

Parshas Bo

Rabbi Avi Metchik

This week's parsha contains the very first mitzvah given to the Jewish People, the mitzvah of Kiddush Hachodesh. The posuk says (shemos 12,1) And G-d said to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Egypt saying. This month shall be for you a beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.

The first Rashi in chumash poses a fascinating question. He asks, why is it that the Torah did not begin with the above possuk as this is the first mitzvah given to the Jewish people, why is it necessary to have the sefer of Bereishis? We can derive from the question of Rashi that the Torah really could have started right here with this mitzva. We need to explain why it is that this is the very first mitzvah that Hashem chose to give us, as well as explain what is so important about this mitzvah that the entire Torah could have begun with it.

The Nesivos Shalom explains that the Jewish People are very similar to the moon. It is not pure coincidence that the Jewish Nation goes according to the lunar calendar as opposed to the vast majority of the world who follows the Gregorian calendar system which follows the sun.

He explains that the moon waxes and wanes, it's small then it grows big again. Sometimes its light but sometimes it's totally covered up and you cannot see even one drop of light. Yet even when it's covered over by clouds, and even when it may be the beginning of the month and the moon is very small, we know that soon the time will come when it will shine big and bright again. So too is our history, there are many dark periods throughout Jewish history. How-

ever, the important thing to remember is that there will yet again come a time of light where we will shine bright.

This is signified in the words we say in the bracha of Kiddush Hachodesh of "chok u'zman nassan lahem shelo yeshanu es tafkidam, sassim u'semeichim la'assos retzon konam", that even when it's a dark period we are still able to worship Hashem properly and with simcha.

This is why this mitzvah is the first of all the mitzvos given to us. Before you receive any of the mitzvos, you must receive this one as an introduction. There will be tough times ahead but you need to carry on with your mission of the other 612 mitzvos which will

himself to finish the entire tanach by the end of the year.

On that fateful afternoon Ezra went on a yeshiva chessed mission, delivering food to IDF troops stationed in the Gush Etzion region. A terrorist sprayed their vehicle with bullets, mercilessly taking Ezra's life, as well as the lives of two others.

How can we hope to understand this? How can this be the reward for a person who chose to spend a year in yeshiva, a year immersed in spiritual growth in the land Israel? How are we to make any sense of this? There is no good answer to this question. All we can say is that Hashem is purely good, and all of His actions are purely good and He must have

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follow. That's our job, to say that Hashem has a Cheshbon, a divine plan, and all that He does is for the best even though I may not understand it at this moment. Every person and every family has something that is not going exactly as they would like it to at that moment, our job is to remind ourselves of the moon, and continue to soldier on and not be swayed by those issues, questions, or disappointments.

This Shabbos marks two months since the brutal murder of Ezra Schwartz hy"d. Ezra was an eighteen year old boy from Sharon, Massachusetts, a Maimonides School graduate. Instead of attending Rutgers University where he had been accepted, Ezra chose to defer that acceptance and to spend a gap year in Eretz Yisroel immersed in Torah, mitzvos and the performance of chessed. He had set a personal goal for

a cheshbon, a divine plan, which we do not understand at this time.

One thing must be clear. We cannot let these questions get in the way of our Avodas Hashem. As one of Ezra's friends wrote in an article after his death, he hopes that every boy and girl who graduates Maimonides will still choose to spend a year in Israel after graduation devoted to their spiritual growth. We must continue in the path that Hashem wants us to take, and we must not stop our mission due to questions we currently do not have the answer to, or due to events we cannot explain. Maybe one day we will understand it and maybe we never will. Our outlook will remain unchanged, we know we are comparable to the moon, and there will yet come to us a period of light. ♦

Good Shabbos!