven causes for this ailment (Erchin 16a), and the Midrash claims ten causes (Vayikra Rabba 17:4), many authorities seem to believe that there are three causes for this TZARA'AT. This is probably based on the fact that the verse records three manifestations of the ailment: S'EIT, a swelling; SAPA-CHAT, a scab; and BAHERET, a discoloration, usually bright or white.

The most famous approach is that

the sufferer had spoken LASHON HARA (gossip). There is basically a consensus (always a rarity among rabbis) on this explanation because it has the only direct evidence in the Torah. In chapter twelve of Bamidbar, Miriam and Aharon talk about Moshe and his wife. Then we read: When the cloud withdrew from the Tent of Meeting, there was Miriam stricken with snow white leprous scales (Bamidbar 12:10).

The Kli Yakar adds two other sins to the causes of this ailment. His second cause is haughtiness towards others (GASUT RU'ACH). He believes that this is hinted at by the use of cedar and hyssop in the treatment or purification process. Cedar represents arrogance; hyssop symbolizes humility. The third cause, according to this great Rav is TZARAT AYIN, literally 'narrow eyes' but it connotes both a love of money and a stinginess towards others. The poor treatment of others, especially is hinted at by the possibility of this afflicting homes, and the love of money as a cause for the ailment is based on the story of Gechazi, the servant of Elisha (Melachim Bet 5:19-27).

However, this year in seeking the other two causes for TZA'RA'AT, I offer a modern approach for your consideration. Rav Meidan of

Yeshivat Har Etziyon presents convincing arguments for two serious crimes against society as catalysts for this terrible ailment.

His first presentation is based on a clever inverse logic. The sufferer showed disdain for kohanim. This makes sense because the things which a METZORA sufferer must do are the opposite of behaviors demanded of kohanim. They must let their hair grow long, rend their garments, and dwell outside the camp. All behaviors alien to kohanim. Plus, the entire process of diagnosis and purification must be supervised by kohanim. To be cured one must show deference to kohanim; the punishment fits the crime.

The other cause is the most fascinating to me: betrayal of AM YISRAEL. Rav Meidan takes this position based on inferences derived from the Haftorot of the two Torah readings, Tazria and Metzora, where most of this material is found. The stories are themselves fascinating, but they often get skipped because of seasonal occasions. This year we read neither.

The first (Melachim Bet 4:42-5:19) is about General Naaman of Aram who has come to reinforce Aram's control over Israel. He contracts TZA'RA'AT, and is instructed in the cure by

Elisha. The story ends with the incident of Gechazi, which I mentioned above. The second (Melachim Bet 7:3-20) describes a miraculous salvation from an Aramean army. The central action revolves around four Jews stricken with TZARA'AT (perhaps Gechazi and three sons) who discover the disappearance of the enemy host, and benefit from the discovery by plundering the deserted encampment. They eventually inform the other Jews of the redemption.

Rav Meidan emphasizes the selfish attitude of the stricken individuals, which is clearly a major case of contempt for the needs of the greater Jewish population. But the end of the second Haftora is what really interests him. Finally, the lepers decide that they must inform the other Jews about the miracle, and share the wealth and food. The Jews refuse to believe the tidings brought by these pariahs. In the Talmud (Sanhedrin 98a), we're told that Mashiach is tending to the lepers while awaiting the time of redemption. Then Rav Meidan quotes from a poem by Rachel, the great poetess of Kibbutz Degania, about not accepting glad tidings from a leper, and a story by Agnon (Shabbat Necessities) about a poor man who does not want to use money from a dung heap to

pay for Shabbat food.

Rav Meidan concludes: We sometimes have questions and doubts about people in positions of authority, including past and present leaders of Am Yisrael. Sometimes we suspect that there is a conflict of interests, or we object to actions that go against the laws of the Torah... But when the "metzora" in question is someone who cares about Am Yisrael, we must accept his tidings of redemption.

Someone may become a leper or outcast because of disrespect for AM YISRAEL or TORAT YISRAEL, but when they've come to see the greatness of the Jewish people hear them out, please. 🙏

## **Walk thru Davening** *with Rabbi David Walk*

### **FUTURE TENSE**

#### **Sh'moneh Esrei 11**

In these articles discussing the Shomneh Esrei prayer, we've noticed the fact that this name, which means 18, is an anachronism. Around the year 100<sub>CE</sub>, our Sages added a nineteenth blessing of request. However, the number of these requests is even more complicated, because the Yerushalmi (Jerusalem

Talmud) says that the two blessings which I will describe today were once together in the same blessing. At that point, apparently, there were 17 blessings, which is nice because that's the numeric value, GEMATRIA of TOV or good.

These two requests are for the rebuilding of Yerushalayim and the reestablishment of the Davidic Monarchy, you know Mashiach. Our Sages have separated them into two distinct requests, because the first is about God's presence on Earth, while the second is about our ultimate aspiration: a partnership with God in developing a just, moral and spiritual society on Earth.

Actually, the first request, a place for God on Earth, is a more remarkable plea than the second, an inspired ruler. We've always believed that God can imbue certain humans with revelation, but asking God to dwell in our midst seems to be asking a lot. Our blessing is aware of the audacity of the petition and, therefore, informs us that we have the right to ask for this only because God has previously informed us of this possibility. The blessing says KA'ASHER DIBARTA, 'As You have promised'.

In the Midbar, God told the Jews, 'Build for Me a sanctuary and I will

dwell in your midst' (Sh'mot 25:8). This dwelling within Yerushalayim (V'TISHKON B'TOCHA) is, perhaps, our greatest desire. This Divine Presence, the SH'CHINA is the goal of every prayer. Ultimately, this request only makes sense, because God has previously guaranteed it. It's unlike any other request in our Shmoneh Esrei which we could generate on our own.

This reality, we believe, can only be achieved in Yerushalayim, because that term, like every Hebrew word which ends in AYIM, denotes a duality. Like YADAYIM, means two hands; Yerushalayim means two Jerusalem's, one here and one in heaven. Many authorities claim that's why our B'RACHA begins with a VAV for connection between the paired entities.

We beg that this rebuilt BEIT HaMIKDASH reveal itself B'KAROV, soon, because it's important to God as well as to us. The Talmud informs us that God has said, 'I will not enter the Yerushalayim of Heaven, until I have entered the Yerushalayim of down here (Ta'anit 5a). And we assume that this rebuilding will be eternal because God will make it happen. The body of this blessing closes by referring to the next blessing: And the throne of David

should speedily be established within it.

Blessing number fifteen is about the reestablishment of the King descended from David in the Holy City. The Messianic wish appropriately is numbered 15, because that number has holy connotations. It's the GIMATRIYA of the shortest name of God (YUD HEI), and represents the 15 steps leading from the outer court of the Beit HaMikdash to the inner area, upon which the Leviyim sang the 15 Shir HaMa'alot.

We refer to this new scion of the House of David as TZEMACH. There are two reasons for this, both based on verses. In Zecharia, it says, 'Behold a man named TZEMACH will flourish (branch?) from this place (6:12). So, perhaps, his name will actually be Tzemach, even though there are sources which suggest Menachem. But it does describe the phenomenon of the development of the Messianic Era, as described in Yirmiyahu, 'In those days and at that time, I will raise up a true branch (TZEMACH) of David's line, and he shall do what is right and just in the land (33:15).'

There is another description of the new King. He is also called KEREN, a magnificent horn or antler. This seems to reference that the

individual will be the pride or glory of the nation. Historically, many crowns or helmets had horns attached to them to be more impressive.

At this point, there is a line which does not appear in the Siddur of either Rambam or R' Sadya Gaon: For we await Your Salvation every (perhaps: all) day. This is a paraphrase of a line in the blessing given to Dan by Ya'akov Avinu (B'reishit 49:18). This powerful three-word verse is recited as an acrostic by many Jews every day at the end of TEFILA (ArtScroll p. 180).

But more importantly, it expresses the constant expectation of the future, great Salvation, which has sustained our nation all these millennia. In fact, the Talmud teaches that when a Jewish soul ascends to heaven, God asks six questions. One of which is, 'Did you consistently anticipate My Salvation?' (Shabbat 31a).

Earlier in this essay, I tried to distinguish between asking for the rebuilt Yerushalayim and requesting Mashiach, but there's another distinction which must be made as well. In blessing number seven, we asked for GEULA. Here in blessing fifteen, we are asking for Mashiach and Y'SHUA. What's the difference between GEULA (usually translated

as 'redemption') and Y'SHUA (often rendered 'salvation')?

Even though these two terms are often used interchangeably, they shouldn't be. GEULA implies being freed or released from incarceration or from being oppressed. Leaving Egypt was definitely an example of GEULA. Y'SHUA, Salvation, on the other hand, means spiritual liberation from the mundane and profane. GEULA describes a physical state; Y'SHUA characterizes a metaphysical circumstance. They require different requests, because they describe very different situations and needs.

In blessings fourteen and fifteen, we are expressing the deepest historic yearnings of the Jewish people. Our longing for Yerushalayim and Mashiach have allowed our people to keep the faith through exile, destruction, Inquisition, pogrom and Holocaust, and continues to sustain us. ❤️

## Rav Kook Torah

by Rabbi

Chanan Morrison • [www.ravkooktorah.com](http://www.ravkooktorah.com)



## Man vs Mosquito

Why does the Torah discuss the laws of taharah (ritual purity) for humans only after teaching the analogous laws concerning animals, differenti-

ating between those animals which may be eaten and those which are unclean? Should not humanity, the crown of creation, come first?

Third-century scholar Rabbi Simlai explained:

“Just as mankind was created after all the animals... so too, the laws pertaining to mankind were given after the laws regarding animals” (Vayikra Rabba 14:1).

In short, the order here in Vayikra parallels the account of Creation in B'reishit.

But is there a deeper significance to this order? The Midrash elaborates the lesson to be learned from this:

“If one is deserving, he is told: ‘You came before all of creation.’ But if not, he is reminded: ‘[Even] the mosquito preceded you.’”

What sort of a contest is this, between man and mosquito?

## Quantity vs Quality

We find in Psalms two nearly identical verses, but with small – and significant – differences:

“How many are Your works, God! The earth is full of Your creations.” (104:24)

“How great are Your works, God!

Your thoughts are very profound.”  
(92:6)

What is the difference between these two similar verses? The first verse expresses our wonder at the variety and diversity of God’s works. “How many are Your works!” The second verse expresses our amazement at their greatness and profundity. “How great are your works!” The first verse refers to quantity; the second, quality.

In other words, we may look at the world in two ways. We can be amazed by its detailed, multifaceted nature – its abundance of species and life forms, the remarkable diversity in the world of nature. This viewpoint focuses on the diverse physical aspect of the universe. “The earth is full of Your creations.”

Or we may reflect on the universe’s inner side. We may perceive its wonderful sophistication and delicate balance, a reflection of the profundity of its design and purpose. This view perceives the underlying spiritual nature of the universe, focusing on the preliminary design – God’s ‘thoughts’ – which preceded the physical creation. “Your thoughts are very profound.”

## **Back and Front**

The Midrash which contrasts man and mosquito opens with the verse,

“You formed me back and front”  
(T'hilim 139:5). What does it mean that humanity was formed with two aspects, “back and front”?

‘Back’ refers to the culmination of the world’s physical manifestation. This is the process of creation by contraction (tzimtzum), step by step, until a detailed physical universe, filled with multitudes of diverse creatures, was formed. From this viewpoint, the ubiquitous mosquito is the superior species. If we are not deserving – if we lack our qualitative, spiritual advantage – then we are reminded: “The mosquito preceded you.” In a contest of numerical strength and survival skills, the mosquito wins hands down. From the viewpoint of “How many are Your works,” even the lowly mosquito comes before us.

‘Front,’ on the other hand, refers to the conceptual design that preceded the actual physical creation. If we are deserving – if we put our efforts into developing our spiritual side – then we belong to the realm of God’s thoughts that transcend the physical world. On the qualitative basis of “How great are Your works”, we may take our place before the rest of creation.

*Sapphire from the Land of Israel.*

*Adapted from Shemuot HaRe'iyah, Tazria (1929)*

Weekly Column by

**Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher**



## Time - Life's Most Precious Gift

HaChodesh '19

“This month shall be for you the beginning of all the months” (Sh'mot 12:2). This verse contains the very first Mitzva that Klal Yisrael received as we were about to become a free and independent nation, right before the Exodus from Egypt.

S'forno explains that this Mitzva of Rosh Chodesh was presented first because its essence - that we Jews are masters over our time - is the central concept and definition of being a free individual. Because as slaves in Egypt, we had no time to call our own, as we were totally dependent on the will of our Egyptian task masters.

Thus, as Israel was about to leave Egyptian bondage forever, we were presented with the Mitzva whose essence is the concept of the gift of freedom of time.

It is Beit Din's task to declare when Rosh Chodesh will take place, by one of two methods. Number one, through R'YIA - the actual sighting of the New Moon by two valid witnesses, or - number two, by CHESHBON - calculation, where Beit Din determines through a mathematical formula when it was probable to see the New Moon.

What is the lesson for us today when we have no Beit Din to determine when the New Moon is? Rav Pam zt"l explains that there are two distinct ways in which a person can utilize his time in this world. Number 1, through R'YIA or number 2, with a CHESHBON. For many people, time is spent through R'YIA, how they see fit to waste time. These foolish people do with time whatever they want, failing to realize that the passing of time on Facebook and Smart Phones is a tragic loss never to be re-gained.

However, the intelligent, thoughtful person uses time with a CHESHBON. He is careful to calculate and fulfill his days and hours with Torah and Mitzvot.

We must strive to the best of our ability to use life's most precious gift wisely, by not killing time or wasting time.

Thus, the Hebrew word for time is Z'MAN, which means preparation. G-d gives us time in this world to prepare ourselves for OLAM HABA - Eternal Life in the World To Come. **ESP**

## CHIZUK *and* IDUD

*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra  
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael  
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

by **Rabbi Yerachmiel Roness**  
*Ramat Shiloh, Beit Shemesh*

**Tazri'a (2016)**

At the beginning of this week's

parsha we read: "On the 8th day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised." The Rabbis, sensitive as they were to any repetitions in the Biblical text, immediately sought a reason for this additional account: Have we not already learned of the Brit Mila in Parshat Lech L'cha concerning Avraham? The Talmud (Shabbat 132a) teaches us that the verse is intended to teach us that when the eighth day falls on Shabbat the Brit is Docheh Shabbat, suspending the laws of this holy day.

Seeing as this Halacha is one of the most well known facts of Jewish life, the average reader may have never noticed to what extent the authority of the Oral Torah shapes our religious lives in this regard. This fact was made apparent to me many years ago when as the Rabbi of the Absorption centers, I assisted the recently arrived Ethiopian Olim. The first time the need arose I began the preparations needed in order to arrange for a Shabbat Brit when the bewildered parents began protesting. They were oblivious of the teachings of Torah SheB'al Peh, and had never before heard of Britot being performed on Shabbat. "You shall observe the Shabbat for it is holy to you, whoever profanes it is certainly to die", they quoted from Parshat Ki Tisa (Sh'mot 31:14), believing that under no

circumstance is the Shabbat to be suspended.

Readers of this column may recall the competing approaches of the Chief Rabbis of the day, Rav Avraham Shapira zt"l and Rav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l, when presented with this type of dilemma surrounding the Ethiopian's irregular customs. The Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi was of the opinion that planning the Brit for Sunday instead of on the eighth day (Shabbat) was no less than a willful plan to circumvent the requirements of Torah Shebe'al Peh, and therefore as a matter of public policy I could not be party to this in any way. The S'fardi Chief Rabbi presented a markedly different, more tolerant, outlook. He felt that it would take some time for the Ethiopian Olim to become familiar with the accepted Halacha as practiced by all other communities, directing me to help them slowly along their path and not turn my back on them.

Incidentally, the Ethiopian custom also differed in terms of where the Brit was to take place. I remember being puzzled by the fact that so few chose to attend the Brit ceremony which we usually held in the local Beit Knesset. Rav Menachem Waldman's book, "The Jews of Ethiopia, the Beta Israel Community", helped me under-

stand this one. It seems that in Ethiopia, Britot had traditionally been performed in the "Beit Nida". This structure was usually situated on the outskirts of the village, and this is where the mother resided throughout the pregnancy. According to their traditions the spilling of blood during a Brit would have rendered the synagogue where it was held to become impure. Their custom was to conduct the naming and the traditional celebrations only on the 40th or 80th day, for on this day the mother would return back home purified.

During this same period a second major group of Olim arrived with their own problems and challenges. Whereas the Ethiopian's were fastidiously holding on to their own way of doing the Brit, the main challenge with the Olim from the Soviet union was that so many of them had never undergone circumcision on the eighth day. Nonetheless, many of these Olim wanted to perform this rite. I remember one such Russian Oleh telling me how he wanted to undergo a Brit Mila before getting married as he did not feel Jewish without one. On another day I had the unusual experience of accompanying a father and his two teenaged sons into the hospital operating room where these unsung

heroes of modern Jewish history underwent the Brit Mila one after another.

The Britot of adult Russian Olim upon arrival to the holy land was strangely reminiscent of the events that occurred during the days of Yehoshua as we entered into the Land the first time. In Sefer Yehoshua 5:9, after all the Jews had undergone a Brit Mila, G-d turns to Yehoshua stating that: "And Hashem said to Yehoshua - today I have GALOTI, rolled away, the disgrace of Egypt (Cherpat Mitzrayim) from upon you. Therefore the name of that place was called Gilgal to this day."

The Brit, the removal or rolling away of Cherpat Mitzrayim is a necessary condition for entering the Land.

It is high time we too accepted upon ourselves to roll away this disgrace. Ralbag (Rav Levi Ben Gershon) explains that disgrace of cherpat mitzrayim does not only refer to the physical act of circumcision (which has become commonplace practice in western medicine). The Brit signifies our willingness to discard foreign customs and norms. Olim who arrive here after "rolling away", or tearing themselves away from the surrounding culture should be commended for having left Galut behind in order to come and reenact the scene at Gilgal.



*Excerpted from Living the Halachic Process by Rabbi Daniel Mann - Eretz Hemdah, with their permission [www.erezhemdah.org]*

## How Thorough Should B'dikat Chametz Be?

**Question:** Growing up, we scrubbed and cleaned our house for a month before Pesach, but on the night of b'dikat chametz, we did a ceremonial b'dika, which was unlikely to uncover any chametz (except the ten “planted” pieces). However, based on my study of the relevant gemarot, I understand that the serious search for chametz should be done specifically on the night of the fourteenth of Nisan. What should we really be doing?

**Answer:** In terms of the classical sources, your observation is correct. The gemara does not discuss the serious cleaning we do in advance, and it does instruct that the b'dika is performed on the night of the fourteenth.

However, the phenomenon you describe existed already in the time of the Rishonim. The Terumat HaDeshen<sup>1</sup>

reports that many people would sweep the house a few days before Pesach, put a few pieces of bread in some rooms, and stop the b'dika when they found them. He rejects this practice based on the Mordechai,<sup>2</sup> who maintains that sweeping the house beforehand is not sufficient. The Shulchan Aruch<sup>3</sup> concurs, saying that cleaning the house thoroughly before the night of the b'dika, even with the intention of that serving as the b'dika, does not exempt one from b'dikat chametz on the night of the fourteenth. However, a few centuries later, the Sha'arei Teshuva<sup>4</sup> cites and justifies the practice you refer to. Does the practice conflict with the Terumat HaDeshen's ruling, or has the situation changed so that the Terumat HaDeshen would agree?

The main reason the Mordechai gives for requiring a b'dika even in a cleaned house is to avoid distinguishing between one b'dika and another. In other words, Chazal instituted the time for doing a b'dika as the eve of the fourteenth, and one should not say that his particular situation is an exception to the rule because he previously obviated the need. The Terumat HaDeshen already points out that if this were the only issue, it would have been sufficient to nominally fulfill the mitzva of b'dika with a minimal b'dika on the fourteenth. However, both the

<sup>1</sup> I:13. The Terumat HaDeshen lived in 15<sup>th</sup> century Germany.

<sup>2</sup> Pesachim 535.

<sup>3</sup> Orach Chayim 433:11.

<sup>4</sup> Ad loc.

Mordechai and the Termat HaDeshen stress that sweeping the house does not do a complete job, as chametz may still remain in the holes and cracks, and it is therefore not a valid replacement for b'dikat chametz. The Sha'arei Teshuva addresses this concern, justifying the actions of those who do a cursory job on the fourteenth by arguing that they clean very carefully beforehand.

The Magen Avraham<sup>5</sup> raises another issue. Chazal required that the b'dika be done by candlelight at night or in an area with direct sunlight during the day. Few are careful to check all areas they clean in this manner. Furthermore, the Taz,<sup>6</sup> Bach,<sup>7</sup> and others say that even if one did a halachic level b'dika on the thirteenth at night, he must repeat it on the fourteenth, the time Chazal instituted. The Chok Ya'akov<sup>8</sup> and Pri Chadash<sup>9</sup> say that one can fulfill the obligation of b'dika on a night prior to the fourteenth, but the Ba'er Heitev<sup>10</sup> notes that this opinion is on the condition that one is careful that chametz be kept away from the checked areas after that point.

We can still justify the prevalent practice even according to those who

say that the b'dika must be done on the fourteenth. Only those areas into which chametz is sometimes brought need to be searched.<sup>11</sup> One can claim that areas that were cleaned and into which people were subsequently careful not to bring chametz are thereafter categorized as places that do not contain chametz. Thus, a superficial perusal of the house, during which one concentrates on confirming the assumption that indeed no chametz got into various rooms, may be considered as checking the relevant parts of the entire house.<sup>12</sup>

According to some poskim, the situation in which there is not really anything to check for on the night of b'dikat chametz mandates the minhag to put out some pieces of bread in order to justify making a b'racha on the search.<sup>13</sup> Others accept the assumption that one is checking to ensure that chametz did not somehow enter the cleaned rooms, and they justify the b'racha on other grounds.<sup>14</sup>

It would be wrong to imply that all poskim fully accept the practice you mention. The Mishna Berura<sup>15</sup> seems to neither embrace it nor reject it. Rav

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<sup>5</sup>. 433:20.

<sup>6</sup>. 433:1.

<sup>7</sup>. 433.

<sup>8</sup>. Ad loc. 23.

<sup>9</sup>. Ad loc. 11.

<sup>10</sup>. Ad loc. 1.

<sup>11</sup>. *Pesachim* 2a.

<sup>12</sup>. This is apparently the understanding of the *Sha'arei Teshuva* 433. See also *Piskei Teshuvot* 433:8.

<sup>13</sup>. See Rama, *Orach Chayim* 432:5; *Sha'ar HaTziyun* ad loc. 12.

<sup>14</sup>. *Aruch HaShulchan*, *Orach Chayim* 432:5.

<sup>15</sup>. 433:1.

Ovadia Yosef<sup>16</sup> says that it is proper to do a serious b'dika on the fourteenth. However, our orientation is to instruct people to follow a prevalent minhag when it is justifiable, as this one is. (In contemporary times, many people have large homes containing so many possessions that it is barely feasible to do a proper b'dika in one night, in any case.) If one wants to be more stringent, that is his prerogative.



## The Miracle of the Mother

The name of the sidra tells us that we will be reading about childbirth.

On one level the sidra is giving us details of the laws of post-birth ritual purification. On another level it is emphasizing the great miracle of

procreation.

Having a baby is the way that the individual is endowed with immortality, the way the family is granted continuity, the way the human race is given a future.

Over the many years in which I was blessed to be a teacher of Judaism, I was often asked why God doesn't perform any miracles these days. I always had an answer to this question. I said that there are countless wonders that enrich our lives, and the two greatest are the continuation of life itself and the giving of new life.

An additional question that I was often asked is whether the Jewish woman is inferior to the man, and my answer was always the same - that woman is the greater gender because she is the one who ushers in the future of humanity.

## Too hard to be a Kohein

The Kohein had much more to do than merely conduct the rituals and services in the Mikdash. They had skills and responsibilities far beyond the walls of Mishkan and Beit HaMikdash.

Their task included, as this week's portion explains, assessing medical

<sup>16</sup> Yechaveh Da'at I: 5.

evidence: "The kohen shall examine the plague" (Vayikra 13:3). It was a real duty carried out by real people in the real circumstances of the time.

It also had metaphorical implications. If something was wrong in the state of society, the kohen had to be able to recognise the problem - and to take action to find a solution.

Why the kohen? Didn't he have enough to do in the sanctuary that he needed this extra burden?

Apparently not. A kohen, like any form of spiritual leader, had to be aware of his surroundings. If something was out of order it was not just an economic or political or some other adjectival issue. Everything was spiritual.

The quality of society was a partnership between man and his Creator. Between them stood the kohen.

He was not an ethereal being, Divinity incarnate. He was a human being like any other, but he had a God-given status that enabled him to convey earthly problems to God and transmit God's messages to the Earth.

Was the task too hard? Hard it certainly was, but God equipped the kohanim to handle it. **OZ**

## Meshech Chochma - Jacob Solomon

Tazri'a

*It is the plague of TZARAAT. The kohen shall examine him and pronounce him TAMEI (13:3).*

Most of the parasha is about the plague of tzaraat. R. Samson Raphael Hirsch writes that tzaraat is not leprosy as we understand it, but G-d's indicating His disapproval to an individual about the way he or she is carrying on. The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzva 168) explains:

"To fix in our souls that G-d is watching each and every human being... including the smallest details, and likewise it is with a sufferer of tzaraat during the days of his confinement. If he repents, then purifying signs will appear and he will be healed. If he does not repent, then the opposite will happen."

Extending this idea, tzaraat is not so much a punishment, as a warning from the Almighty. As Moshe said to the B'nei Yisrael before his death: Like a father who chastises his son, so... G-d chastises you (D'varim 8:5). Out of love, so that the child learns from his or her wrongdoings and mistakes. And we are all G-d's children.

Though tzaraat is not leprosy, the Meshech Chochma considers the possibility that, as leprosy, tzaraat is contagious. Once the symptoms appear, the community isolates him, declaring "Unclean! Unclean!" ... He shall dwell in isolation, outside the camp (13:47-48). The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 16:3) brings traditions of people refusing to walk through or eat food from the precinct of an alley shared by a metzora.

And on that basis, the Meshech Chochma asks: why is the duty of the kohen, of all people, to examine the person at close quarters for tzaraat and thus put himself at risk of becoming infected himself? He answers that it is their special status as inner-circle servants of G-d and public servants to the community that gives them His protection in carrying out their duties.

This idea may be supported by the Ramchal (Otzrot Ramchal: Ramchal Al HaTorah, 71) in exploring the words of Hillel who would exemplify Aharon as the person who "loved peace, pursued peace, loved people, and brought them close to the Torah" (Avot 1:12). As communicator, Aharon knew how to persuade without confrontation, or making them feel bad. He knew how to talk to people as human beings, not as units at a public

meeting. He knew how to bring the best out of them. And thus he and his successors would be able to speak to the sufferers in such a way that would inspire them to do the necessary teshuva for the tzaraat to finish, and, after the korbanot, they would rejoin the community. And it is that quality: loving peace, pursuing peace, loving people, and bringing them close to the Torah, that would merit the kohanim G-d's protection from being infected by the disease. [e](#)

## Menachem Persoff

### The "Conception" of a Concept

Our Parsha opens with laws pertaining to a woman who has given birth, first those concerning a baby boy and, then, a baby girl. Notably, an intriguing entry in the Talmud focuses on this gender differentiation when praying for a healthy child.

In the most general of terms, it expresses that if the woman's biology is more primed to conceive than that of the man, the woman is likely to have a baby boy. Conversely, if the man is "primed" first, the expectant mother will have a girl.

Of interest, the Netivot Shalom offers an intriguing explanation of the male-female differentiation of

the new offspring. For the rabbi, the woman symbolizes Yir'ah, the 'Fear of God,' as it says: "A God-fearing woman shall be praised" (Mishlei 31:30). Furthermore, our sages taught that Yir'at Hashem precedes Wisdom, as is written, "Reishit Chochma Yir'at Hashem" (9:10).

In contrast to the 'woman,' 'man' symbolizes the complementary attribute of Ahava, "Love of God".

For the Netivot Shalom, Yir'at Hashem and Ahavat Hashem go hand-in-hand in the service of the Almighty - but Yir'at Hashem must precede Ahavat Hashem because the attribute of "Fear of God" serves as a vessel to receive the love that stirs from the heart. For instance, Bnei Yisrael at Sinai experienced the fearful events that cleansed the human proclivity for material pleasure that further laid the way for the emergence of Ahavat Hashem, considered to be of a higher spiritual essence.

So, taking this analogy, we understand that when the 'seed' of the woman who stands for "Yir'at Hashem" precedes the man's contribution to the child's conception, a boy will be born, thus facilitating the manifestation of Ahavat Hashem in this world.

Lest anyone takes umbrage to this explanation, let us duly note that the Gemara posits that the prayer for a

healthy child is most potent when both parties to the baby's conception are equally primed to make that happen. For Yir'ah and Ahava are both necessary and complementary, just as the terms Shamor and Zachor apply jointly to Shabbat. They are like bird's wings that fly; without one, the bird cannot soar heavenward.

On that note, let us try and share the women's wings so that our Fear of Heaven flies so high that all our children will be born healthy to continue building Hashem's kingdom on this Earth. **MP**

## **The Daily Portion**

**- Sivan Rahav Meir**

### **A third grader's eulogy**

*Translation by Yehoshua Siskin*

Many eulogies have been written and heard regarding the five precious souls murdered in Bnei Brak. Here is a slightly different eulogy, a letter from an third grader in the Or David school, written to the family of his teacher, Rabbi Avishai Yechezkel:

"To the family of Rabbi Avishai,

"Shalom. I wanted to tell you that Rabbi Avishai Yechezkel was a very good rabbi who always played with us, taught us well, and was like a real

father to us. He would even hold lotteries and throw parties for us with rolls and sausages.

“He never missed a chance to teach us something. He would always teach us and spoil us, and I hope we will have another rabbi like Rabbi Avishai. He wanted to teach us the Pesach Haggadah, he wanted us to learn more psalms with him. He would learn with us and make us a Shabbat cake, bring candy, snacks, and always recite psalms with us and would not let a second go by without Torah in it. He would teach and we would learn all the time.

"Now my heart doesn't feel well. It is very difficult for me, but at least his stories will stay with us, and also the lessons he taught us as he wrote them down in his beautiful handwriting. And my heart doesn't feel well but I am sure he is now in the best place, the closest to HaShem and close to the tzadikim.

"And I want to make him happy in Heaven by doing what he always told us to do: 'Be careful about the honor of your friend.'

1. Study well.
2. Be nice to your friends.
3. Happily help your friends.
4. Speak with clean language.

"You were privileged to have a father like this."

To receive Sivan Rahav-Meir's daily WhatsApp: [tiny.cc/DailyPortion](https://tiny.cc/DailyPortion)

## **Dvar Torah** by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

*Graciously shared with PhiloTorah*

UVAYOM HASH'MINI YIMOL B'SAR ORLATO. - "And on the eighth day you shall remove his foreskin."

It seems unusual that the Mitzva of Mila is mentioned here. After all, long before this, G-d commanded Avraham Avinu to circumcise himself, his son and his household. Why then, the apparent repetition of the commandment?

Not only had G-d already given the Mitzva of Mila, but presumably Bnei Yisrael had been actively observing this commandment for a few hundred years by the time this pasuk was said. Why command them to do something which they already do?

The Talmud (Shabbat 132) suggests that several additional laws can be learned from this pasuk that were not made clear by Avraham. One law would be the requirement that the Mila takes place in the daytime even

on Shabbat because of the text "Uvayom - on the day".

Yet, these explanations do not explain why this specific place in the Torah was chosen to tell us this.

Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch provides us with an explanation for the location of this pasuk which specifically connects the commandment in the previous pasuk to circumcision. He explains that there is an inherent connection between the mother's seven days of tumah - impurity and the Mila. Those seven days have significance not only for the mother, but for the baby as well. The first seven days of the baby's life serve as the preparation for the beginning of its spiritual life as a Jew. During those days, he is transformed from being a human child to one who marks his freedom through divine covenant. On the eighth day, it is as if he is reborn and begins his first act as a Jew. Therefore, we are told of the Mitzva of Mila here, after the mention of the woman's seven days of tumah.

So too, we must appreciate that we have the merit of divine covenant that helps guide us through our life with purpose and meaning.

## **The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**

*HaChodesh 5779*

At first blush, it is somewhat puzzling that the last of the special Four Portions, Parshat HaChodesh, should take as its theme the first commandment given to the Jewish People prior to their liberation from Egypt. Although most of the Maftir Torah reading for this Shabbat deals with the Pesach sacrifice, it is curiously introduced by the mitzva of the New Moon (Sh'mot 12:1-2). How might this be explained?

Rav Soloveitchik understands the commandment of Rosh Chodesh as mandating the Jew to cultivate an acute time awareness, to mature into a time-conscious individual where every moment has significance. Its prefacing of the entire Pesach ritual is to underscore this truth: that to be free, to throw off the shackles of abject servility, one must first appreciate the value of time and make it your own. Even in the absence of physical emancipation, a person can still experience freedom, the moment he learns that the moment is his! Otherwise, even if he is delivered from his servitude, that person remains very much a slave.

In the Rav's words: "To the slave, time is a curse; he waits for the day to pass. The slave's time is the property of his master. No matter how hard he may try to be productive in time, he will not reap

the harvest of his work; therefore, he is insensitive to time. His sense of the movement of time, the passing of hours, days, weeks, is very dull... He lacks the great excitement of opportunities knocking at the door, of challenges summoning him to action, of tense expectations and fears of failure... This time-awareness and appreciation is the singular gift granted to free man because time belongs to him; it is his time, and he can utilize it to the utmost or waste it." (Festival of Freedom, pp. 37-42)

Time matters, not only in terms of how you can appropriate its use, but also because it has important halachic ramifications. The halacha is extremely time-conscious. For instance, on Erev Pesach, we may eat chometz only until a very specified minute. Consuming chometz after that time violates a rabbinic injunction. If the dough of matza is left to stand for a second after 18 minutes, it becomes chometz and cannot be eaten on Pesach. On Erev Yom Kippur, eating or drinking a moment after sunset, transgresses a Biblical prohibition whose punishment is very severe - karet. Even in the performance of a MITZVAT ASEI, a positive commandment, say, the recitation of the Sh'ma, should one read its Biblical portions after the designated time, he forfeits its fulfillment. Time is of the essence - "not years or months, but seconds and split seconds".

Before our ancestors were redeemed

from Egypt, they were given a number of important mitzvot. But chief among them was the first. "This month shall be for you ..." Remember, it is yours! Yours to fashion into something of lasting value; yours to invest in some noble venture, some great cause; your time which you can fill with acts of kindness and compassion, sensitivity and righteousness. Every minute can count, every second, something precious. Indeed, for the truly free person, boredom is an anathema; for him, every fleeting instant can be a portal to eternity. In a flash, one may realize or destroy hopes, visions and expectations. Whatever "hand we are dealt" by the Almighty, the choice of how we play out that "hand" in real time, the value and priorities we place upon the time we are given in this world is completely in our hands. (See Tanchuma Yashan, Sh'mot 1:2 and S'forno 12:2.)

Sociologist Eric Fromm's classic, *Escape From Freedom*, endeavored to explain the strange paradox of man who, soon after he is freed, quickly seeks to escape from its incredible opportunities. He simply cannot handle the choices, the decisions, and the challenges. Rather, he prefers to remain a complete creature of habit: to be content with an ordered, bounded and limited existence. In short, he'd rather be a slave, in suit and tie no doubt, but a slave nonetheless. The Torah, though, had an answer to this dilemma of modern man; actually, more than one

answer. But all the solutions begin with man and the control over his time (Sh'mot Rabba 15:2).

Shabbat HaChodesh gives us some two weeks to reflect upon how we successfully we spent our time since last Pesach. Much like the Rosh HaShana of Tishrei, the month of Nissan is also the beginning of a New Year. (Mishna, Rosh HaShana 1:1) In Tishrei, because of HaShem's bountiful forgiveness and mercy, we were granted a "quantity" of time - another year of life. In Nissan, because of HaShem's everlasting covenant and love for us, we are presented with a "quality" of time, with an experience of living in time. An experience which invites us - more, commands us - to feel the rhythms of time: to dip into bygone events and relive them, to leap into futures filled with great promises and taste them. Living in time and treasuring its content gives us the ability to compress into the present, the glories of the past and visions of the future. Life then becomes an exciting and exhilarating affair, filled with meaning and purpose. In a word, the life we were given on Tishrei now becomes the time we learn to treasure in Nissan.

In the days of the Beit HaMikdash, when the great Sanhedrin would announce the beginning of the New Month, they would declare, "M'KUDASH, It is sanctified", and the people would respond, "M'KUDASH, M'KUDASH, It is indeed sanctified." (Rambam, Kiddush

HaChodesh 2:8) When we take charge of the life we are given and, cherishing its every moment, dedicate it to the service of HaShem, we are living a sanctified existence. From a slave reality, we emerge as AVDEI HASHEM, His servants (Yerushalmi Pesachim 5:5).

And to such a life, Gd, as it were, proudly pronounces, "M'KUDASH, It is sanctified!"

What better way to enter the exalted Pesach season!

## **Afterthoughts** **by Yocheved Bienenfeld**

### **Thoughts on the Moon**

As the Jewish people, we are acutely aware of the changing of the months. They don't just slip one into the other without notice. As one lunar month ebbs and the other comes to life, we greet it with much fanfare. The waxing and waning of the moon are noticed and celebrated with special prayers for the day and with Kiddush L'vana - the blessing of the Moon.

I've always felt that the Moon was given "short shrift" by tradition in being maligned for presenting the truth about two kings not being able to share the same crown (Rashi, B'reishit 1:16). After all, in the blessing for Kiddush L'vana, it says SASIM USMEICHIM LA'ASOT R'TZON KONAM - They are joyous and glad to perform the will of their Owner.

Not only does this refer to the Sun - like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber rejoicing like a mighty man running along a path, but also to the Moon who, when told by HaShem to minimize himself, did so happily to satisfy Gd's will.

What made me feel this way was the name for the Moon - YAREI'ACH - which would imply an entity above the putative pettiness attributed to the Moon. YAREI'ACH is a word related to the spiritual: REI'ACH (smell), RU'ACH (spirit) - things that have no material essence. This seemed in direct contrast to the word for the Sun, SHEMESH, which, in my opinion, implies the material: L'SHAMEISH (to serve), hinting to MAMASH - something tangible. Even the alternate words for these orbs project a similar distinction: L'VANA (white) vs. CHAMA (hot or heat).

In addition, Rashi in Bamidbar 28:15, on the words describing the offering for Rosh Chodesh - and one he-goat for a sin offering to HaShem, says that Gd is asking us to bring a sin-offering "for Him, on His behalf" to atone for His having reduced the size of the Moon, which certainly puts the Moon on a different level and implies that Gd might 'think' (so to speak) that the Moon was correct.

Part of the Shabbat davening, I think, affirms my understanding. In Shacharit, we say HAKOL YODUCHA... - all things will thank You and all will praise You,

and within that paragraph, it says: Who brings out the Sun from its place and Moon from its dwelling. The MAKOM of the sun is a set place. But the MACHON L'SHIVT'CHA of the Moon gives the impression that this is a temporary dwelling place, not its real MAKOM.

When I read in Rav Schwab on Chumash (p.481) his comments on Parshat Pinchas, it seemed to support my impression about the Moon. Rav Schwab talks about this whole idea of HaShem having reduced the size of the Moon. Among other things, he refers to a Chazal that teaches that the Moon was originally the carrier of Or HaSh'china, the spiritual light of Creation. When the Moon "complained" that the Earth should be illuminated either by the physical light of the Sun or, if it deserved it, by Or HaSh'china, Gd removed the spiritual light from the Moon and set it aside for the future world for the tzadikim to enjoy. If, indeed, the Moon was the original "container" of this spiritual light, then my impression that there was something spiritual about the Moon is validated.

Something else that would seem to imply the spiritual nature of the Moon is the fact that the Mikdash itself is described as being in "m'chon shivta". In Az Yashir, towards the end, it says - You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance a place (shrine) for You to dwell. The place of the Mikdash is called machon

I'shivtecha (similar to the words describing the location of the Moon). Could this imply a temporary place? Is this related to the fact that in Parshat R'ei, the place of the Mikdash is referred to 15 times and never as a Mikdash but rather as a MAKOM ASHER BACHAR HASHEM - a place that HaShem has chosen? That the place Gd decides to choose as the place for His Mikdash is not necessarily one specific spot. After all, wasn't the Mishkan in various places for different periods of time before the actual Temple was built? Maybe this is hinted to in the same verse in AZ YASHIR. First, it was in a place temporarily, a MACHON L'SHIVTECHA; and only afterward was it MIKDASH - where it emphasizes KONENU YADECHA - Your Hands established it there.

And so, it appears that not only is the Moon, indeed, of a spiritual nature but that its tenure as a mere reflection of the sun is a limited one. And Gd will return Or HaSh'china to it and we will then benefit from Two kings who will use one crown.

N.B. I humbly admit that the Kabbalistic view of the Moon isn't as forgiving or as generous as mine and explains its 'sin' very differently.

## HACHODESH

One type of Gimatriya Match that I have found over the years of searching, I am just now naming OPPOSITE ENDS GMs. You'll see what I mean in a moment.

We are soon to celebrate of transition from Egyptian Slavery to Freedom.

Sh'mot 5:9, towards the end of Parshat Sh'mot, exemplifies the deepest moment of our Slavery - when Moshe and Aharon first went to Par'o to "ask" him to Let the People Go -

תְּכַבֵּד הָעֲבֹדָה עַל־הָאָדָמִים וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־בָהּ  
וְאֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַבְרֵי־שִׁקְרָה׃

*Make the work heavier for the men, and make sure they do it. Then they will stop paying attention to false ideas.'*

In Parshat HaChodesh - Sh'mot 12:2 in Parshat Bo - we find the statement that represents to Redemption to come shortly. A well-known pasuk which is the first mitzva to the not yet, but very soon to be, freed People of Israel.

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רִאשׁוֹן וְיָדָעְתֶּם  
הוּא לָכֶם לְחֹדֶשׁ הַשָּׁנָה׃

*This month shall be the head month to you. It shall be the first month of the year.*

These two p'sukim are gimatriya matches at 2658. Specifically, they are OEGMs.

*everyone will be able to eat."*

These two p'sukim are gimatriya matches at 4928.

## **HACHODESH** *from the file*

There are differences between Shabbat and Chagim, halachic differences, and different origins. But there are more things that connect Shabbat and Chag. Yom Tov is called SHABBATON, a Shabbat with some permitted melacha. A Shabbat with a lesser punishment for violation. The major concept that unites Shabbat with Yom Tov is the concept of K'DUSHAT Z'MAN - the sanctity of time. The mitzva of ZACHOR ET YOM HASHABBAT, extends to Yom Tov in several ways. The concluding pasuk of our introduction to Shabbat after the Six Days of Creation, is B'reishit 2:3 -

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יְוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ  
אֵתוּ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ  
אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

*"God blessed the seventh day, and He declared it to be holy, for it was on this day that God ceased from all the work that He had been creating [so that it would continue] to function."*

And the pasuk that first introduces us to Yom Tov is Sh'mot 12:16 -

וּבַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ וּבַיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם  
כָּל-מְלַאכָה לֹא-יַעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם אִךְ אֲשֶׁר  
יֵאָכַל לְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ הוּא לַבְּדוֹ יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם:

*"The first day shall be a sacred holiday, and the seventh day shall [also] be a sacred holiday. No work may be done on these [days]. The only [work] that you may do is that which is needed so that*