



This Month To You Parshas Boh

The Viennese professor was excited, not every day did a renowned rabbi come to his practice; it was Rabbi Yisroel Meir of Radun, the Chafetz Chayim.¹ The rabbi came to consult with the doctor regarding a digestive problem from which he was suffering. After a thorough examination the doctor concluded that an operation was required, but he would try to treat the condition with medications first.

When the doctor sat to write the prescription the Chafetz Chayim asked him: "Does the medication contain grains?" it was just before Pesach time. The doctor did not understand the question. "Pesach is in two week and I will be prohibited from consuming *Chametz*. That is why I ask," the Chafetz Chayim explained.

"Since when is this so?" The doctor inquired. The Chafetz Chayim replied "Since we have received the Torah, over 3,000 years ago, we received 613 commandments; one of them is the prohibition to consume *Chametz* on Pesach,". The doctor seemed incredulous; how one could sustain beliefs over such a long time?

Instead of answering directly the Chafetz Chayim questioned regarding the operation: "surely the operation is dangerous and I might bleed to death?" The doctor responded that he was competent and that the Chafetz Chayim had nothing to fear, to strengthen his point he pointed to all the diplomas hanging on his wall.

"When did you get these diplomas?" the Chafetz Chayim asked. The doctor responded "40 years ago from the University of Berlin." "But what about technological advancement, how can one rely on a diploma decades old?" asked the Chafetz Chayim. "What do you suggest, that I get a diploma every year? The diploma is for life" pronounced the doctor.

"That point is relevant for me as well," the Chafetz Chayim explained. "A document is for life. The Torah is a document we received at Mount Sinai, and is binding for all generations. The Torah is everlasting and does not need to be rechecked or renewed."

This week we read Parshas Hachodesh,² one of the four parshios³ read at this time of the year. We read: "This

¹ Yisrael Meir (HaKohen) Kagan (1838 – 1933), known popularly as the Chafetz Chaim, was an influential Lithuanian Jewish rabbi of the Musar movement, a Halakhist, posek, and ethicist whose works continue to be widely influential in Jewish life.

² Parshat HaChodesh is a special section of the Torah (Shmot 12:1-20) which is read on the Shabbat before the month of Nissan. It is read as a

month shall be **to you** the head of the months; **to you** it shall be the first of the months of the year."⁴ Why does the verse emphasize this is "**to us**"?

The Midrash tells us: "When G-d chose His world He created the beginnings of the (lunar) months and years, and when He chose Yaacov and his sons he set a month of redemption in which they were redeemed from Egypt and in which they will be redeemed in the future." What does this mean?

When G-d created the world He instated a regime of months and years according to which the world revolves. When he chose the Jewish Nation he revealed to them His kingship of the world and His miracles. "And in order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son's son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and My signs that I placed in them, and you will know that I am the Lord."⁵

Although all months run a natural course, the month of Nissan in which the exodus from Egypt occurred is unique, as G-d's kingship in the world was revealed, and therefore it is called "the head of the months."

Therefore, this month is "**to you**", to show that G-d chose this world for the Jewish People only. The second "**to you**" denotes to the fact the G-d is the ruler of the world and when the time comes He will redeem us from exile.

Years after his visit, the Chafetz Chayim expanded on the concept he related to at the doctor's office: "In previous generations, when all was conducted properly, the tradition was passed with love from generation to generation, and the sons accepted their father's teachings, as was the custom. Our holy tradition has been passed down since the first generation that received the Torah first-hand."

This is the Jewish People's certificate which it has been proudly bearing for the past 3,000 years, and with which they will be redeemed in the future.

preparation for Pesach, and discusses various commandments related to the holiday, including the Paschal offering, bitter herbs, Matzah, and the Seder.

³ In the month of Adar there are 4 Parshiot that are read after the weekly each Shabbat. Parshat Shekalim is to remember the mitzvah to donate half-shkalim in the time of the Bet HaMikdash. Parshat Zachor is to remember the mitzvah of destroying Amalek in proximity to the story of Purim. Parshat Parah is in commemoration of the parah adumah done before the inauguration of Mishkan,

⁴ Shmot 12:2.

⁵ Shmot 10:2.