
THE WEISS EDITION

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Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעלוי נשמה
הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב
תנצב"ה

בָּא

Bo

12:2 | בָּבָרֶא

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶם רִאשׁ חֲדֹשִׁים

This month shall be for you the head of the months.

Sacred Time

The first mitzvah given to the Jews after they became a nation was to determine and sanctify the first day of every month—Rosh Chodesh—thereby creating the Jewish calendar. This command is expressed in the verse cited above, **הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶם רִאשׁ חֲדֹשִׁים**. The words **הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה** can also be translated as “this renewal,” meaning that G-d showed Moshe the crescent moon and said, “This renewal—when the moon renews itself—shall be [what determines] for you the heads of the months.”¹

The priority given to this mitzvah suggests that sanctifying Rosh Chodesh is a model mitzvah, representing the underlying theme of all the other mitzvos.

The primary objective of all mitzvos is to transform the

¹. Rashi ad loc.

physical world from mundane to holy. By using any physical object to perform a mitzvah, we reveal the G-dly purpose for which that object was created, thereby sanctifying said item.

The sanctification of Rosh Chodesh embodies this idea, for in this mitzvah *time itself* is elevated. Namely, this mitzvah involves taking a day that was previously like any other, and declaring it Rosh Chodesh—no longer a regular weekday, but a day replete with special offerings brought in the Beis Hamikdash. In addition, setting up the calendar requires the Beis Din to calculate the constant cycles and patterns of the sun and moon. Thus, the mitzvah to establish a Jewish calendar not only elevates the days sanctified as Rosh Chodesh (and by extension, the holidays observed on specific dates within the months), it reveals the G-dly purpose within the *entire* passage of time.

Rosh Chodesh was therefore the first mitzvah commanded, since it is a visible act of sanctifying the mundane—the essential theme of all the mitzvos. Moreover, time, which marks and is defined by change, is the first and *most basic* characteristic of every created being: the change from non-existence to existence. As such, just as time is the very first creation, its sanctification is the very first mitzvah.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 26, pp. 61–65

12:6 | יב:ו

וְהִי לְכֶם לִמְשֹׁרֶת עַד אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לְחֶדֶשׁ הַזֶּה:

*You shall keep it for inspection
until the fourteenth day of this month.*

The Deprogramming

Bnei Yisrael were commanded to designate a lamb on the 10th of Nissan to be slaughtered as the Pesach offering four days later.

Rashi comments that these four days of waiting were necessary because “the time for the Redemption had arrived... but Bnei Yisrael were steeped in idolatry.”² To leave Egypt’s borders but to bring its undesirable influences—“the shame of the earth”³—with them would mean that the redemption was incomplete. The slaughtering of sheep—an Egyptian deity—for the Pesach sacrifice was the Jewish people’s means of rehabilitation. But the Jews in Egypt had not only dabbled in idolatry, they were steeped in it. Therefore, a one-time act that renounced their previous obsession with idolatry was not enough to deprogram them from Egyptian influence. A longer process was required: four days of introspection.

Why four days?

When Avraham was commanded to offer his son Yitzchak as a sacrifice, he headed out the very next morning to do G-d’s bidding, but he was shown the place where Yitzchak would be sacrificed only three days into his journey—i.e., four days after the initial command. Rashi explains that G-d delayed showing

2. Rashi ad loc.

3. Bereishis 42:9.

it to him immediately, “so that people should not say that He confused him and confounded him suddenly, overwhelming his mind, and that if Avraham had had time to think it over, he would not have done it.”⁴ A person’s greatest passion is his children. Giving Avraham four days to contemplate parting with his child meant that when he ultimately lifted the knife over Yitzchak, it was indisputable that he did so completely sound of mind.

Therefore, to remove the shame of the Egyptian influence, the Jewish people were commanded not only to slaughter a sheep, but to start the process four days in advance, fully aware of what they were about to do. By slaughtering a creature that they had once considered a deity, after four days of thought and awareness, they effectively and indisputably purged themselves of their idolatrous state of mind.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 16, pp. 117–119*

4. Rashi, Bereishis 22:4.

12:13 | יב:יג

וְהִיָּה הַדָּם לְכֶם לִזְרֹעַ עַל הַבָּתִים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם
 שָׁם וְרָאֵיתִי אֶת הַדָּם וּפֶסְחָתִי עַל כֶּם וְלֹא יִחָּיֶה
 בְּכֶם נָגֵף לְמִשְׁחָתִ בְּהַכְתִּי בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

*The blood will be for you for a sign upon the houses
 where you will be, and I will see the blood and spare you,
 and there will be no destructive plague in you when
 I smite the land of Egypt.*

Egypt Syndrome

After guaranteeing that G-d will spare the Jewish homes from the final plague—death of the firstborn—the Torah adds, “And there will be no destructive plague in you.” Rashi explains that these additional words address the query: “What if one of Bnei Yisrael was in an Egyptian’s house? I would think that he would be smitten like him. Therefore, the verse states: ‘And there will be no destructive plague in you.’”

The Jews who lingered in Egyptian homes on the night of the Exodus were in an appalling spiritual state, one more akin to that of their Egyptian oppressors than to that of their fellow Jews. Consider this: Not only had Bnei Yisrael suffered miserably at the hands of the Egyptians for hundreds of years, they had just witnessed the miraculous plagues with which G-d punished their captors. Now they had offered the Pesach sacrifice to commemorate their imminent redemption, and were explicitly warned, “No man shall leave the entrance of his house until morning.”⁵ We could assume that at this point,

5. Shemos 12:22.

a Jew who still chose to spend the night in the home of an Egyptian “would be smitten like him,” in Rashi’s words.

Yet, out of His love for the Jewish people, G-d Himself descended into the homes of the Egyptians in order to single out the Jews who might be among them. “I will go out into the midst of Egypt,”⁶ says G-d, to save a Jew so spiritually hollow that even on this fateful night he still clings to his Egyptian friends and neighbors.

In doing so, G-d demonstrated the lengths to which we must go to save a Jew, either physically or spiritually—i.e., to draw him nearer to the service of G-d. Emulating G-d’s ways, we must seek to reach even the Jew who is so assimilated that engaging him can require “descending” and compromising (within the guidelines of *halachah*) our own high spiritual standards. We must search for the Jew who cannot be found in a holy environment and is still “in an Egyptian home,” to rescue him and draw his heart closer to his Father in Heaven.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 36, pp. 50–51

6. Shemos 11:4.

13:8 | ג:ח

וְהִנֵּה לְבָנֶךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בַּעֲבוּר
זֶה עָשָׂה הָיָי בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם

*You shall tell your son on that day, saying,
“It is for this sake that G-d acted on my behalf
when I went out of Egypt.”*

The Miracle of Freedom

The Torah tells us that in all generations we must convey to our children “that G-d acted *on my behalf* when I went out of Egypt.” Our Sages learn from this verse that “in every generation, one is obligated to regard himself as if he himself has just come out of Egypt.”⁷

Chassidus explains that freedom from Egypt is a constant and recurring miracle, and not just the natural and automatic state ever since the Exodus 3000 years ago.

The Zohar explains that the exodus from Egypt involved not only redemption from our physical slavery; the spiritual source of Egypt was entirely vanquished as well.⁸ This is hinted at in the verse “For the Egyptians whom you see today, *you will never see again.*”⁹ Practically, this means that (even though the bondage in Egypt is the spiritual root from which all our subsequent exiles derived,)¹⁰ the Jewish people will never again be subjugated in a manner as extreme as the Egyptian bondage.

7. Mishnah, Pesachim 10:5.

8. See Zohar 2:52b.

9. Shemos 14:13.

10. See Bereishis Rabbah 16:4.

For this reason we continue to celebrate the holiday of Pesach despite having been subsequently exiled and forced into captivity in other lands multiple times, because the freedom achieved through the redemption from Egypt can never be undone.

Our eternal freedom from the *possibility* of another “Egypt-like” exile defies nature, for in the natural order of the world a comparable exile is entirely possible. Hence, the *guarantee* of freedom that came with the Exodus is not a one-time miracle, but a continuous, nonstop defiance of the natural possibility of enslavement. Therefore, in every generation, and indeed every single day,¹¹ we can truly regard ourselves as having just been redeemed from Egypt.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, pp. 175–178

11. See Tanya, chapter 47.

<p>לעילוי נשמות מורת גאלדא פרידא בת ר' ירחמיאל גוטמאן ע"ה דינערמן נלב"ע ביום ו' שבט ה'תש"ע תנצב"ה נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו</p>	<p>לזכות הת' שנייאור זלמן שי' לרגל הכנסו לעול המצוות בשעטו"מ ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ז ה"ר שיגדל להיות חסיד, ירא שמים ולמדן לנח"ר הוריו וכל משפחתו שיחיו נדפס ע"י הוריו הרה"ת ישראל זוגתו מורת חייה מושקא שיחיו ראסקין</p>
<p>לעילוי נשמות מורת שרה לאה בת ר' יהודה ליב ע"ה אווערלאנדער נלב"ע ביום ח' שבט ה'תשע"ג תנצב"ה נפטרה ג' שבט ה'תשע"ג תנצב"ה</p>	<p>לעילוי נשמות מורת שרה לאה בת ר' יהודה ליב ע"ה אווערלאנדער נלב"ע ביום ח' שבט ה'תשע"ג תנצב"ה נדפס ע"י חתנה הרה"ת מענדל זוגתו מורת אסתר שיחיו פלاطקי</p>

לעילוי נשמת

מרת מרים בת ר' אלטער מרדכי ע"ה וויס
נפטרה ר"ח שבט ה'תשע"א

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נדפס ע"י חתנה ובתה

השליח הרה"ת שלום דוב בעיר הלוי
וזוגתו מרת חנה בילא שיחיו

לעוויטין

סיאטל וושינגטון



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