

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	KETUVIM
Vayikra	17 Mar., 2018	1 Nisan 5778	Lev. 1:1-6:7	Ezek. 45:16-46:18	Luke 22:1-13

Today is the first day of Nisan. It is also known as Shabbat HaChodesh. It occurs either on the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh Nisan or on Rosh Chodesh itself. Before we start expounding on today's Torah portion, we would like to share with you an insight to a month called Nisan or Aviv according to the Hebrew calendar.

Nisan is the first month of the biblical year. As you recall, Hashem said, "This month shall be for you the beginning of month (Rosh Chodashem): it shall be the first month of the year for you."¹ As we have studied in the past, "*rosh*" is a Hebrew word for "head" or "beginning", and "*chodash*" means "month."

There is another day known as *Rosh Hashanah*. This is the Jewish New Year, meaning "head of the year" or "first of the year." It begins on the first day of *Tishrei*, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, which falls during September or October. *Rosh Hashanah* commemorates the creation of the world and marks the beginning of the Days of Awe, a 10-day period of introspection and repentance that culminates in the Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

The Nisan is an auspicious (favorable) month. This is the month we celebrate Pesach. Usually, the holiday that the month we celebrate already reflects, and shows the essence of the month. One of the things we do during this month begins cleaning our homes and in search of *chametz* (leavened) to destroy them as Hashem says, "And there shall be no leavened *lechem* (bread) seen with you in all your borders seven days; neither shall any of the meat which you sacrificed the first yom at evening, remain all night until the morning."²

We are not to eat any unleavened bread for seven days as Hashem commanded in Exodus 12:15; 13:7. This does not mean all leavened bread is bad. Yahushua said, "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into three measures of flour, until all of it was leavened."³

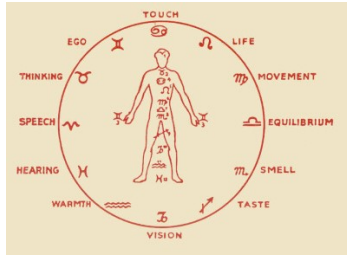
The zodiac symbol of Nisan is Aries (Ram). In Exodus, we are to take a lamb (12:3), roasted (12:8), and eat it (12:11). The sacrifice can be a lamb or a ram. There is some confusion as to what is a sheep, or a lamb, or a ram, etc.. A sheep is over one year old, produce offspring, and its meat is called "mutton". A lamb is less than one year old, do not produce offspring, and its meat is simply called "lamb". A female sheep is called a "ewe". A male sheep is called a "ram". A young male is called a ram lamb. So, when the Israelites took a lamb (Exod. 12:3), they took a lamb of either sex.

The first 14 days of Nisan determines this year's upcoming war not only against others, but within ourselves as well. Therefore, we need to correct ourselves now as we rid of physical *chametz* during Nisan, we also need to rid of spiritual *chametz*, lashon hara (evil tongue), evil inclination, ego, etc. The five senses (hear, sight, taste, touch, speech) frame and limit our perception of reality. Kabbalah says we perceive a mere one percent of reality, yet the 99 percent that we do not see is where the Light exists. It continues further that we have twelve senses.

¹ Exodus 12:2

² Deuteronomy 16:4

³ Matthew 13:33



Rudolph Steiner's twelve senses can be grouped into three categories. He distinguished senses which relate to the perception of:

the body: the senses of touch, of life, of movement, of balance

the external world: smell, taste, sight, temperature

the immaterial, spiritual world: hearing, speech, thought, ego

The body has physical senses that are the lowest, or senses of the will because they are used to perceive one's own body.

Then there are the senses of feeling. Observations made with these senses arouse feelings, i.e. smell of food makes you hungry. These senses are also reflected in our language: indifference, a gorgeous house.

Finally, there are the highest senses that focus particularly on the other. These are the spiritual or knowledge senses, and they are used in the observation of other people.⁴

The Tabernacle was erected and left standing for the first time on the 1st of Nisan, 2449, one year after the Israelites left Mitzrayim. Whenever Hashem wanted to communicate with Moshe, He would call out to Moshe to meet Him in the Tabernacle, as it says, “And YHWH called to Moshe.”⁵ In Hebrew, it is וַיִּקְרָא (va•y•kra) (And he called). The sages teach that “alef” is written smaller than usual and appears only once in the Scripture. It alludes to Moshe’s humility even in the face of his own greatness and his selection by Hashem for his exalted role. He understood that true humility was seeing the virtue in others. Whereas in the Chronicles 1:1, “alef” is bigger than other letters, Adam (אָדָם) which alludes to self-esteem. The sages teach that Adam allowed his self-esteem to degenerate into conceit, and this caused his downfall. Moshe rectified Adam’s mistake by making “alef” smaller in Leviticus.

The word “Vayikra” means both to call someone out loud and to read a book. In the Tanya, when one is reading the Torah, he is actually calling out to our Father in heaven to come to him. The idea that “And He called” is expressed as “Hashem is near to all who call/read Him to all who call/read Him truthfully.” And “there is no truth other than the Torah.”⁶ When we are reading the Torah loud, we are calling out to Hashem’s very essence, so that He comes to us. The Scroll of Torah says, “וַיִּקְרָא, אֵל-מִשְׁכָּה” to show the essence of Hashem is included in when “He called”.

There is an interesting conversation between Hashem and Moshe about the “alef” by Ba’al Haturim. Because of Moshe’s great humility, he did not want to write “Vayikra”. Rather he wanted to write “Vayikar” without the “alef” meaning “He happened” as the Torah writes regarding to Balam, “Vayikar Elokim el Bilam” [Elokim happened upon Bilam].⁷ But Hashem commanded Moshe, “No! You must write “Vayikra”. You are not Balam, Hashem forbid.” It would continue until Moshe concedes and writes “Vayikra” with a small “alef.”

The Tanya continues that every Israelite has a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu in his heart, which is the point, the point of inner *da’at* [consciousness] representing the connection with Hashem’s very essence. The verse then continues, “וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלָיו” [Vayedaber YHWH eilav] [Havayah spoke to him]. “מֵאֵהָל מוֹעֵד לְאֹמֶר” [mei’ohel mo’eid leimor] [from the Tabernacle saying], inviting Moshe that precedes the actual teaching Moshe will

⁴ Man as a Being of Sense and Perception, Rudolf Steiner

⁵ Leviticus 1:1

⁶ Jerusalem Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 3:5

⁷ Numbers 23:4

receive. Meaning, that the invitation to enter the Tabernacle comes from Hashem's essence, the "*derecho eretz*" [proper conduct] that precedes Torah, as the sages say whereby Moshe did not enter the Tabernacle before being called [invited].

Then Hashem tells Moshe how to perform sacrifices which seems taking of animal life unnecessarily. There are several problems with this. Hashem is taking away valuable property. He does not eat, drink, or smell. Yet, the Torah says, "a sweet aroma to YHWH."⁸ Isn't Hashem not pleased with us obeying any of His commandments that we now have to bring sacrifices to Him?

Rashi describes the pleasure that Hashem derives from the sacrifices as being the sheer pleasure that "I said [something] and My will was implemented."⁹ When the Israelites followed the prescription of sacrifices as Hashem commanded, their fulfillment of Hashem's words pleased Him in pure, unadulterated way. The sacrifice itself is a *chukim*, something that we will never understand, nor does it have to make any sense to us for He is the Creator of all.

Love in Hebrew is "*ahava*" [אהבה] with the numerical value of 13. Chassidic teachings note that there are 13 different types of love. It is associated with the *sefirah* of loving-kindness (*chesed*). Hashem created the world with love and sustains it with love. Therefore, love is the essential power of growth.¹⁰

The Torah teaches that love for Hashem passes through three incremental stages: "And you shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your lev, and with all your being, and with all your might."¹¹ Because love for Hashem is the most essential of all the types of love, it defines the nature of all the others.

As the Pesach approaches, Hashem commanded us in Exodus 12:19 not to have any leaven (*chametz* in Hebrew) in our house nor eat any *chametz* for seven days. While it is fairly easy to remove *chametz* from our house, there is one *chametz* that is difficult to remove. And that is us. We are constantly struggling within ourselves what to eat, what to wear, chase after the latest trend, gossip, slander, anger, and so on.

Yahoshua told us not to worry about food or clothing as Hashem in heaven will provide.¹² He also told us not to "worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own."¹³ "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you."¹⁴

The Talmud tells us that slander is worse than murder as our mouth has the power to curse and bless. Once the word leaves our mouth, it cannot be taken back. An example for today is the internet. Millions of people use social media to connect with families far away, friends, mentors, and even strangers. Once your ideas, thoughts, words, photos get posted online, it never gets deleted. Example: Facebook; Employer and employee relationship.

As the month of Aviv is the month of mercy, we are to ask Hashem for His mercy and walk the narrow path He has chosen for us, so we could be the pleasing "aroma" to our Father in heaven.

⁸ Leviticus 3:5

⁹ Vayikra, The Lubavitcher Rebbe, p. 7

¹⁰ What you need to know about Kabbalah, p. 107-108

¹¹ Deuteronomy 6:5

¹² Matthew 6:25

¹³ Matthew 6:34

¹⁴ Matthew 6:33