

THE KTM

# DAF PARASHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



TORAH תורה  
מִצִּיּוֹן MITZION  
KTM MONTREAL

**VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI  
PARASHAT HACHODESH**  
**25 ADAR 5786**  
**14 MARCH 2026**  
**CANDLE LIGHTING: 6:39 P.M.**  
**HAVDALAH: 7:44 P.M.**

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## TIPPING POINT

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

In his book “The Tipping Point”, Malcolm Gladwell explores the mysterious moment when gradual change suddenly becomes permanent - when

an idea, a trend, or a movement crosses an invisible threshold and becomes something enduring. For a long time, the ingredients may already exist: the ideas circulate, the practices begin, the structure is in place. Yet only at a certain moment does it truly begin. Judaism, too, has its tipping points. Moments when practices that existed earlier suddenly become binding and enduring - when something that once appeared temporary becomes part of the permanent rhythm of Jewish life.

Rashi famously opens his commentary to the Torah with a striking question:

אמר רבי יצחק לא היה צריך להתחיל את התורה אלא מהחודש הזה לכם, שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו בה ישראל, ומה טעם פתח בכרואשית?

**Rebbi Yitzchak said: The Torah should have commenced with the verse (Exodus 12:2) “This month shall be unto you the first of the months” which is the first commandment given to Israel. What is the reason, then, that it commences with the account of the Creation?**

This raises an obvious difficulty. Were there not commandments long before this? Adam was instructed regarding certain moral laws, Noah was commanded in the seven Noahide laws, Avraham received the mitzvah of brit milah, and Yaakov’s descendants refrained from eating the gid hanasheh. Why, then, does Rashi treat *Kiddush HaChodesh* as the first mitzvah of the Torah?

With careful analysis, we will see that the answer is found in the “secret” of the day itself - Rosh Chodesh Nissan: Earlier commandments existed, but they lacked something essential: permanence. They were meaningful, perhaps even practiced faithfully, but they were not yet part of a binding national covenant. With the arrival of *החודש הזה לכם*, and the birth of the Jewish people, mitzvot become part of an enduring framework.

This insight becomes even clearer when we look at another event that occurred on the same date. Our parasha tells us that the Mishkan was erected on Rosh Chodesh Nissan (Shemot 40:2):

ביום-החודש הראשון באחד לחודש תקים אתי-משכן אהל מועד

**On the first day of the first month you shall set up the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting.**

Yet Rashi (Shemot 40:29; Vayikra 9:1) notes that the

Mishkan had already been functioning during the *yemei miluim*, the seven days beginning on the 23rd of Adar. During those days, Moshe assembled and dismantled the Mishkan as part of the inauguration process. The Mishkan was already standing, the korbanot were already being offered, and the service had already begun. In fact, the Midrash goes even further and teaches that the Mishkan had actually been fully completed months earlier - on the 25th of Kislev (Yalkut Shimoni). Structurally, it was ready. Its vessels were prepared. Everything necessary for the Divine service already existed. Yet it remained unused.

Why? Because something was still missing. The Mishkan would only enter its permanent, consistent usage on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Only then would the Divine service become part of the ongoing rhythm of Jewish life. The Mishkan was not simply inaugurated that day - it became institutionalized. What had previously been preparation became permanence.

The same dynamic may explain the mitzvot observed before Sinai. They existed. They were meaningful. But they were not yet part of the permanent covenantal structure of Torah.

In other words, the practice may have existed earlier - but its permanent authority began only at Sinai.

החודש הזה לכם - and generally Rosh Chodesh Nissan - represents the transition from temporary spiritual practices, to institutionalized covenantal structure. Rosh Chodesh Nissan is Am Yisrael’s “Tipping Point”.

This idea - that permanence matters as much as beginnings—appears in many areas of life. In his widely read book “Atomic Habits”, James Clear notes that lasting change rarely comes from dramatic moments of inspiration. People often begin new behaviors - exercise routines, study schedules, creative projects - with excitement and determination, yet most fade quickly. What ultimately makes the difference is not the initial burst of motivation but the point at which the behavior becomes consistent and structured. When small actions are repeated regularly, they transform from experiments into habits, from intentions into systems. What begins as an idea gradually becomes part of the fabric of daily life.

The Torah’s calendar seems to capture this truth. Rosh Chodesh Nissan is not merely another date. It is the moment when preparation gives way to permanence. Until that point, many elements of

Jewish life already existed. The Avot had served God. The Mishkan had been built. The Jewish people had already begun observing certain commandments. But on Rosh Chodesh Nissan something changed: the rhythms of Jewish life became anchored in time and structure.

The mitzvah of *החודש הזה לכם* establishes the Jewish calendar. The Mishkan begins its permanent service. The Jewish people enter a new phase of their relationship with God - one defined by enduring commitment rather than isolated moments of inspiration.

Perhaps this is the deeper meaning behind Rashi’s opening comment. The Torah could have begun with *החודש הזה לכם* not because earlier mitzvot did not exist, but because this moment represents the beginning of Torah as a permanent covenant. It is the point when Judaism transitions from inspiration to institution, from preparation to enduring structure.

And that message remains profoundly relevant today. In our own lives, many beautiful ideas begin with excitement: new spiritual commitments, new learning goals, new acts of kindness. But the true transformation occurs only when those moments become part of the regular fabric of our lives.

Judaism was never meant to live only in flashes of inspiration. It lives in the steady rhythm of days, weeks, and months - in the quiet permanence of mitzvot observed consistently over time. Rosh Chodesh Nissan reminds us that holiness does not depend only on great beginnings. Its true power lies in the moment when those beginnings become permanent.



## SHABBAT'S GREATEST HITS: SHABBAT HAYOM LAHASHEM

BY EVYATAR KERNER

Living a halachic lifestyle can sometimes bring about moments when you look at life and ask: Why can't

I? The world offers freedom, possibilities, experiences. You open your phone and everything's there. On the street, life looks easy, without boundaries, without prohibitions. And you? With laws, halachot, sacrifices. Slowly, the mitzvot start to feel not like a gift but like a cage. Another thing you can't do, another thing to give up. Until you reach the breaking point: "I need some air. Some freedom."

And then Shabbat arrives, and you sing: "If you guard it, God will guard you like the pupil of an eye." Who's guarding whom? I guard Shabbat, and God guards me?

Maybe we're missing the real question. We assume the world outside is good, and the mitzvot are the limitation. But what if it's reversed? What if the mitzvot are the protection, and the world outside is sometimes the danger?

The "pupil of the eye" is the most sensitive thing. When something approaches the eye, it closes immediately. That's how God guards us. Not distant protection, but instinctive, close, loving. Sometimes we don't understand what we need protection from. We see only the desire of the moment, not the long road ahead. But often, when

we stop and look back, we see how a certain "no" saved us. How a boundary protected us. How a mitzvah that seemed unnecessary prevented a fall.

Our difficulty also comes from living in a world that expects understanding everything. If it doesn't fit with what's "normal," if it doesn't look modern, we start to doubt. But healthy halachic living rests on two sides.

The first side: "My Father in Heaven decreed upon me." God is King. And when you accept a king, you don't choose to obey only when you understand. The Sages said: "Don't say 'I can't eat pork,' but rather 'I can, but my Father in Heaven decreed upon me.'" You don't have to convince yourself you don't want it - you can acknowledge the desire, and still say: there's a King, and there's a decree. This requires humility and recognition that I'm not the center, but this is true acceptance of the yoke.

And the second side: a Father who desires your good. God isn't just King, He's also Father. When a father tells a child "no," the child feels something good is being withheld. But the father sees the danger. He says "no" out of love. So too with the Holy One: the "no" isn't just restriction, but protection. We don't always see the complete picture, but there's love behind every boundary.

This requires a shift in perspective, not measuring mitzvot by the standard of the

street, but understanding that there's both kingship and fatherhood here. There are decrees we fulfill even without understanding, and there's a loving hand that protects.

And precisely in the moment when it's hardest, when it feels like a cage, that's when you need to remember: "If you guard it, God will guard you like the pupil of an eye." Our guarding opens His guarding over us.

Shabbat Mission:

When you sing these words, stop for a moment. Share: when did a mitzvah feel like a limitation, and only later did it become clear how it protected you? Try to see the mitzvot not as a prison, but as the protection of a loving Father.

## KEEPING UP WITH KTM

- **Kochava Rozenbaum's chabura** continues: Engage in deep learning and discussion about the Parasha and Chagim based on the classic chassidic work "Bnei Yissachar". Each Motzei Shabbat at 8:30pm. Contact [ravari@ktmmtl.org](mailto:ravari@ktmmtl.org) for info.
- **Community learning:** This week, KTM ran a track at Shaar HaShomayim's communal learning program. Next sessions will take place on March 24 and April 14.
- **Israeli Wine Tasting:** Join KTM & The Shaar for an Israeli wine tasting evening. Wednesday, March 18th. Contact [ravari@ktmmtl.org](mailto:ravari@ktmmtl.org) for more info or registration details.
- **KTM on Campus:** Lunch & Learn at Dawson, with Chabad of Dawson and FCJA, continues! Join the team for food, learning and chill every Monday! This week the team had a special pre-Pesach lunch & learn at John Abbott College.
- **Tekes Ma'avar:** The annual Yom Hazikaron-Yom Ha'atzmaut ceremony will take place on Tuesday evening, April 21. Details to follow.
- **Mishnah Challenge:** KTM, in conjunction with Hebrew Academy, has launched a new learning initiative for boys in grades 7 & 8. Each Thursday from 4:50-5:30pm learn mishnayot with the bachurim in order to make a siyum by the end of the year. For more info contact [ravari@ktmmtl.org](mailto:ravari@ktmmtl.org)
- **Night seder continues:** Join R' Moshe Rozenbaum's Hebrew Gemara shiur on Tuesday (8:00-9:00pm), or English Gemara shiur on Thursday (8:00pm-9:00pm). Rav Ari's "Life Insights from the Parasha" shiur is also on Thursday (8:00pm-9:00pm). To arrange a chavruta with one of our bachurim, please contact [ravari@ktmmtl.org](mailto:ravari@ktmmtl.org).
- **Bekiut Club:** The last session of Bekiut Club this year will be on Tuesday, March 24. Details regarding the annual siyum to follow.
- **Kindly note that Maariv at Hebrew Academy has been moved to 9:30pm, except for Thursdays when it is still 9:00pm.** (KTM holds night Seder on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00pm)



## HALACHIC Q&A

BY RABBI YOSEF ZVI RIMON - NASI, WORLD MIZRACHI

**Question: Rav Moshe Feinstein paskins that when you do not have a nice cup for Kiddush, you should use two disposable cups. Now that the price of disposable cups has been raised, is it okay to use only one?**

**Answer:** There is a machloket regarding how to view a disposable cup for Kiddush. Lema'ase, when there is no other cup to use, you can use a disposable cup (Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchlata). I do not see any advantage in using two disposable cups over one cup. In fact, it seems less respectful, as nobody ever would serve a drink in two cups.

**Question: Every week in shul on Friday Night, there is a group of people who leave after Lecha Dodi to make a faster Maariv minyan outside. Is it okay to join them? Is it considered poresh min hatzibur?**

**Answer:** The halachic concept of "poresh min hatzibur" (separating from the community) is brought up in the context of disconnecting oneself from the pain of the community (see Taanit 11). This concept seemingly does not apply to breakaway minyanim. It could potentially be an issue of "lo titgodedu," (creating subcommunities) but this concept also may not be relevant in this case. Nevertheless, separating from the minyan is certainly not the right thing to do. Such breakaway minyanim can cause rifts in shuls, and these decisions should be made with consultation of the Rabbi/ gaba'im before taking action. Therefore, if that is not the case, you should not join them.

**Question: Does somebody without the ability to smell or taste need to make a bracha rishona/achrona on a food?**

**Answer:** In this case, both a bracha rishona and bracha achrona should be made.

Even though this person does not have the full enjoyment when eating, this is still halachically defined as eating as it will fill him up. Bracha rishona is made because a person cannot get enjoyment from this world without making a bracha (Brachot 35a), and this logic is relevant here as well. Additionally, bracha achrona is always made if the proper size is eaten and not enough time has passed for the food to totally digest.

**Question: When I make hamotzi on Shabbat, should I cut the top or the bottom challah?**

**Answer:** We generally have a rule that we do not pass over mitzvot ("ein ma'avirim al hamitzvot"). Many Rishonim bring this logic as support that the top challah should be cut first, as you should not "pass over" the top challah which is closer and cut the lower challah instead. Nevertheless, the Beit Yosef quotes that there is a reason based in kabbalah to cut the lower challah. There are two minhagim for Sefardim: Some always cut the top challah (Ha'Ari, Chazon Ovadia), and others only cut the bottom based on the psak of the Shulchan Aruch (OH 274:5). According to Ashkenazim, it depends on when. On Friday night, you should cut the lower challah but bring it closer to you. On Shabbat day, you should cut the top challah (ibid, Rema and Mishneh Brurah).

**Question: I am making aliyah this coming week. Should I make a shehechyanu?**

**Answer:** There are two compelling reasons that one should. 1) The Bach writes that shehechyanu is made whenever there is "simchat halev," (genuine happiness). 2) Some Rishonim write that a shehechyanu is made over a mitzvah that you do for the first time in your life. Both of these reasons should apply in this case. Nevertheless, there

are those who paskin otherwise (Lev Chaim) and say not to make a bracha. The best thing to do is to bring a new shirt and make the shehechyanu on that as well. Alternatively, if you are seeing family members or friends you have not seen in thirty days or more, you could make bracha on seeing them and have in mind for both. You should merit to have an uplifting aliyah experience. Rav Aharon Lichtenstein would say that the advantage of being born in chutz la'aretz is the intense feeling of happiness that one can experience when making aliyah to Eretz Yisrael.

**Question: If somebody who lives in Eretz Yisrael will be in chutz la'aretz for Pesach, can they do melacha in private on the second day?**

**Answer:** The Shulchan Aruch (OH 496:3) implies that if you are in a place where the minhag is to refrain from melacha, and your minhag is different, if you have the intention to go back to your original location you can do melacha in private. However, the Mishna Brurah and Aruch Hashulchan disagree and say that even in private one should not be doing melacha. Many Achronim debate this topic, but the general opinion is to be stringent and not do melacha even in private. If there is a need, one can be a little lenient and do melacha for actions that can be done with a Shabbat timer. If there is an even greater need, there is room to be even more lenient, except for in areas of performing Torah prohibitions.

### PARNESS HAYOM :: ADAR

- 2 Adar I Ruth Drazin, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her mother, Gertrude Fried z"l
- 4 Adar I The Gewurz Family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Judah Leib Gewurz z"l
- 19 Adar I Adrienne and Shlomo Drazin, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her grandfather, Henry Segal z"l
- 21 Adar I The Gewurz Family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Rachel Gewurz z"l



# Time flows like water



The teacher announced the science project – Yonah was so excited!



After school, Yonah played basketball...



The next day, he played Pss...



The night before the project was do, he stayed up all night building it frantically.



He was disappointed with his results.



The teacher explained that if he had used his time more wisely, he could have succeeded

This special Shabbat, we read Parashat HaChodesh, when Bnei Yisrael receive the first mitzvah – Kiddush HaChodesh (to sanctify the new month). This mitzvah teaches Am Yisrael to pay attention to time and give it meaning by declaring the start of each new month. Just like Yonah learned that waiting until the last minute made his project harder, this mitzvah reminds us that when we use our time wisely and start things early, we can do our best work.