

# OHRNET

PARSHAT BO 3 SHVAT 1 FEBRUARY 2025

• VOL 32 NO. 12

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

### One Jet of Water

*“It happened on that very day: Hashem took the Children of Yisrael out of the land of Egypt, in their legions” (12:51)*

One spark can start an inferno, and one jet of water can put it out.

During the recent terrible fires in Los Angeles, 65-year-old John Carr defied evacuation orders to save the home that had been passed down to him by his parents.

He said, “The house was built by my mother and father in 1960. And I lived here my whole life. There's a lot of memories here. And I think I owed it to them as well to try my best to save it. Some things in life are worth fighting for. I was hosing the house down and getting ready, and when the houses started to burn, I didn't see one single fire truck out here at all. Zero. If they had some fire trucks, just put a squirt here, a squirt there, and kept an eye on things, all these houses would be here.”

One small jet of water can put out an inferno – but only at the beginning.

The gemara in Sukkah: Rabbi Yehudah said: “In the future, Hashem will take the evil inclination and slaughter it in front of the Tzadikim and the Resha'im, the righteous and the wicked. Both the Tzadikim and the Resha'im will cry; the Tzadikim will cry when they realize that the evil inclination they overcame was like an enormous mountain; the Resha'im will realize that what they failed to overcome was like a tiny thread of hair, and they will cry, ‘How were we not able to conquer such a small thread of hair?’”

The uncontrollable inferno of the evil inclination starts off with a little spark. All one needs is one or two jets of water to put it out. But only in the beginning. If one doesn't stamp out that fire at the start, it will grow and engulf the person.

The Torah calls Egypt, “The nakedness of the land.” (Ber. 42:9) Egypt was an entire culture dedicated to the pursuit of infinite variety and potential. By definition, such a society is

incapable of, and scorns, fidelity. When Hashem took the Jewish People out of Egypt, He took us out of a worldview that glorifies immorality.

If John Carr was prepared to fight for his legacy, his house, his memories, how much more we, the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, should be prepared to fight for ours. Carr said there were no fire trucks in the area. He was on his own. You know, that's our world today. Relatively few people care about holiness in the world.

But the Jewish nation does, and we're preserving generations. We're preserving a legacy infinitely more valuable than any house. We have to do for ourselves and the world what John Carr did for his house. We have to stand up and rescue a world, burning, out of control with physicality.

It only takes "a small jet of water."

---

## TALMUD TIPS

---

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

### **Sanhedrin 58-64**

#### **No Laughing Matter**

*Rav Nachman said, "It is forbidden to make fun of anything except for making fun of idolatry, which is indeed permitted to ridicule."*

Rav Nachman explains the source for this teaching in the *gemara* as being based on verses in Yeshayahu (46:1) that ridicule, mock and laugh at idols: "Bel squats; Nebo soils himself.." Rashi (in Sefer Yeshayahu) explains that the prophet is making fun of these two Babylonian idols: "The deities of Babylon squatted and soiled themselves. This is an expression of ridicule of the idols." Rashi on our *daf* expounds on the nature of this ridicule: "Even though the idols are not animals and don't have excrement, the verse speaks in this manner in order to make fun of idols and idolatry."

A practical example of making fun of idols in our day is jeering at the name of the wicked Haman and the merrymaking we enjoy each year on Purim when we celebrate the miracle of being saved from the genocidal plan of the wicked Haman who demanded being treated as an idol.

▪ *Sanhedrin 63b*

---

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

---

G-d tells Moshe that He is hardening Pharaoh's heart so that through miraculous plagues the world will know for all time that He is the one true G-d. Pharaoh is warned about the plague of locusts and is told how severe it will be. Pharaoh agrees to release only the men, but Moshe insists that everyone must go. During the plague, Pharaoh calls for Moshe and Aharon to remove the locusts, and he admits he has sinned.

G-d ends the plague but hardens Pharaoh's heart, and again Pharaoh fails to free the Jews. The country, except for the Jewish People, is then engulfed in a palpable darkness. Pharaoh calls for Moshe and tells him to take all the Jews out of Egypt, but to leave their flocks behind. Moshe tells him that not only will they take their own flocks, but Pharaoh must add his own too.

Moshe tells Pharaoh that G-d's going to bring one more plague, the death of the firstborn, and then the Jews will leave Egypt. G-d again hardens Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh warns Moshe that if he sees him again, Moshe will be put to death. G-d tells Moshe that the month of Nissan will be the chief month.

The Jewish People are commanded to take a sheep on the 10th of the month and guard it until the 14th. The sheep is then to be slaughtered as a Pesach offering, its blood put on their doorposts, and its roasted meat eaten. The blood on the doorpost will be a sign that their homes will be passed-over when G-d strikes the firstborn of Egypt. The Jewish People are told to memorialize this day as the Exodus from Egypt by never eating chametz on Pesach.

Moshe relays G-d's commands, and the Jewish People fulfill them flawlessly. G-d sends the final plague, killing the firstborn, and Pharaoh sends the Jews out of Egypt. G-d tells Moshe and Aharon the laws concerning the Pesach sacrifice, *pidyon haben* (redemption of the firstborn son) and *tefillin*.

---

# COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

---

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

## KRIAT SHEMA AL HAMITAH (PART 3)

“The amount of sleep required by the average person is five minutes more.”  
Wilson Mizener – American Playwright

The Talmud teaches that when we sleep at night, our souls go up to the Heavens for a daily accounting. In a certain spiritual way, this leaves our bodies “unprotected.” In order to try and counterbalance our temporary lack of protection, we recite the following blessing: “Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, Who casts the bonds of sleep upon my eyes, and slumber upon my eyelids. May it be Your will, Hashem, my G-d and G-d of my forefathers, that You lay me down to sleep in peace, and raise me up in peace. May my thoughts, bad dreams, and bad notions not confound me. May my offspring be perfect before You, and may You illuminate my eyes lest I die in sleep. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who illuminates the entire world with His glory.”

Our blessing begins with our declaring that Hashem “casts the bonds of sleep upon my eyes, and slumber upon my eyelids.” In the final blessing of the Morning Blessings, we thank Hashem, “Who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids.” As our day begins, we thank Hashem for giving us back our lives. And, now, as we end our day, we mirror that blessing and thank Hashem for the incredible gift of sleep. It is sleep that allows us to recuperate from the ordeals of the day. And it is sleep that lets us recharge ourselves so that we will have the strength to face the new day.

We then continue with a request that we “sleep in peace.” This is referring to being able to sleep in physical safety. Then we ask, “May my thoughts, bad dreams, and bad notions not confound me.” The Rabbis explain that we are entreating Hashem that our dreams should not be tainted by any improper thoughts we may have had during the day. As Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch writes, we should wake up in the morning, “Unencumbered by those influences that would be inimical to our life and endeavors during our waking hours on the day to come. G-d, Who calls us to sleep and summons us to awaken, has it within His power also to grant us peace in and for both sleeping and waking.”

Because our souls have been taken to the Heavens as we sleep, the Talmud teaches (*Pesachim* 57b) that while asleep we are considered to be partially dead. When we are asleep, we are in a state of unawareness. We lack any clarity to see and connect to Hashem. For this reason we ask of Hashem, “May You illuminate my eyes lest I die in sleep.” Not necessarily death as in the end of life. But, also a reference to existing in this world in a state of spiritual “death,” the most terrible reality of all – being disconnected from the true Source of life.

Napoleon Bonaparte would sleep for only a few hours each night. Someone once asked him why he slept so little. He replied, “When I am awake, I am the king of the world. When I am asleep, I am no different from any other foot soldier!”

The Prophet Yeshayah in 42:18 declares, “Deaf ones, listen! Blind ones, see!” The Chidushei HaRim asks how it is possible for the deaf to hear and for the blind to see. He answers that Yeshayah is referring to those who are deaf and blind to spirituality. That is why the Prophet continues (ibid. 20), “Seeing much but heeding not. Opening ears but hearing not.” The Chidushei HaRim explains that in each person’s life there are moments so spiritually lofty, that with just the most minimal effort, even one who is “deaf” can hear, and one who is “blind” can see.

Our blessing is beseeching Hashem that our place is not to be with those who are deaf and blind to Him. Rather, we will hear and see Hashem’s Majesty in everything that we do.

*To be continued...*

*\*Please note that there are two differing opinions about when the blessing is recited. Either it should be said at the beginning (Rambam Hilchot Tefillah 7:1), or the second possibility is that it is said at the very end of Kriat Shema al Hamitah (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 239:1).*

Ohrnet Magazine is a weekly Torah magazine published by Ohr Somayach  
Institutions,

POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel · Tel +972-2-581-0315 · Email. [info@ohr.edu](mailto:info@ohr.edu)

Contributing authors, editors and production team: Rabbi Nota Schiller – Rosh HaYeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz - Rav of Kehillos Ohr Somayach, Avi Kaufman, Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein, Rabbi Reuven Lauffer, Rabbi Yaakov Meyers, Mrs. Rosalie Moriah, Rabbi Moshe Newman, Rabbi Shlomo Simon, Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair, Rabbi Yehuda Spitz, Mrs. Helena Stern.

©1992-2025Ohr Somayach Institutions – All rights reserved – This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Editor’s disclaimer – Ohrnet Magazine is not intended to be a source for halachic rulings. In any real and specific case one should consult a qualified halachic authority for ruling.

---

# Q & A

---

## Questions

1. What was Pharaoh's excuse for not releasing the Jewish children?
2. How did the locusts in the time of Moshe differ from those in the days of Yoel?
3. How did the first three days of darkness differ from the last three?
4. When the Jews asked the Egyptians for gold and silver vessels, the Egyptians were unable to deny ownership of such vessels. Why?
5. *Makat bechorot* took place at *exactly* midnight. Why did Moshe say it would take place at *approximately* midnight?
6. Why did the first-born of the animals die?
7. How did Moshe show respect to Pharaoh when he warned him about the aftermath of the plague of the first-born?
8. G-d told Moshe "so that My wonders will be multiplied" (11:9). What three wonders was -G- d referring to?
9. Why did G-d command the mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh to Aharon, and not only to Moshe?
10. Up to what age is an animal fit to be a Pesach offering?
11. Prior to the Exodus from Egypt, what *mitzvot* involving blood did G-d give to the Jewish People?
12. Rashi gives two explanations of the word "*Pasachti* ." What are they?
13. Why were the Jews told to stay indoors during *makat bechorot*?
14. What was Pharaoh screaming as he ran from door to door the night of *makat bechorot* ?
15. Why did Pharaoh ask Moshe to bless him?
16. Why did the Jewish People carry their matzah on their shoulders rather than have their animals carry it?
17. Who comprised the *erev rav* (mixed multitude)?
18. What three historical events occurred on the 15th of Nissan, prior to the event of the Exodus from Egypt?
19. What is the source of the "milk and honey" found in *Eretz Yisrael* ?
20. The only non-kosher animal whose first-born is redeemed is the donkey. What did the donkeys do to "earn" this distinction?

*All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated.*

## Answers

1. 10:11 - Since children don't bring sacrifices there was no need for them to go.
2. 10:14 - The plague brought by Moshe was composed of one species of locust, whereas the plague in the days of Yoel was composed of many species.
3. 10:22 - During the first three days the Egyptians couldn't see. During the last three days they couldn't move.
4. 10:22 - During the plague of darkness the Jews could see and they searched for and found the Egyptians' vessels.
5. 11:4 - If Moshe said the plague would begin exactly at midnight, the Egyptians might miscalculate and accuse Moshe of being a fake.
6. 11:5 - Because the Egyptians worshiped them as gods, and when G-d punishes a nation He also punishes its gods.
7. 11:8 - Moshe warned that "All these servants of yours will come down to me" when, in fact, it was Pharaoh himself who actually came running to Moshe.
8. 11:9 - The plague of the first-born, the splitting of the sea, the drowning of the Egyptian soldiers.
9. 12:1 - As reward for his efforts in bringing about the plagues.
10. 12:5 - One year.
11. 12:6 - Circumcision and *Korban Pesach*.
12. 12:13 - "I had mercy" and "I skipped."
13. 12:22 - Since it was a night of destruction, it was not safe for anyone to leave the protected premises of his home.
14. 12:31 - "Where does Moshe live? Where does Aharon live?"
15. 12:32 - So he wouldn't die, for he himself was a first-born.
16. 12:34 - Because the commandment of matzah was dear to them.
17. 12:38 - People from other nations who became converts.
18. 12:41 - The angels came to promise that Sarah would have a son, Yitzchak was born, and the exile of the "covenant between the parts" was decreed.
19. 13:5 - Goat milk, date and fig honey.
20. 13:13 - They helped the Jews by carrying silver and gold out of Egypt.

---

# WHAT'S IN A WORD?

---

## Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

### Follow the Leader (Part 1/2)

Biblical Hebrew offers several different terms that denote the concept of “leading.” If we focused just on verbs used in conjunction with the exodus from Egypt to denote Hashem “leading” the Jewish People out of Egypt and “leading” them through the wilderness, we will already encounter several such terms, including *noheg* (Ps. 78:52), *molich* (Deut. 8:2, Jer. 2:6, Ps. 136:16), *nachah* (Ex. 13:17, 15:13, Ps. 77:21), and *nohel* (Ex. 15:13). Our discussion of these four synonyms will be cut into two halves, with Part 1 of this two-part essay focusing on the words *noheg* and *molich*, while in Part 2 we delve into the other two Hebrew terms for the act of “leading” and attempt to show how they all differ from each other.

The term *noheg* appears three times in the Book of Exodus, none in direct reference to the exodus itself, but all in adjacent stories: The first time it appears is when relating that in his capacity as a Jethro's shepherd, Moses "led" (*vayinhag*) his sheep through the desert (Ex. 3:1). The second time that this the term appears is when reporting that the day before the onset of the Plague of Locust, Hashem "led" (*nihag*) an easternly wind (Ex. 10:13) to foreshadow the arrival of the grasshoppers. The final time this term appears is in the narrative concerning the Splitting of the Sea, when the Egyptians' chariots forcefully led their riders through the muck and mud straight into the Red Sea bank — where they duly drowned (Ex. 14:25).

The classical lexicographers like Ibn Saruk, Ibn Janach, Ibn Parchon, and Radak all trace the word *noheg* to the three-letter root NUN-HEY-GIMMEL, which appears about thirty times throughout the Bible. However, as is his way, Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim actually traces that trilateral root to a simpler biliteral root HEY-GIMMEL (viewing the initial NUN as extraneous to the core etymon). Rabbi Pappenheim offers two different ways of explaining the meaning of this two-letter root (and thus how it relates to the concept of *noheg*), one in his work *Yeriot Shlomo* (on Hebrew synonyms) and one in his work *Cheshek Shlomo* (on biliteral stems in Hebrew). Since, in my opinion, the latter source is easier to understand, we will focus on presenting that approach.

Essentially, Rabbi Pappenheim in *Cheshek Shlomo* defines the fundamental meaning of HEY-GIMMEL as "consistent action." He thus explains that the word *hoge/hagut/higayon* denotes "sustained thinking" (for examples, see Josh 1:8, Prov. 15:28, Ps. 19:15, 49:4) as done when delving into the intricacies of a topic, while the words *hege/higayon* denote "sustained sound-



making," like that of crying, cooing, or a person who consistently speaking of the same thing (for examples, see Isa. 31:4, 38:14, 59:3, 59:11, Ps. 37:30, 71:24, Prov. 8:7).

Rabbi Pappenheim sees *noheg* as relating to this core meaning of HEY-GIMMEL because "leading" entails keeping those under one's influence on a consistent course. This verbiage is thus used when referring to a shepherd leading his flock (Ex. 3:1, Ps. 78:52) and to a general leading his army (I Chron. 20:1) because in both cases, the leader wants his charges to stay on the right track.

That said, Rabbi Pappenheim does point out that the sort of "leading" denoted by *noheg* is not always positive. This is because the term *noheg* refers in general to any repeated mode of comportment or the way one consistently acts — whether he is supposed to act that way or not. For example, Laban uses an inflection of *noheg* in a negative sense, when complaining that Jacob was "leading" (i.e., treating) his daughters as though they were captives of war (Gen. 31:26). Similarly, when Job criticizes the ills of those evil-doers who abuse from the unfortunate, he said: "the donkey of the orphans they lead [*yinhagu*], they damage the widow's ox" (Job 24:3). In this case, those bad people take advantage of the orphan's weakened position to commandeer or steal their donkey and "lead" the donkey away from their rightful owners. This is not an admirable or noble type of leadership, but actually a type of exploitation. Similarly, in the aforementioned case of the Egyptian chariot riders at the Red Sea, the chariots "led" them to their watery demise by consistently heading towards the river bank, even when they should not have.

One common form of the word *noheg* is the Hebrew term *manhig* ("leader"), applied to a person who engages in the act of *noheg*. Other words that are directly related to *noheg* include the Modern Hebrew word *nahag* ("driver") and *hege* ("steering-wheel").

Likewise, the term *higayon* in the sense of "logic/dialectics," as it is often used in Modern Hebrew, is a Medieval Hebrew neologism that developed after Biblical Hebrew. This usage is explained in *Peirush HaMilot HaZarot* ("Explanation of Bizarre Words"), written by Rabbi Shmuel Ibn Tibbon (the translator responsible for rendering Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* in Hebrew) as having been coined as a way of expressing Greco-Arabic philosophy in Hebrew. All of these words relate to the concept of "leading," because a driver "leads" his car and other passengers to their final destination, the steering-wheel is the device used to "lead" the car in the right direction, and logic/dialectics is the modality used to "lead" a person to his final conclusions. [Following from Rabbi Pappenheim's understanding of *noheg* as relating to "consistency," we may add that "logic" refers to the epistemological and intellectual frameworks in which arguments can be made. When employing "logic," one must consistently refer back to a specific framework in order for a proposition to hold muster.]

The word *minhag* in Biblical Hebrew refers to the way one rides a horse (II Kgs. 9:20). But in later rabbinic usage, a *minhag* is a “custom” or “tradition” that people follow. Meaning, a *minhag* is a particular habit or way of life that a person, family, or community has accustomed themselves to consistently following. In other words, it is a sort of rubric that “leads” a person in determining how to act, hence its connection to the idea of *noheg* (and, per Rabbi Pappenheim, consistency).

Just like we saw that *noheg* can sometimes refer to being led into something destructive or otherwise negative, many rabbis over the generations have decried the dark side of *minhag* which sometimes leads people, families, or communities into placing customs on a higher pedestal than they deserve and/or adopting customs that are unbecoming or are otherwise halachically problematic. To underscore such concerns, many rabbis have homiletically pointed out that the word *minhag* spelled backwards yields *gehinnom* (see responsa Mahari Mintz §66, Rabbi Yaakov Emden's *Migdal Oz Beis Middos Aliyas Vatranut, Pele Yoetz* s.v. *minhag*, and *Sdei Chemed Kllalim Ma'arechet* MEM §38).

As mentioned above, another term used to denote “leading” is *molich*. Forms of this word appear when describing Hashem leading the Jews through the desert (see Deut. 8:15 and Ps. 136:16). Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer clarifies that the term *molich* in the context of “leading” is simply an inflection of the verb *holech* (“going/walking”), as it denotes the leader’s role in making something happen and helping the people under his responsibility *go* from one situation or place to another. Needless to say then, the word *molich* derives from the Hebrew root (HEY)-LAMMED-KAF — of which declensions appear more than 1550 times in the Hebrew Bible!

Indeed, Rabbi Pappenheim points out that the core etymological basis for this term is not directly related to “leading,” but is rather a borrowed or ancillary meaning of the word’s etymological root. Similarly, the word *yolech* appears in the Bible when Hashem “led” (i.e., took charge of) the sea with a strong easternly wind the entire night before the Splitting of the Sea (Ex. 14:21). In this case, He commandeered that force of nature for the sake of bringing a miracle on the morrow.

Interestingly, even though the letter MEM in the word *molich* is clearly not essential to the core root of the term, Rabbi Shmuel David Luzzatto (in his comments to Gen. 36:31) writes that the word *melech* (“king”) comes from *molich* in the sense that a king “leads” his people in a certain direction. There is a lot to say about the word *melech* and its apparent synonyms. In fact, Rabbi Shlomo of Urbino in his lexicon of Hebrew synonyms *Ohel Moed* lists fifty-seven synonyms to the word *melech* in Biblical Hebrew. All of the terms he lists refer to positions of leadership or authority in one way or another. But that’s a story for another time.

*\*To be continued...*

---

# TAAMEI HAMITZVOS – Reasons behind the Mitzvos

---

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

*“Study improves the quality of the act and completes it, and a mitzvah is more beautiful when it emerges from someone who understands its significance.” (Meiri, Bava Kama 17a)*

## SANCTIFICATION OF THE NEW MOON

Mitzvah #4; *Shemos* 12:2

The first Mitzvah that Moshe taught us was to sanctify the new moon and to follow a lunar calendar that begins with Nissan (*Parashas Bo*, 12:2). Included in this Mitzvah is the requirement to institute leap years to ensure that Nissan falls in spring, the season of natural renewal, as well as of the renewal of our nation through the Exodus. To appreciate the significance of this Mitzvah to our people at that time, we need first to reflect on the symbolism of the solar calendar that was followed by their Egyptian masters.

The Egyptians’ choice of a solar calendar may be associated with the fact that they worshiped the sun (*Abarbanel* to *Yirmiyah* 43:3). The sun rises every day from the same direction it rose the previous day, with no noticeable sign of change. The rest of the natural world likewise continues along its perpetual course, and there is nothing new under the sun (*Koheles* ch. 1). Their Hebrew slaves were even more restricted in this respect, for they lacked the independence to make choices and create changes.

In contrast, the moon changes from day to day, and once a month it experiences a renewal that is displayed around the world. When we were released from the clutches of the Egyptians and granted the Mitzvah to sanctify the moon’s renewal, we were granted independent power to define the sanctity of time, the fabric of reality, by designating the day of the moon’s renewal. This newfound independence would come with its ups and downs, as we rise and fall corresponding to our choices, just as the moon waxes and wanes — but all this is part of the process of growth.

We were commanded to mark Nissan, the beginning of our nation, as the first month, as opposed to Tishrei, the beginning of the world. This meant that we would no longer view ourselves as regular human beings locked with the confines of nature, who began with the beginning of the world in Tishrei, but rather as a class of human beings who can control the universe, who date back to the Exodus of Nissan (see *Abarbanel* and *Rav Hirsch* to 12:2). Until then, like the nations, we were under the astrological influence of the constellations. From then on, to the contrary, we control the months, along with the influence of their associated astrological signs (*Olelos Ephraim* §51). This means that a Jew can merit to be impervious to any astrological influences (see *Shabbos* 156a and *Olelos Ephraim* §5).

Not only do we have a Mitzvah to sanctify Rosh Chodesh. Rosh Chodesh sanctifies us. The festivals, which all depend on our designation of Rosh Chodesh, bring sanctity to us and develop our relationship with Hashem, and Rosh Chodesh itself is a miniature festival that affects us similarly. Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos correspond to the Patriarchs, and the twelve

festivals of Rosh Chodesh correspond to the twelve tribes (*Abudraham, Rosh Chodesh*). When the Jewish men sinned with the Golden Calf, Rosh Chodesh lost much of its festival status, but it is still commemorated through a festive meal (*Orach Chaim* 419:1). Through the renewal of Rosh Chodesh, we merit atonement. Some, therefore, have a custom to fast on the day before Rosh Chodesh, which is called Yom Kippur Kattan, a miniature Yom Kippur.

On a deeper level of understanding, the moon's reflection of the sun's light symbolizes the reflection of Hashem's light. Thus, Jewish kingship, which reflects Hashem's will in the world, is compared to a moon. Just as a moon reaches fullness after fifteen days and then disappears after another fifteen days, Jewish kingship ascended fifteen generations from Avraham until King Shlomo and then declined until the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* fifteen generations later (*Shemos Rabbah* 15:26). And just as the moon renews itself without fail, the Jewish people will soon become renewed in full splendor under the leadership of Mashiach, never to wane again. For this reason, when we recite the blessing over the new month, we say, "*David, melech Yisrael, chai v'kayam!*" (*David, king of Israel, lives on!*), meaning that the Davidic dynasty lives on despite its apparent disappearance and that it will one day be renewed like the just-witnessed phenomenon of the moon's renewal. We conclude the ceremony with a brief dance, which resembles a wedding dance, to symbolize the future renewal of our marriage-like relationship with Hashem (*Orach Chaim* 426:2).

This idea, that the moon's reflection of the sun symbolizes how we reflect Hashem's will, is related to the aforementioned idea that our ability to designate the moon's day of renewal symbolizes our ability to define the sanctity of time. For, to the extent that we reflect Hashem's will, we represent the King of the universe, and this empowers us to control the world according to His will. We will only be able to do so fully when Mashiach comes and the Davidic moon becomes full again.

Since the Jewish women refused to part with their golden earrings for the formation of the Golden Calf, Hashem rewarded them in this world by granting them to observe Rosh Chodesh more than men, and in the next world by renewing them like Rosh Chodesh (*Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* §44; see *Hilchos Chag B'Chag Rosh Chodesh*, ch. 5, for halachic details). The moon relates to women in particular, because a wife reflects her husband's will similar to the way the moon reflects the sun's light. Accordingly, the renewal of the moon's light is especially symbolic for women, for their marital relationship experiences a similar renewal through the monthly cycle (*Ohr Zarua*, Vol. 1, *Niddah* §360).

Although these days we no longer sanctify the new moon, we can all connect with this Mitzvah by taking stock of our deeds before Rosh Chodesh and planning improvement in the coming month, lauding Hashem for His renewed kindness through the recital of Hallel, reciting the Mussaf prayer that corresponds to the Rosh Chodesh Mussaf offering, and observing this richly symbolic day as a miniature festival. We are celebrating our renewed relationship with Hashem, the opportunity to reflect His will in the new month, and the belief in our upcoming national renewal that is symbolized by this day.