



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel tov to Yanky and Bracha Kahan on the occasion of Nissan's Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a kiddush after davening in the Shul Hall.

Mazel Tov to Harrison and Adina Kauffman on the birth of a boy. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 6 Circular Road, Prestwich.

Mazel Tov to Rabbi and Mrs YY Katz on the wedding this week of their granddaughter Brocha Katz to Alexander Ryde.

שובבי"ם Series

Taharas Hamishpacha Refresher and Shalom Bayis series for men by R' Shaya continues this Thursday and every Thursday night 8.15 - 8.50 until Thursday 20 February.

Josh Shields Memorial Shiurim

This month's Shiur will iyh be given by Rabbi Binyomin Goldblatt on Sunday 2nd February @ 9.15pm in the back Beis Hamedrash.

Thank You

This week we celebrate the one year anniversary of the Shul members regularly contributing Divrei Torah to the Newsletter. We would like to thank all those who have contributed Divrei Torah for both the Shabbos and Yom Tov editions, Boruch Michaels for coordinating and the indefatigable Dan for his patience with late submissions!

Rosh Chodesh: Renewal & Rejuvenation Boruch Michaels

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֵן ראש חֲדָשִׁים ראשון הוא לָכֵן לְחֻדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה – שמות פרק י"ב פסוק ב'

Rashi on this Posuk states: "When the moon renews itself, it shall be the beginning of the new month."

This concept of renewal does not only refer to the moon itself; but also to the Jewish people. The **שפת אמת**, **נתיבות שלום**, Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch and Rav Eliyahu Munk all express the idea that Rosh Chodesh is a representation for the regeneration, rejuvenation and reinvigoration of the Jewish people. Let's go through them one by one. The **נתיבות שלום** states that a Jew has the obligation to renew himself constantly as an entirely new being. Just as the moon renews itself every month (unlike the sun which shines with the same stagnant intensity every day), the Jewish people must also renew themselves regularly. This expresses itself in the Bracha of Kiddush Levanah: "G-d said to the moon to renew itself as a crown of splendour for those born of the womb, those who in the future will renew themselves like it [the moon]." So important is this concept of constantly renewing oneself that it was the first Mitzvah Bnei Yisrael received. In addition, just as the moon begins covered up and hidden initially and then appears from the darkness, so to **עם ישראל**, even if they are currently situated in the darkness of exile (like they were in Egypt) or at the depths of **עבירות** (the Jews in Egypt were situated on the 49th level of Tumah), there is always an opportunity for revitalization and Teshuvah. No matter how dire a situation a person finds themselves in, it is the will of Hashem that eventually that person will find a way to break out from that darkness. The light of the moon comes to invigorate and motivate a person to renew themselves. This is why it is the first Mitzvah given to **עם ישראל**, to emphasise that regardless of the situation one finds themselves in and regardless of the level that one is at, a person always has the opportunity to renew themselves and to reconnect to Hashem.

שפת אמת explains the process behind how a person renews themselves. He says that by having a realisation that everything in this world is a creation by Hashem will lead to a person truly cleaving himself to Hashem and thus precipitate the inevitable renewal process. By having faith in your heart that everything is a creation by Hashem, will awaken inside a person a sense of motivation to reinvent oneself into a new personality. In my humble opinion, I think that the **שפת אמת** implies that the renewal of the moon should remind us to renew our Emunah that everything that is present in the world has been created by Hashem and this will motivate us to try and come close to Hashem. **שפת אמת** explains, this is why this Mitzvah was given in Egypt. If you act like Egyptians who fail to recognise that Hashem is the creator of the entire world, the you will be unable to access this ability of renewal. Hashem wanted to emphasise, that a Jew must first recognize that Hashem created and runs the world according to his will, before entering into the renewal process.

Rav Eliyahu Munk defines the concept of renewal as a sustained effort to continuously progress on the road to perfection, using all the reserves at one's disposal. Brachos 33b: "All is in the hands of Heaven, expect the fear of Heaven." The renewal of the month is a means to encourage us to work with youthful spirit towards sanctification of the individual and the people. Israel is blessed with the ability to maintain an eternally youthful enthusiasm for ethical and spiritual purity. Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (RSRH) compares the creation of the rainbow after the episode of the flood to the Mitzvah of the new moon in Egypt. The rainbow was a "sign of the [new] covenant" with mankind to guarantee a future safe from annihilation. Similarly, at the threshold of a new future to be given to the Jewish people, Hashem shows Moshe and Aaron the silver crescent of the moon and said: "This renewal of the moon shall be for you a beginning of new moons." The moon's renewal represents a new future for the Jewish people as a nation of Hashem just as the new rainbow represented a new future for mankind. Following on from this, RSRH states: "Your perception of the renewal of

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת בא

Candle Lighting	No later than 4.33pm
Mincha	4.38pm
יציאת ה'טו	11.00pm
Rov's Shiur	8.45am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.08am
Children's Group	10.45am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	4.24pm
Shalosh Seudos	Following
Motzei Shabbos	5.44pm
Ovos uBonim	6.44pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.40pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

the moon shall cause you to renew yourselves. It is through this perception that you are to set your own periods of renewal. That is why the Posuk says: "...renewal of the moons shall be for you." What we are to establish is not an astronomical cycle of months but monthly renewals for ourselves." As we say on Shabbos in the blessing for the new month: "May you renew for us the new month for good and blessings...long life, a life of peace, goodness, prosperity, physical health, a fear of Heaven and Avert, without embarrassment, with wealth, honor, love of Torah etc..." Similarly, in Kiddush Levanah, we pray that Hashem will bring about a rebirth of prosperity and salvation. The new moon is also a guarantee by Hashem of Teshuvah which can be attained at any time through the reunion with Hashem in perpetual rejuvenation to break forth from darkness into the light of Kedusha. Just like the moon, a Jew will never be totally lost in the cover of darkness even when he/she has strayed from the Torah path. The dark stains that cloud our lives as a result of past transgressions can be eliminated by our efforts to become reborn and renewed.

To summarise, according to these sources, the new moon is a symbol of the potential renewed relationship between a Jew and Hashem. This could take the form of a reinvigoration to concentrate in Davening, a rejuvenated desire to learn Torah or a renewed connection to Hashem post-Teshuvah.

May we בעיה have a new year of beautiful new Divrei Torah by members of the Community and may we בעיה take the opportunity to renew our relationship with Hashem.

Good Shabbos

Spiritual Brinkmanship Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

Come to Paroh, for I have made his heart, and the hearts of his servants stubborn, so that I can put My signs in his midst.

What happens when you come that close to wiping out evil? The prospect, it turns out, is pretty frightening.

The important figures in Chumash lived lives that spilled over to future times in history. The episodes and incidents that are recounted in the Torah often prefigured major events in times to come. Something much larger than an encounter between two adversaries happened here, according to the Zohar.

Note that Moshe was not told to go to Paroh, but to come to him. Moshe, in approaching the resolutely evil Paroh, was enacting the final showdown between good and evil. He was led, step-wise, into different spiritual "rooms," all the while approaching closer to the Great Serpent. Once there, Moshe balked. Moshe knew he would find the greatest concentration of evil – although necessarily comingled with good – in the exact manner that it would exist just prior to the end of conventional time. That moment will occur just prior to the fulfillment of the prophecy that "On that day, Hashem will be One and His Name will be One," when the power of evil will be fully abolished.

Moshe feared approaching. He understood the potency of the evil that would present itself at that time. Moshe, representing the light of Torah and its goodness, wished to have no contact with such evil. HKBH had to coax him. "I have made his heart... stubborn." When you get there, He told Moshe, you will find not only the Great Serpent, but I will be there too. The consequence of My presence is that one of two things will happen. Either you will succeed in subduing it in the service of Hashem and His people, or you will extract from it the hidden light associated with it, and returning it to Am Yisrael. Either way, the encounter leads to some important gain.

The announcement of the impending Plague of the First-Born was an anomaly. After relating to Paroh what would happen, "He left Paroh's presence in a burning anger." Moshe had not stormed out of any previous meeting. Moshe understood the stakes much better than Paroh. Soon, his associates would cry out to let the Jews go. "We are all dead!" They perhaps intuited that makas bechoros was not a one-off. Had the Egyptians not relented, a new surrogate bechor would have taken the place in each family for the deceased one. After he would be killed in the second round, the process would continue until they were all killed.

In other words, Moshe knew that he was poised at an enactment of a

prequel to the final showdown with evil before its final destruction. He understood the implications and the stakes. Evil would intensify just before the end, sensing that its continued existence was imperiled. Anyone opposing it could easily be spiritually wounded in the struggle – even if he emerged the victor. On the other hand, there was a promise that the Shechinah itself was present to assist. And if the Good would tough it out till the end, Evil would be beaten back – forever!

Paroh had shown Moshe the extent of his determination. "Do not see my face any more, for on the day that you see my face, you will die." Moshe grasped that Paroh realized that he was engaged in an existential struggle, and was willing and ready to fight to the finish.

Moshe calculated the odds, and made a conservative choice. He withdrew. Just as he had fled before the power of the serpent at the Burning Bush, he ran from the power of the Great Serpent, personified in Paroh. Without assurance that he would not be hurt in the showdown (with terrible consequences for the Jewish people), he could not take the risk.

He did not have to hasten his stride to back down from the confrontation with Paroh. When he stood in front of Paroh, Moshe was acting as a prophet, drawing on the presence of the Shechinah forecast by the "I will be there too." Moshe knew that if that Divine Presence would remain in play, the showdown would continue, forcing the issue to an outcome. Therefore, he allowed anger to well up inside him, knowing that anger is incompatible with nevuah.

Without the Shechinah present, what was left was just a contest between two mortal humans – not the ultimate cosmic battle.

The upshot is that makas bechoros brought about the quick deliverance of our people from bondage. But eradicating evil entirely from human society would have to wait for another day.

Q&A

Kids

1. How many plagues are in this weeks sedra?
2. How many locusts stayed in Mitzrayim after the plague?
3. After how many days did the darkness of choshech change so that they could not move?
4. Did Moshe use his staff for the plague of choshech?
5. Why did Hashem choose lambs or sheep to be brought as the Korban Pesach?

Adults

1. Why in **פרק י פסוק ג** does the torah mention Aaron and Moshe together, usually the Torah only mentions Moshe and it is obvious that Aaron was with him?
2. If the hail destroyed all the trees why does the Torah say that the locusts will destroy the tress?
3. Why is the order of **פסוק ו** interesting?
4. Why did Paroh "hasten" to remove the plague of locusts?
5. In **פרק יג ה פסוק ה** the Torah mentions 5 of the nations of the land of Canaan, how many were there and why does the Torah miss some out?

1. This is because in **א י א & ב ד ו ק** paroh called them back then told them to go away again. Since Aaron was included in the end scenario the Torah mentions him at the beginning as well. (Ibn Ezra)
 2. The hail broke the main body parts of the trees, however did not destroy them completely. Additionally several months may have passed after the hail to allow the trees to grow again. (Ibn Ezra)
 3. One would have expected that Paroh's home, the palace would be the most protected and would be the last to be affected by the plague, while the commoners would suffer first. However the Torah writes that the opposite happened. Paroh was the first to suffer and last were the commoners (Kli Yakar).
 4. As he wanted the locusts removed before they could eat the roots of the vegetation, causing permanent damage (Sforno).
 5. There were seven, RashI quoting a tanchuma says that all 7 nations descended from canaan, therefore they were included in the Canaanite nations. Alternatively according to Ramban only the 5 nations mentioned had land flowing with milk and honey.

Adults

1. None, even the locusts that the mitztrim had kept for food (Midrash)
2. 3
3. 5
4. No
5. As these were the Egyptians g-ds, by using these as korbonos showed the power of hashem (Ramban).

Kids

Answers