

Time and Transformation

Bais Chana Online

I. Introduction:

1) חודש = חידוש

Chodesh = chidush (innovative idea, discovery, novelty)

2) Midrash Tanchuma - Noach

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

3) Devarim 24:5

כִּי יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה חֲדָשָׁה - When a man takes a **new** wife...

4) Devarim 33:14

וּמִמְנוֹד תְּבוֹאֵת שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמִמְנוֹד גְּרֵשׁ יְרַחֵם –

and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for **the precious things put forth by the moon,**

5) Rabbi Shneur Ashkenazi:

When a couple marries, the words used in marking the date in the ketubah 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, כי יקה אשה חדשה, “When a man will take a new wife;” the use of the word חדשה 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.”

6) S’forno, Shemot 12:2

החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים, (This month shall mark for you the beginning of months): 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.

7) Ramban, Shemot 12:2

.....Our Rabbis have already mentioned this matter when saying, “The names of the months came up with us from Babylon,” (Talmud Yerushalmi, Rosh Hashana) 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. . . . 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.

II. The Month of Marcheshvan

A. Names of the Month: Marcheshvan, Bul, 8th Month

1) **מר = bitter**

During the month of Marcheshvan, we can turn the מר - bitter into רם -elevated (The Trisker Rebbe)

2) **מר = drop**

Yeshayahu, 40:15

הֵן גּוֹיִם כְּמַר מִדְּלִי

The nations are but a drop in the bucket....

3) **בול = mabul – flood**

Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 11:

You find that from that time until Solomon erected the Temple, it rained continuously for forty days each year as a reminder of the waters of the flood that lasted forty days. After Solomon completed the Temple, he pleaded for mercy in behalf of them (Israel), and the continuous rains ceased, as it says: *And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul* (I Kings 6:38).

Melachim 1, 6:38

וּבְשָׁנָה הָאֵחָת עָשְׂרָה בְּיָרַח בּוּל הוּא הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁמִינִי כָּלָה הַבְּיֹת לְכַלְדָּבְרָיו וּלְכָל־מִשְׁפָּטָו וַיִּבְנֶהוּ שְׁבַע שָׁנִים:
And in the eleventh year, in **the month of Bul**—that is, the **eighth month**—the House was completed according to all its details and all its specifications. It took him seven years to build it.

4) **בול** = withered, fodder

Rashi, Melachim 1, 6:38

בִּירַח בּוּל. הוּא מְרַחֵשׁוֹן, שֶׁהַעֲשָׂב בָּלָה בְּשָׂדֵה, וּבּוֹלְלִין לְבֵהֶמָה מִן הַבַּיִת, מִלְּשׁוֹן : וַיָּבֵל לַחֲמוֹרִים.

In the month of Bul. This is [the month of] Mar Cheshvan; [when] the grass in the field decays, and cattle is given fodder from what is stored, from the expression “and he gave fodder [ויבל] to the donkeys.”

B. Permutation of Hashem's name: Vav-Hei-Hei-Yud

C. Letter of the Month: Nun נ ן

5) Brachot 4b:

Nun represents *nefila* – falling.

6) The Month of Cheshvan – Rav DovBer Pinson:

Nun thus represents the idea of dropping away, or, in the case of the ‘final’ Nun, of deepening in order to rise. During Cheshvan, when we descend from the heights of Tishrei, our work is to stay strong and learn how to bring the previous month’s illumination and inspiration all the way down into our lives. We thus transform the energy of ‘falling’ or descending into ‘flying’ or progressing through ‘rooting’ and grounding. In the words of Rebbe Tzadok of Lublin, “Every month has something particular that we have to work on, and in Cheshvan our work is to strengthen ourselves and get up if we have fallen down.” (Pri Tzaddik, Marcheshvan)

7) Gal Einai – Inner.org

Cheshvan, the eighth month, is the month of Mashiach, because eight signifies the eternal revelation of the supernatural (the consummate state of rectified nature being the secret of the number seven). Whereas in our present reality, the "harp" played by King David and used in the Temple has seven strings, the harp of Mashiach possesses eight strings. Just as 8 transcends 7, so does 50 (the numerical value of *nun*) transcend $49 = 7^2$.

In our present reality, the *nun* is bent over, confined by the boundaries of nature. With the coming of Mashiach, the *nun* will "straighten out" (the shape of the final *nun* – ן), and will break through the boundaries of nature also descending ("below the line") into the subterranean realms of reality in order to reveal there God's all-encompassing Infinite light.

D. Historical Events:

- a) 7th of Cheshvan - we begin to say ומטר לברכה, a prayer for rain (in Israel)
- b) 17th of Cheshvan - the Flood began. It ended the following year on the 27th of Cheshvan.

8) Yalkut Shimoni on Nach 184:

משנעשה הבית בירח בול נעשה נעול (ג) י"ב חדש..... וכן מרחשון עתיד הקבי"ה לשלם לו

c) King Solomon completed building the Beit Hamikdash in Cheshvan, and it was inaugurated the following Tishrei...Hashem will “compensate” MarCheshvan in the future. (with the dedication of the Third Temple)

d) It's a month devoid of any holidays

E. Element: Rain

F. Mazal (Zodiac): Akrav עקרב - The Scorpion

9)Brachot 33a:

We learned in the mishna that **even if a snake is wrapped around his heel, he may not interrupt** his prayer. In limiting application of this principle, **Rav Sheshet said: They only taught** this mishna **with regard to a snake**, as if one does not attack the snake it will not bite him. **But if a scorpion** approaches an individual while he is praying, **he stops**, as the scorpion is liable to sting him even if he does not disturb it.

10)Erchei Hakuim, Erech Nachash:

A snake has hot venom. A scorpion has cold venom.

11)Channeling Enthusiasm - Sichos in English, Chabad.org

It is written that a snake's venom is exceedingly hot. This alludes to a condition in which a Jew becomes so wrapped up and roused by the heat of the material world — namely the excitement in the mundane — that his spiritual inspiration is compromised. Concerning the scorpion it is stated that his venom is cold, connoting a more insidious situation than that of a snake. When one is enthused and excited — albeit in matters relating to the mundane — at least it is a sign of life. He can then channel that enthusiasm to holiness. However, when one is cold and uninspired — a sign of the opposite of life — it is considered far worse.

This will serve to explain the Gemara (Talmud, Brachot 33a) that says that If one encounters a snake around his ankle during the *Shemonah Esreh* prayer, he is not to interrupt, whereas when a scorpion is near his ankle he is to interrupt [his prayer] and deal with the impending danger.”

When, in the midst of prayer, one is overwhelmed with passion and excitement for worldly things (comparable to the heat of the snake's venom), he is not to interrupt his prayer. Since he possesses the proper tool for spiritual growth, he must merely learn to channel it in a positive way. On the other hand, when one is besieged during prayer by a sense of coldness and lack of enthusiasm (comparable to the venom of the scorpion), he must interrupt his prayers, since this indicates that his service to G-d is totally inappropriate and must be reconstructed anew. (Likutei Sichos, vol. 2, p. 374)

12)B'nei Yissaschar: (as summarized in *The Month of Elul*, Rav DovBer Pinson)

עקרב akrav can also be divided into two words עיקר בית, with the letter bet alluding to the word bayit – house. The ‘Main House’ is the rebuilt Temple. The Third Holy Temple will be rededicated in the month of Cheshvan

G. Tribe: Menasheh (which means to forget)

13)The Month of Elul – Rav DovBer Pinson

When we fall into negative patterns, our sense of joy in life is deadened; this is the coldness of the scorio....Genuine joy is further kept at bay if we then continue to ruminate on our failures. In such a case “forgetting” the shortcomings of our past can empower us to come alive and joyfully

the limitless potential of the present. The word שמחה simchah – joy, contains the same letters as שמחה shemacha - to erase. Joy allows us to let go and erase past resentments.

H. Sense: Smell

14)Rav DovBer Pinson – The Month of Cheshvan:

Smell is the only sense that was not damaged or distorted by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the perception of duality and separation. This is the only sense that was not negatively affected by the snake, the Yetzer HaRa....It can therefore transport us back to the Unity-consciousness more directly than any other sense.

15)Breshit 3:6-8

“And the woman saw..” (sight), “And she took...” (touch) “And she ate... and he ate...” (taste), “and they heard...” (hearing)

16)Brachot 43b:

The dimension of soul called “Neshama” takes particular pleasure in the sense of smell.

17)Yeshayahu 11:3

וְהָרִיחַ בְּיַרְאֵת ה' וְלֹא־לְמַרְאֵה עֵינָיו יִשְׁפּוּט וְלֹא־לְשִׁמְעַ אָזְנוֹ יוֹכִיחַ:

And he shall be animated (“smell”) by the fear of Hashem, and neither with the sight of his eyes shall he judge, nor with the hearing of his ears shall he chastise.

18)Sanhedrin 93b:

He shall judge by smell.

I. Body Part: דַּקִּין dakin – Intestines

19)Gal Einai – Inner.org, based on Sefer Yetzira

The word for "intestines" (דַּקִּין) derives from the same root as the words meaning "minute" (דַּקָּה) or "grain" (דָּק). It implies the power to dissect into fine, refined parts. In the process of preparing the incense for the Temple (the consummate expression of the sense of smell in the Temple service), the priest would repeat (over and over) a phrase which uses the verb "to grind" (הִדְקָה הַיָּטֵב, (הִיטֵב הַדָּק), which is also cognate to the word for "intestines."

20)Rav DovBer Pinson – The Month of Cheshvan:

Cheshvan is a month in which we are pressed to digest the spiritual abundance of Tishrei, in order to fuel and illuminate our souls in the coming winter months. This work of deconstruction and integration requires us to break down and extract the essence of what feeds us on the deepest level. This is the work of the Dakin. Just as the Priests would ‘thoroughly grind’ 11 different plants to make the Ketoret in order to produce a pleasing aroma for Hashem, we too are tasked with transforming our various experiences as well as the world around us into something worth offering to the Infinite One. If we merit, our very lives will become like the Ketoret, and we too will give off a pleasing fragrance for Hashem.