

Discourse 21

*“HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem... -
This month shall be for you...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Vayikra,
Parshat HaChodesh, Rosh Chodesh Nissan, 5728
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹³³² “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.” In the discourses of the Tzemach Tzedek¹³³³ and the Rebbe Maharash,¹³³⁴ they bring the statement in Midrash Rabbah¹³³⁵ on the verse, “When the Holy One, blessed is He, chose His world, he set in it the beginnings of months and years. When He chose Yaakov and his descendants, He set the beginnings of the months of redemption.”

The explanation¹³³⁶ is that the two matters in the verse, “months-*Chadashim* חדשים,” and “the months of the year-*Chodshei HaShanah* חדשי השנה,” correspond to the two matters

¹³³² Exodus 12:2 – beginning of Parshat HaChodesh

¹³³³ Ohr HaTorah, Bo p. 264; Vol. 8 p. 2,920

¹³³⁴ Sefer HaMaamarim 5634 p. 160 and on

¹³³⁵ Midrash Shemot Rabba 15:11

¹³³⁶ See the beginning of the discourse by this title of the year 5700 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5700 p. 19).

of “When the Holy One, blessed is He, chose His world,” and “When He chose Yaakov and his descendants.”

In other words, the matter of “the months of **the year-Chodshei HaShanah-חדשי השנה**,” is connected to the Holy One, blessed is He, “choosing His world,” which refers to everything the world, even the luminaries in the heavens, “the great luminary” (the sun) and “the small luminary” (the moon),¹³³⁷ since it is by the path of their travel, that the establishment of the new months and years depends. This is as stated,¹³³⁸ “Let there be luminaries... and they shall serve as signs, and for festivals, and for days and years.” On the other hand, the matter of “**months-Chodashim-חדשים**” is connected to Him “choosing Yaakov and his descendants,” in that the existence of the Jewish people transcends the world.

This then, is the general difference between the month of Tishrei and the month of Nissan.¹³³⁹ That is, Tishrei is the beginning of the natural conduct, whereas Nissan is the beginning of the miraculous conduct that transcends the natural order.

[About this], it is known what it states in Akeidah,¹³⁴⁰ that there are two ways by which to know the greatness of the Creator; from the continuous conduct by way of the natural order, and from miraculous conduct such as the exodus from Egypt and the splitting of the sea, which is the matter of

¹³³⁷ Genesis 1:16

¹³³⁸ Genesis 1:14

¹³³⁹ Also see Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit 18b and on; Beginning of the discourse entitled “*HaChodesh*” 5654; 5666; 5678 (of Parshat HaChodesh), and elsewhere.

¹³⁴⁰ Parshat Bo to Exodus 12:2 (Shaar 38), cited and explained in the discourses cited in the preceding note.

overriding and nullifying the systems of the natural order, by which the greatness of the Creator is recognized to an even greater degree than through the natural order.

This likewise is the difference between Tishrei and Nissan. This is because the Tishrei is the matter of the conduct of the world according to the natural order, this being the way that the Holy One, blessed is He, conducts His world. The matter of Nissan, on the other hand, is the miraculous conduct that transcends the natural order, this being the way that the Holy One, blessed is He, conducts the Jewish people (“Yaakov and his descendants”). About this the verse states, “This month shall be for you,” specifying “for you-*Lachem*-לכם,” similar to the verse,¹³⁴¹ “They will be yours alone, strangers not sharing them with you.”¹³⁴²

This is also the meaning of the statement in Talmud,¹³⁴³ in explanation of the words of Mishnah,¹³⁴⁴ “The 1st of Nissan is the new year (*Rosh HaShanah*) for kings,” that “this was only taught in reference to the kings of Israel, whereas the kings of the nations of the world are counted from Tishrei.” Thus, since “all Israel are princes,”¹³⁴⁵ and beyond this, “all Israel are kings,” (as stated in Tikkunei Zohar),¹³⁴⁶ we thus find that the 1st of Nissan is the beginning of the year (*Rosh HaShanah*) for all Jews (unlike the nations of the world who are connected to

¹³⁴¹ Proverbs 5:17

¹³⁴² Midrash Shemot Rabba ibid. 15:23

¹³⁴³ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 3a

¹³⁴⁴ Mishnah, Rosh HaShanah 1:1

¹³⁴⁵ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 67a

¹³⁴⁶ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 1b

Tishrei). It therefore specifically states, “This month shall be for you-*Lachem*-לכם.”

2.

Now, about the month of Nissan, it states in Midrash there, that “the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt [in the month of Nissan] and they are destined to be redeemed [in the month of Nissan], as the verse states,¹³⁴⁷ ‘As in the days when you went out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders.’” That is, the month of Nissan itself has two matters, the redemption from Egypt, and the coming redemption.

Now, this must be better understood. For, as known, the coming redemption will be higher, beyond all comparison, to the redemption from Egypt. This is as emphasized by the words, “As in the days-*K’Yemei*-כִּימֵי when you went out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders,” with the [prefix letter] *Khaf*-כַּ which [only] indicates similarity (*Khaf HaDimyon*).

This is because in the coming future there will be wonders that are akin to “the days that you went out of the land of Egypt,”¹³⁴⁸ but this will be to such an extent that in the coming future the matter of recalling the exodus from Egypt will only be secondary to it.¹³⁴⁹ [This being so], why does the verse include both of them in the matter of the month of redemption, (“This month shall be for you,” which was

¹³⁴⁷ Micah 7:15

¹³⁴⁸ See Ohr HaTorah, Na”Ch to Micah 7:15 ibid.

¹³⁴⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 12b

established “when He chose Yaakov and his descendants”) at which time the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt, and at which time they are destined to be redeemed, in that this emphasizes that even when they are destined to be redeemed, there [still] will be an element of superiority to their redemption from Egypt.

The essential point of the explanation is that the novelty of the coming redemption relative to the redemption from Egypt, is that the revelation of the exodus from Egypt was through a drawing down from Above, by way of arousal from Above (being that the service of those below did not yet exist).

In contrast, in the coming redemption there will be revelations brought about through the work of the Jewish people, by their own strength and volition. This is what was introduced upon the exodus from Egypt, when “He chose Yaakov and his descendants,” in comparison to the state [of the world stemming] from when “the Holy One, blessed is He, chose His world.”¹³⁵⁰ That is, all matters come about through the work of the Jewish people by their own strength and volition, in that they are the ones who make “a dwelling place for the Holy One, blessed is He, in the lower worlds.”¹³⁵¹

However, for the service of those below to be possible, there must be assistance and the granting of empowerment from Above, this being the matter of the revelation of the exodus from Egypt. Therefore, even in the coming future, upon the conclusion of the work, there still will be the element of

¹³⁵⁰ Also see *Torat Menachem*, *Sefer HaMaamarim Nissan* p. 396

¹³⁵¹ See *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Bechukotai* 3; *Naso* 16; *Midrash Bereishit Rabba* 3; *Bamidbar Rabba* 13:6; *Tanya*, Ch. 36, and elsewhere.

superiority of the exodus from Egypt, being that in that time, the general matter of the work of the lower one, by his own strength and volition, began, by which we bring about the revelations of the coming future.

3.

Now, to understand this, we first must preface with an explanation of the three above-mentioned matters, [these being], the natural conduct (“when He chose His world”), the miraculous conduct of the exodus from Egypt (“when He chose Yaakov and his descendants”), and the miraculous conduct of the coming redemption (upon the conclusion of the work of the Jewish people).

The explanation is that in the Act of Creation (*Ma’aseh Bereishit*) *HaShem*’s יהוה title “God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי” is mentioned thirty-two times.¹³⁵² This is because the creation of the world is due only to His title “God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי,” about which the verse states,¹³⁵³ “For *HaShem*-יהוה God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי is a sun and a shield.” That is, just like a shield and sheath covers over and conceals the sun, so likewise, His title “God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי” covers over and conceals His Name *HaShem*-יהוה.

As known, His title “God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי-86” shares the same numerical value as “the natural order-*HaTeva*-הטבע-

¹³⁵² Zohar Chadash 94d; 96b; 112c; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One, The Gate of His Title (Shaar HaKinuy)*.

¹³⁵³ Psalms 84:12; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, translated as *The Gate of Unity and Faith*, Ch. 4.

86,”¹³⁵⁴ and the word, “nature-*Teva*-טבע” is of the same root as in the verse, “sunken-*Tooboo*-טובעו in the sea of reeds,”¹³⁵⁵ like something that is covered by water. That is, the world covers over the Godly light, and this is to such an extent that from the perspective of the world itself, there is room to posit that “there is no Master to this city,”¹³⁵⁶ Heaven forbid to think so.

However, through the exodus from Egypt, which came about through miracles that transcend the natural order, such as the splitting of the sea etc., there was a revelation of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which transcends the world. This is the meaning of [the verse],¹³⁵⁷ “I appeared... but with My Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה I did not make Myself known through them... Therefore, say to the children of Israel, ‘I am *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.’” That is, before the exodus from Egypt, the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה was not openly revealed, and this was the novelty introduced upon the exodus from Egypt etc.

It is this matter that begins from Rosh Chodesh Nissan, “the first of the months.” For, as known,¹³⁵⁸ the twelve new moons (Roshei Chadashim) [of the year] correspond to the

¹³⁵⁴ Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*) and The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*); Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 12 (Shaar HaNetivot) Ch. 2; Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaAhavah, Ch. 6 (section beginning “v'*Hamargeel*”); Shaalot uTeshuvot Chacham Tzvi, Section 18; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, translated as The Gate of Unity and Faith, Ch. 6; Likkutei Torah, Re’eh 22b and on.

¹³⁵⁵ Exodus 15:4; See Ohr HaTorah, Shir HaShirim Vol. 1 p. 315; Sefer HaMaamarim 5689 p. 51.

¹³⁵⁶ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 39:1

¹³⁵⁷ Exodus 6:3-6

¹³⁵⁸ Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *Gates of Light*, Gate Five (*Tiferet*); Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 13, Ch. 3; Siddur HaArizal, Kavanot Rosh Chodesh, Mishnat Chassidim, Seder Mo’ed, Mesechet Nissan and on (Kavanot Kol HaChodesh), and elsewhere.

twelve permutations of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה (which transcend the twelve months as they stem from the creation of the world that correspond to the twelve permutations of His title “Lord-*Adona*” אדני”-י”) and on Rosh Chodesh Nissan the first permutation radiates, this being the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה (according to its straightforward order) within which all the other permutations of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה in all the months are included,¹³⁵⁹ and therefore Nissan is “the first of the months.”¹³⁶⁰

This also is the meaning of what our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁶¹ “What is the reason for Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel’s ruling (that two weeks before Pesach one studies and teaches the laws of Pesach)? Because Moshe stood on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and cautioned about [properly performing] the Pesach offering, as the verse states,¹³⁶² ‘This month shall be for you the first of the months,’ and [in the next verse] it is written,¹³⁶³ ‘Speak to the entire congregation of Israel, saying... they shall take for them, every man, a lamb according to their fathers’ household etc.’” This is because beginning from Rosh Chodesh Nissan there is a radiance of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

Now, although in the exodus from Egypt there was a radiance of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is why there then was miraculous conduct that transcends the natural conduct stemming from His title “God-*Elohi*” מ-אלהי”ם,” nevertheless,

¹³⁵⁹ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*) and on; Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *Gates of Light*, Gate Five (*Tiferet*).

¹³⁶⁰ Also see *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5665 p. 118; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5671 p. 65.

¹³⁶¹ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 6b

¹³⁶² Exodus 12:2

¹³⁶³ Exodus 12:3

in the coming redemption there will be an even greater revelation beyond all comparison.

About this the verse states about the coming future,¹³⁶⁴ “And they will say on that day, ‘Behold, this (*Zeh*-זה) is our God; we hoped to Him that He would save us; this (*Zeh*-זה) is *HaShem*-יהו” to Whom we hoped etc.,” (as stated at the end of Tractate Taanit),¹³⁶⁵ in that they will say “This-*Zeh*-זה” twice, unlike the exodus from Egypt in which they only said “This-*Zeh*-זה” once, as they said at the splitting of the sea,¹³⁶⁶ “This (*Zeh*-זה) is my God.” This is because the revelation of the coming future will be much higher than the revelation of the exodus from Egypt.

The explanation is that the Name *HaShem*-יהו” that was revealed at the exodus from Egypt was the lower Name *HaShem*-יהו”, and although it transcends the world, it nevertheless has relation to the world (such that it is drawn down to also manifest in His title “God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי”). However, in the coming future the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו”, which is the essence of the Name *HaShem*-יהו” and completely transcends relation to the world, will be revealed.

4.

Now, based on this, we can say that the two matters of the month of Nissan; that the Jewish people were redeemed [in the month of Nissan], and that they are destined to be redeemed

¹³⁶⁴ Isaiah 25:9; See Midrash Shemot Rabba 23:15

¹³⁶⁵ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 31a

¹³⁶⁶ Exodus 15:2; Midrash Shemot Rabba 23:15 *ibid*.

[in the month of Nissan], are hinted in the two matters in the verse, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months of the year,” these being “the months of the year-*Chodshei HaShanah*-חדשי השנה,” and “months-*Chodashim*-חדשים.”

The explanation is that when it states, “it shall be for you the first of the months of the year,” this hints at the redemption from Egypt, when “This-*Zeh*-זה” was said once, [the word “This-*Zeh*-זה-12”] having the numerical value of 12-י"ב, which is the number of months in the year.

This is because there then was only a radiance of the lower Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, and since it relates to the world, it therefore is similar to the matter of “when the Holy One, blessed is He, chose His world” (hinted at in the months of the year, as mentioned above).

However, when it states, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months,” this specifically refers to what was introduced “when He chose Yaakov and his descendants,” which primarily hints at the coming redemption, at which time the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that completely transcends relation to the world will be revealed.¹³⁶⁷

However, based on this, we must better understand what is added by the words “it shall be for you the first of the months of the year,” compared to, “this month shall be for you the beginning of the months.” For, at first glance, since in the coming future there will be the revelation of the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, this being the true matter of “this month shall be

¹³⁶⁷ Also see the discourse entitled “*HaChodesh*” of Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan 5737 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5737 p. 181 and on).

for you the beginning of the months,” what need is there to also be the revelation of the lower Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה in that time, since this is still the aspect of “the months of the year,” which only is similar to “when He chose His world?”

5.

This may be understood by prefacing with the teaching of the Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch,¹³⁶⁸ in explanation of the words,¹³⁶⁹ “If our eyes shone like the sun and the moon,”¹³⁷⁰ which, at first glance, is not understood. That is, why is it that after mentioning the high level of the sun, we continue by mentioning the moon, being that the light of the moon is of no comparison to [the light of] the sun, like [the teaching],¹³⁷¹ “Of what use is a candle flame in broad daylight?”

The Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch, explains that the sun does not receive light, whereas the moon receives its light from the sun, but has greater pleasure from this. That is, the sun has no pleasure, being that “constant pleasure is not pleasurable.” In contrast, the sun has pleasure when its light reaches the moon, and the pleasure is then on a higher level etc.

The general explanation is that the light of the sun, which undergoes no change, is indicative of the drawing down from Above. In contrast, the light of the moon undergoes

¹³⁶⁸ Ohr Torah 84d, cited and explained in Ohr HaTorah, Va’etchanan p. 109-110; Rosh HaShanah, p. 1,400 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 437 and on; Also see Ohr HaTorah, Bamidbar p. 47.

¹³⁶⁹ In the liturgy of “*Nishmat*” in the morning prayers of Shabbat, the holidays, the Haggadah etc.

¹³⁷⁰ Also see Ohr HaTorah, Bo p. 263

¹³⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Chullin 60b

change (in that at month's end the moon is concealed, and there then is caused to be the birth (*Molad*) of the new moon etc.) specifically indicating the work of the recipient by his own strength. (This is because the light of the moon is not just the reflected light of the sun, but through it there also is a radiance of the essential light of the moon).¹³⁷²

Based on this, we can also explain the matter of the permutation of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that radiates in the month of Nissan, this being the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה according to its straightforward order (as mentioned in chapter three), which is hinted in the verse,¹³⁷³ “The heavens will be rejoice and the earth will be jubilant-*Yismechu HaShamayim V'Tageil HaAretz*-ישמחו השמים ותגל הארץ,” (this being an acronym of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה in its straightforward order) as explained in Mishnat Chassidim.¹³⁷⁴ At first glance, what is added by the words “the earth will be jubilant” after already mentioning that “the heavens will rejoice,” which is a higher matter?

However, the explanation is that the difference between the heavens and the earth is similar to the difference between the sun and the moon. This is because the earth receives from the heavens, just as the moon receives from the sun. Thus, because of the superiority of the work of the recipient by his own efforts (the moon and the earth) there is an added advantage to the matter of “the earth will be jubilant” even after there already is the matter of “the heavens will rejoice.”

¹³⁷² See Sefer HaArachim Chabad, section on “*Ohr HaLevanah*” (Vol. 3 p. 295 and on).

¹³⁷³ Psalms 96:11

¹³⁷⁴ Mishnat Chassidim, beginning of Mesechet Nissan.

The explanation, as it is in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is the difference between the two ways of serving Him, these being self-restraint (*Itkafiya*) and self-transformation (*It'hapcha*), which are the two modes of service, that of those who return to *HaShem*-יהו"ה in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*) and that of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*).

To explain, the work of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) is in a way of self-transformation (*It'hapcha*), which is why they have no need to engage with evil etc. Rather, all their work is in a way of “going from strength to strength,”¹³⁷⁵ this being the matter of advancing in elevation after elevation within holiness itself.

In contrast, the work of the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*) is in a way of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*), in that they must constantly battle against the evil and subjugate it. [This is unlike the Righteous (*Tzaddik*) who is called “the **servant** of *HaShem*-Eved *HaShem*-יהו"ה-עבד,” in that he already has finished the work of waging battle against the evil. Rather, [the repentant (*Baal Teshuvah*)] is called “one who **serves** God-*Oved Elohi*”*m-עובד אלהי"ם* in the present tense, since for him, the battle against the evil is constant.]¹³⁷⁶

This is especially so considering that, as known,¹³⁷⁷ the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*) require additional caution, with stringencies and protective fences, being that he is inclined toward evil etc.¹³⁷⁸ Thus, even though there is greatness to the work of self-transformation (*It'hapcha*), over and above the

¹³⁷⁵ See Psalms 84:8; Also see the end of Tractates Brachot and Moed Katan.

¹³⁷⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 15

¹³⁷⁷ Likkutei Torah, Va'etchanan 9d

¹³⁷⁸ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 59b

work of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*), nonetheless, the pleasure is primarily and specifically in the work of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*). For, since it is in a way of battle etc., there is greater emphasis of the toil that comes from one's own strength in it.

This likewise is the element of superiority of the exodus from Egypt, at which time the toil was in a way of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*). This is as explained in Tanya,¹³⁷⁹ on the verse,¹³⁸⁰ "The people fled," that the evil in the souls of the Jewish people was still in its full strength etc., and it therefore was necessary for their service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, to be in the mode of the repentant (*Baal Teshuvah*).

Because of the greatness of their service in the exodus from Egypt, even in the coming future the exodus from Egypt will be recalled.¹³⁸¹ Beyond this, even in the coming future the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*) will be necessary, as in the teaching,¹³⁸² "Moshiach is destined to bring the righteous *Tzaddikim* to repentance (*Teshuvah*)."

6.

Based on this, we can explain the verse, "This month shall be for you the beginning of the months (which then adds) it shall be for you the first of the months of the year." That is, even in the coming future, when there will be the revelation of

¹³⁷⁹ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 31

¹³⁸⁰ Exodus 14:5

¹³⁸¹ See the end of the discourse entitled "K'Yemei Tzeiticha MeiEretz Mitzrayim" 5708 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5708 p. 107 and on).

¹³⁸² See Zohar III 153b; Likkutei Torah, Drushei Shmini Atzeret 92b; Shir HaShirim 50b, and elsewhere.

the true matter of, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months,” this being the revelation of the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה which utterly transcends the world, there then will also be the matter of “the months of the year,” this being the revelation of the lower Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which relates to the world and was revealed in the exodus from Egypt.

This is because the novelty of the exodus from Egypt, “when He chose Yaakov and his descendants,” is the work of the Jewish people in the world by their own power, and it specifically is through this that the revelations of the coming future come about.

This then, is why the verse adds, “it shall be for you the first of the months of the year,” after already stating, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months,” (similar to the additional [mention of] the moon after the sun, and the additional mention of the “the earth will be jubilant” after [mentioning that] “the heavens will rejoice”).

This is because in the coming future, the superiority of the work of the Jewish people by their own strengths, through which we make “a dwelling place for the Holy One, blessed is He, in the lower worlds,” will be felt,¹³⁸³ as the verse states,¹³⁸⁴ “The glory of *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be revealed, and all flesh together will see, (meaning, the eyes of flesh, and even the physical flesh itself),¹³⁸⁵ that the mouth of *HaShem*-יהו"ה has spoken,” with the coming of our righteous Moshiach, in the near future, literally!

¹³⁸³ See Midrash Tanchuma, Bechukotai 3; Naso 16; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya, Ch. 36, and elsewhere.

¹³⁸⁴ Isaiah 40:5

¹³⁸⁵ See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 15 p. 44, and the citations there.