



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,
OU ISRAEL

This *Motzai Shabbat*, we will celebrate *Rosh Chodesh Nisan*, which means that just two weeks later we will be gathering together to rejoice at our *Pesach Seder* tables. Sadly, many among us will approach these next two weeks leading up to the *yom tov* of *Pesach*, as a time of stress, aggravation and discomfort, rather than as an opportunity for renewal and re-invigoration.

The *Shabbat* preceding *Rosh Chodesh Nisan*, is known as *Shabbat HaChodesh*. The special *maftir* segment which is read on this *Shabbat*, records the very first *mitzva* given to the Jewish people. It instructs us in the *mitzva* of *Kiddush HaChodesh*, introducing us to the concept of *Rosh Chodesh*. These verses also instruct us in the basic laws of *Pesach*, and of preparing the *Korban Pesach*.

Parshat HaChodesh begins with the familiar verse:

HaChodesh Hazeh Lachem Rosh Chodashim, Rishon Hu Lachem L'Chodshei HaShana- 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 *Sefer Ohr Gedalyahu*, **Rabbi Gedalia Schorr ztvl**, offers a beautiful insight as to the significance of this opening *pasuk*:

“The redemption begins with this parsha of HaChodesh Hazeh lachem, the galut began when a new king arose upon Egypt- Vayakam Melech Chadash, that with that new King-the Egyptians oppressed the Jewish people and

took from them the capacity for renewal, and once Hashem uttered the words of HaChodesh Hazeh Lachem, the redemption began, as the power of creativity and renewal was restored to the Jewish People...”

As we enter *Chodesh Nisan*, and begin to prepare ourselves for the *yom tov* of *Pesach*, the *yom tov* of *geula*, explains Rav Gedalia Schorr, we are once again given an opportunity to feel spiritually re-invigorated.

Similarly, the great Chasidic Master the **Birkat Avraham zy'a of Slonim** offers this original insight on our verse:

“HaChodesh Hazeh Lachem-Rosh Chodashim- HaChodesh Hazeh- this entire month-every day of this month has the sanctity and capacity of Rosh Chodesh! Rishon Hu Lachem- The Midrash teaches us that Hashem is called Rishon. Throughout this entire month of Nisan, HaKadosh Baruch Hu reveals his presence to each and every member of Klal Yisrael...”

Yehi Ratzon, As we read *Parshat HaChodesh* and *bentch Rosh Chodesh Nisan* this *Shabbat*, may we be blessed to heed these two beautiful teachings from the **Ohr Gedalyahu** and the **Birkat Avraham**, and may we be blessed to feel that restoration of the inspiration and capacity for renewal and growth that comes with feeling Hashem's presence in our lives each and every day. *Chodesh Tov!* ■

רפואה שלמה
אורה בת ראינה