

## The Month of Nissan Mesorah – Rosh Chodesh Program

### 1) שמות יב:

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשִׁים רֵאשִׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֳדָשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה:

This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you.

### 2) רש"י שמות יב:

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה. הָרֵאשִׁית לְבִנְיָהּ בְּחֻדְשָׁהּ וְאָמַר לוֹ כְּשֶׁהִיָּרַח מִתְחַדֵּשׁ יִהְיֶה לָּךְ רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשׁ (מכילתא). וְאִין מְקַרָּא יוֹצֵא מִיַּד פְּשׁוּטוֹ, עַל חֳדָשׁ נִסָּן אָמַר לוֹ, זֶה יִהְיֶה רֵאשִׁית לְסֵדֶר מִנְּנוֹן הַחֳדָשִׁים, שְׂיִהְיֶה אֵיךְ קְרוּי שָׁנִי, סִינּוֹן שְׁלִישִׁי:

He showed him the moon in the first stage of its renewal, and He said to him, “The time when the moon renews itself thus, shall be unto you the beginning of the month).” The translation therefore is: “This stage of renewal (חֹדֶשׁ) shall be the moment of beginning the months”; cf. Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 12:2:2. (But no Scriptural verse can lose its literal meaning, and He really spoke this in reference to the month Nissan: this month shall be the beginning in the order of counting the months, so that Iyar shall be called the second, Sivan the third.

חודש = חידוש

### 3) מדרש תנחומא – נח

Fish rise to the surface when it rains and open their mouths to taste rainwater.

### 4) דברים כד:

כִּי־יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה חֲדָשָׁה

When a man takes a new wife...

### 5) דברים לג:

וּמִמְקַדְתְּבוֹאֵת שְׁמֶשׁ וּמִמְקַדְגֵּרֶשׁ יְרַחִים

and with the sweetness of the produce of the sun, and with the sweetness of the **moon's yield**.

### 6) Rabbi Shneur Ashkenazi:

When a couple marries, the words used in marking the date in the kesubah is chodesh (“On this and this day of the week in this and this day of the chodesh”), but in a get, the bill of divorce, the word yerach is used (“on this and this day of the yerach”). Why? The Levush (Rabbi Mordechai Yoffe, 1530-1612) finds an interesting allusion to this in the Torah itself, noting that regarding marriage the Torah states, “When a man will take a new wife;” the use of the word חֲדָשָׁה connotes the connection between marriage and renewal. In contrast, in Moshe’s parting blessing to the Jewish nation, he mentions the “the sweetness of the moon’s yield,” using the phrase “גרש ירחים.” The word גרש can also mean divorce, indicating that divorce is connected to ירח, or moon.

The explanation, then, is as follows: Life can be lived in two ways, like a chodesh or like a yerach. One may live in such a way that every day is new, where every day of marriage is like the wedding day, with each half investing just as much to win over the other’s heart as the day they met—putting the other in the center, honoring them, and surprising them. Conversely, a yerach marriage lacks the renewal aspect. The moon may orbit again and again, but it’s possible that nothing new happens in the interim. Here are two people sharing a home but effectively living two separate lives, without no real connection between them—because they aren’t doing anything to keep the marriage new, G-d forbid.

Several years ago I listened to a radio interview with a famous Israeli author. The interviewer asked, "You're married for over fifty years; how do you do it?" The author replied, "We get married again every day."

## חודש הראשון

### (7) רמב"ן - שמות, יב:ב

וטעם החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים, שימנו אותו ישראל חדש הראשון, וממנו ימנו כל החדשים שני ושלישי עד תשלום השנה בשנים עשר חדש, כדי שיהיה זה זכרון בנס הגדול, כי בכל עת שנזכיר החדשים יהיה הנס נזכר, ועל כן אין לחדשים שם בתורה, אלא יאמר בחדש השלישי (שמות י"ט: א'), ואומר ויהי בשנה השנית בחדש השני נעלה הענן (במדבר י יא), ובחדש השביעי באחד לחודש וגוי' (שם כט א), וכן כלם :

וכמו שתהיה הזכירה ביום השבת במנותינו ממנו אחד בשבת ושני בשבת, כאשר אפרש (רמב"ן על שמות כ' ח'), כך הזכירה ביציאת מצרים במנותינו החדש הראשון והחדש השני והשלישי לגאולתינו, שאין המנין הזה לשנה, שהרי תחלת שנותינו מתשרי, דכתיב (שמות ל"ד: כ"ב) וחג האסיף תקופת השנה, וכתיב (שם כג טז) בצאת השנה, אם כן כשנקרא לחדש ניסן ראשון ולתשרי שביעי, פתרונו ראשון לגאולה ושביעי אליה וזה טעם ראשון הוא לכם, שאיננו ראשון בשנה, אבל הוא ראשון לכם, שנקרא לו לזכרון גאולתינו :

וכבר הזכירו רבותינו זה הענין, ואמרו שמות חדשים עלו עמנו מבבל (ירושלמי ר"ה א ב, ב"ר מח ט), כי מתחלה לא היו להם שמות אצלנו, והסבה בזה, כי מתחלה היה מניינם זכר ליציאת מצרים, אבל כאשר עלינו מבבל ונתקיים מה שאמר הכתוב (ירמיה טז יד-טו) ולא יאמר עוד חי ה' אשר העלה את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים כי אם חי ה' אשר העלה ואשר הביא את בני ישראל מארץ צפון, חזרנו לקרא החדשים בשם שנקראים בארץ בבל, להזכיר כי שם עמדנו ומשם העלנו הש"י כי אלה השמות ניסן אייר וזולתם שמות פרסיים, ולא ימצא רק בספרי נביאי בבל (זכריה א ז, עזרא ו טו, נחמיה א א) ובמגילת אסתר (ג ז). ולכן אמר הכתוב בחדש הראשון הוא חדש ניסן, כמו הפיל פור הוא הגורל (שם). ועוד היום הגוים בארצות פרס ומדי כך הם קוראים אותם ניסן ותשרי וכלם כמונו. והנה נזכיר בחדשים הגאולה השנית כאשר עשינו עד הנה בראשונה :

Now the purport of the expression, *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months*, is that Israel is to count this as the first of the months, and from it they are to count all months — second, third, etc., until a year of twelve months is completed — **in order that there be through this enumeration a remembrance of the great miracle**, [i.e., the exodus from Egypt, which occurred in the first month]. Whenever we will mention the months, the miracle will be remembered. It is for this reason that the months have no individual names in the Torah. Instead, Scripture says: *In the third month; And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month ... that the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle of the Testimony; And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month*, etc., and so in all cases.

Just as in counting the weekdays we always remember the Shabbos-day since the weekdays have no specific name of their own, but instead are called "one day in the Sabbath," "the second day in the Shabbos," as I will explain, so we remember the exodus from Egypt in our counting "the first month," "the second month," "the third month," etc., to our redemption.

This order of the counting of the months is not in regard to the years, for the beginning of our years is from Tishri, [the seventh month], as it is written, *And the feast of ingathering at the turn of the year*, and it is further written, *And the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year*. If so, when we call the month of Nisan the first of the months and Tishri the seventh, the meaning thereof is "the first [month] to the redemption" and "the seventh month" thereto. This then is the intent of the expression, *it shall be the first month to you*, meaning that it is not the first in regard to the year but it is the first "to you," i.e., that it be called "the first" for the purpose of remembering our redemption.

Our Rabbis have already mentioned this matter when saying, "The names of the months came up with us from Babylon," since at first we had no names for the months. The reason for this [adoption of the names of the months when our ancestors returned from Babylon to build the Second Temple], was that at first their reckoning was a memorial to the exodus from Egypt, but

when we came up from Babylon, and the words of Scripture were fulfilled — *And it shall no more be said: As the Eternal liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but: As the Eternal liveth that brought up and that led the children of Israel from the land of the north* — from then on we began to call the months by the names they were called in the land of Babylon. We are thus reminded that there we stayed [during our exile] and from there, blessed G-d brought us up [to our Land]. These names — Nisan, Iyar, and the others — are Persian names and are to be found only in the books of the prophets of the Babylonian era and in the Scroll of Esther. It is for this reason that Scripture says, *In the first month, which is the month of Nisan*, just as it says, *they cast 'pur,' that is, the lot*. To this day, people of Persia and Media use these names of the months — Nisan, Tishri, and the others — as we do. Thus through the names of the months we remember our second redemption even as we had done until then with regard to the first one.

#### 8 ספורנו יב:א

**החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים.** מכאן ואילך יהיו החדשים שלכם, לעשות בהם כרצונכם, אבל בימי השעבוד לא היו ימיכם שלכם, אבל היו לעבודת אחרים ורצונם, לפיכך ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה. כי בו התחיל מציאותכם הבחיריי:

from now on these months will be yours, to do with as you like. This is by way of contrast to the years when you were enslaved when you had no control over your time or timetable at all. While you were enslaved, your days, hours, minutes even, were always at the beck and call of your taskmasters.

#### **חודש ניסן**

#### 9 ראש השנה יא:א

בְּנִיסָן נִגְאָלִי בְּנִיסָן עֲתִידִין לִיגָאֵל

#### 10 ברכות נו:א

הַרְוָאָה הוֹנָא בְּחֵלוּם — גִּס נַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ. חֲנִינָא, חֲנִינָא, יוֹחֲנָן — נְסִי נְסִים

**One who sees** a man named **Huna in a dream**, it is a sign that **a miracle will be performed for him**, because the letter *nun* in the name Huna represents the word *nes*, miracle. One who sees a man named **Hanina, Hananya, or Yohanan**, it is a sign that **many miracles will be performed for him**, since the letter *nun* appears twice in those names.

ניסן is related to the word נסים.  
2 nuns in the word represents “miracles of miracles.”

#### 11 מדרש רבה שמות טו:יא

מִשְׁבַּחַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעוֹלָמוֹ, קִבַּע בּוֹ רָאשֵׁי חֳדָשִׁים וְשָׁנִים, וּכְשֶׁבַחַר בְּיַעֲקֹב וּבְנָיו קִבַּע בּוֹ רָאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים  
When Hashem chose his world he established heads of months and years, and when he chose Yaakov and his children he established the head of the month of redemption.

#### **חודש האביב**

#### 12 דברים טז:א

שְׁמוֹר אֶת־חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב וְעֲשִׂיתָ פֶּסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב הוֹצִיאָךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמִּצְרָיִם לַיְלָה:

Keep the month of spring, and make the Passover offering to the Lord, your God, for in the month of spring, the Lord, your God, brought you out of Egypt at night.

**13) רש"י, דברים טז:א**

שְׁמֹר אֶת־חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב: מִקֵּדָם בּוֹאֹ שְׁמֵר שְׂפִיחָא רָאוּי לְאָבִיב – לְהַקְרִיב בּוֹ אֶת מִנְחַת הָעֹמֶר, וְאִם לֹא עֲבַר אֶת הַשָּׁנָה (ע"י סנהדרין י"א):

**Keep the month of spring:** Heb. אָבִיב. Before it [Nissan] arrives, watch that it should be fit for the ripening [capable of producing ripe ears of barley by the sixteenth of the month], to offer up in it the omer meal offering. **And if not, proclaim it a leap year [thereby enabling you to wait another month, until the barley ripens].** — [San. 11b]

**14) רבינו בחיי שמות יג:ד**

אבִיב can be broken down into אב, father of יב, signifying the twelve months of the year. Nissan is the “father” the source, of the twelve months of the year.

**15) The מִזַּל of the month: טלה**

The lamb symbolizes the Pesach sacrifice, the first sacrifice of the Jewish people to Hashem just before their redemption. The Jewish people itself is symbolized by a lamb (surrounded by seventy wolves). Of all of Hashem’s creations, the lamb possesses the innate ability to arouse mercy by its voice (the origin of the sense of speech of the month of Nissan). (Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, based on Sefer Yetzira)

**16) יהודה of the month: שבט**

Nisan is connected to the tribe of Yehudah. The meaning of the name Yehudah is to give thank, alluding to speech. The archetype of kingship, King David, is a descendant of Yehudah. Kingship also alludes to speech, for a king rules over his people through his words, which are received as commands: for the word of the king is his rule.” The Talmud says that Nissan initiates the New Year of Kings. **It is thus a new beginning for the power of leadership, for speech, and also for expressing thanks.** Because of the Redemption in this month, it is our duty to thank, laud praise, glorify, exalt, adore, bless, elevate, and honor the One who did all these miracles for our ancestors and for us. (Rabbi Dov Ber Pinson, based on Sefer Yetzira)

**17) משנה ראש השנה א:א**

בְּאֶחָד בְּנִיסָן רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְמַלְכִים וְלְרִגְלִים.

The first of Nissan is the Rosh Hashana for king and for festivals.

**18) Faculty of the month: Speech**

The faculty corresponding to Nissan is speech. Just as Hashem created the world with speech, so do we create our world, or at least our experience of the world, with speech. A slave is someone who has no voice, nor the power to create his or her reality. ....The word Haggadah means - telling. During the Seder we speak at length about our Redemption from collective and personal slavery. Thus, each year we receive the ability to proclaim our freedom on higher and higher levels. (Rabbi Dov Ber Pinson, based on Sefer Yetzira)

**19) פרי עץ חיים שער חג המצות:א**

פסח = פה סח a mouth that speaks