



**“This month shall be for you the beginning of the months”**

## **Parshas HaChodesh Is the Fourth Special Shabbas of Adar Corresponding to the Four Letters of the Name Havaya**

The auspiciously approaching Shabbas Kodesh is called **Shabbas HaChodesh**. This designation indicates that our sages of blessed memory established the reading of parshas HaChodesh in parshas Bo as the Maftir. We learn from this passage that it is a mitzvah to establish the month of Nissan, the month of the exodus from Mitzrayim, as the first of the twelve months of the Hebrew calendar year. Here is the pertinent text (Shemos 12, 1): **“ויאמר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן: בארץ מצרים לאמר, החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים, ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה—Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Mitzrayim, saying, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.”** It is the fourth and last of the special parshiyos associated with the month of Adar—Shekalim, Zachor, Parah, and HaChodesh. The Levush writes (O.C. 685): **Chazal instituted the reading of four parshiyos from Rosh Chodesh Adar until Rosh Chodesh Nissan.**

His source is a teaching in the Mishnah (Megillah 29a): **“ראש חודש אדר שחל להיות בשבת קורין בפרשת שקלים, חל להיות בתוך השבת, מקדימין לשעבר, ומפסיקין לשבת אחרת. בשניה זכור, בשלישית.”** **If Rosh Chodesh Adar falls on Shabbas, we read the passage discussing the “shekalim”; if it falls during the week (on a weekday), we read that passage on the Shabbas preceding Rosh Chodesh—namely, the Shabbas on which we bless the new month of Adar—and interrupt the reading of the Four Parshiyos on the following Shabbas. On the second (Shabbas of Adar), we read Zachor; on the third, we**

read the passage of the **Parah Adumah; on the fourth (Shabbas of Adar), on which we bless the month of Nissan, or which is Rosh Chodesh Nissan, we read the passage of “hachodesh hazeh lachem.”**

In general, each of these parshiyos has a special connection with the Shabbas on which it is read. Parshas Shekalim is read on the Shabbas on which we bless the month of Adar, since the collection of the shekalim for the new year was announced on the first of Adar. Parshas Zachor is read just before Purim, since both are related to “mechias Amalek.” Parshas Parah is read to purify the people of Yisrael in preparation for offering the Korban Pesach. Lastly, Parshas HaChodesh is associated with Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Notwithstanding, we will endeavor to explain the theoretical rationale for reading all four of these special passages from Rosh Chodesh Adar to Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

### **These Four Parshiyos Correspond to the Four Letters of the Name Havaya**

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by referring to a teaching in our sacred sefarim that our sages of blessed memory instituted the reading of these four parshiyos to correspond to the four letters of the name **Havaya**. We find a source for this notion in the Kedushas Levi (Ki Sisa): **First, I will explain to you the secret of the four parshiyos—Shekalim, Zachor, and Parah, and Chodesh; behold, they allude to the four letters of Havaya.**

Apropos this notion, it is worthwhile introducing what is brought down Irin Kadishin HaShaleim (Four Parshiyos, p. 121) in the name of the great Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin, zy”a: **The tzaddikim say that on the four parshiyos, every single individual can see himself with HKB”H. This relates to the fact that the four parshiyos correspond to the four letters of Havaya, blessed is He, the four letters of “rachamim” (divine mercy). On each one of the four parshiyos, one letter of the four letters of Havaya shines. When a person sanctifies and purifies himself, he becomes a vessel for the dwelling of the Shechinah upon him. Hence, we pray (recite the formula in Mussaf on parshas Shekalim): “The light of Your countenance upon us, O Master, raise up.”**

It seems clear that what the great Rabbi of Ruzhin cites in the name of the tzaddikim is referring to what is brought down in Imrei Pinchas (Four Parshiyos 118) in relation to the great Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz, zy”a: **He would look forward to the arrival of the four parshiyos; and he would say, “I already long for the arrival of the four parshiyos, so that I can be seen with HKB”H.”**

In this vein, the esteemed Rabbi of Ruzhin explains his meaning: It is because on the Shabbasos of the four parshiyos corresponding to the four letters of the name **Havaya**, we are seen with HKB”H. So, it is now incumbent upon us to delve into the matter to achieve a better understanding of what this entails. What is the significance of Chazal’s institution to read the four parshiyos corresponding to the four letters of the sacred name? Why did they institute that they be read specifically in the month of Adar?

### Do the Four Parshiyos Correspond to the Four Letters of the Name in Order or in Reverse

To answer these questions, I would like to note that we find a disagreement in the Chassidic literature regarding how the four parshiyos align with the four letters of the name **Havaya**. According to the aforementioned Kedushas Levi, they align in reverse order. In other words: **Shekalim aligns with the final “hei” ... Zachor aligns with the “vav” ... Parah aligns with the first “hei” ... and Chodesh aligns with the “yud.”**

In contrast, the Magen Avraham (Pekudei and HaChodesh), authored by the holy Maggid of Trisk, zy”a, and the Toras Chaim (Ki Sisa), authored by the great Rabbi Chaim of Kosov, ztz”l, assert that the four parshiyos align with the four letters of the name **Havaya** in their proper order. In other words: Shekalim aligns with the letter “**yud**”; Zachor aligns with the first “**hei**”; Parah aligns with the letter “**vav**”; and HaChodesh aligns with the final “**hei**.”

As a loyal servant in the presence of his masters, I yearn to pay homage to them by reconciling their two opposite viewpoints. As we know, when dealing with divergent opinions related to Torah-issues, the Gemara states (Eiruvin 13b): “אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים”—**both are the words of the living G-d**. We will begin with a precious insight from the illustrious Arizal. In Pri Eitz Chaim (Sha’ar Purim, Chapter 6), he teaches us that the wicked Haman intended to invoke the midah of “din” against the Jews emanating from הוה”י—the reverse of the sacred name. In its proper order it represents the midah of “rachamim.” Haman’s malicious intent is evident from this remark (Esther 5, 13): “וכל זיה אינני ליה”—**yet all this is worth nothing to me**. Note that the final letters of these last four words are הוה”י—the complete reverse permutation of the name **Havaya**, which as just mentioned, reflects “midas hadin.”

His plan was thwarted by Esther’s tefilah that extended divine “rachamim” to her people with the words (ibid. 4): אם”על המלך טוב—**if it please the king**. Now, when the Megillah refers to the king anonymously, it is referring to the Supreme King, HKB”H. She continues: “יבוא המלך והמן היום”—**let the king and Haman come today**. The first letters of these four words spell **Havaya** in its proper order; thus, Esther invoked the midah of “rachamim” to save her people. HKB”H responded by extending His “rachamim” to the Jews and His “din” to Haman and all the enemies of Yisrael. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as “נגוף ורפוא”—smiting our enemies while healing Yisrael simultaneously. This concludes the precious insight of the Arizal.

This explains beautifully the “remez” inherent in the text toward the end of the Megillah (ibid. 9, 1): “ובשנים עשר חודש הוא חודש אדר... ביום אשר שברו אויבי היהודים לשלוט בהם, ונהפוך

**Then, in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar . . . on the day that the enemies of the Jews expected to prevail over them, and it was turned about—the Jews prevailed over their adversaries.** In other words, the tables (fates) were turned on the enemies of Yisrael—“ונהפוך הוא”. They expected to prevail on account of Haman’s statement invoking the name of “din”; however, the fates were reversed on account of Esther’s tefilah invoking the name of “rachamim.”

### When Adar Enters We Are Filled with Joy

With immense pleasure, we can apply what we have learned to the teaching in the Gemara (Ta’anis 29a): **מְשֻׁנְנֵס אָדָר מְרַבֵּין בְּשִׂמְחָה. אָמַר רַב פֶּפְאֵה: הֲלִכְךָ בֵּר יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּאִית לֵיה דִּינָא בְּהַדִּי לְכָרִי, לִישְׁתַּמִּיט מִינֵיהּ בְּאָב – דְּרִיעַ מְזַלִּיה, וְלִמְצִי נִפְשִׂיה בְּאָדָר – דְּבְרִיא מְזַלִּיה.** **So too when the month of Adar begins, one increases rejoicing. Rav Pappa said: Therefore, a Jew who has litigation with a gentile, let him avoid him in (the month of) Av, when his (a Jew’s) fortune is bad, and he should make himself available in Adar, when his fortune is good.** While it is true that the month of Adar portends joy and bodes well for Jews, why did Chazal choose to express this fact specifically in terms of when to ideally settle legal issues with a non-Jew?

In keeping with our current discussion, we can suggest that Chazal are teaching us a vital lesson. It is speaking of when Jews are embroiled, chas v’shalom, in matters of judgment with the Satan, the heavenly representative of Eisav, who accuses Yisrael of wrongdoing and prosecutes them before HKB”H, of which it is written (Mishlei 29, 4): **“מֶלֶךְ בְּמִשְׁבֵּט יַעֲמִיד: אֲרִיץ—a king upholds the land with justice.** It is advisable to improve our lot by sweetening the “din” specifically in the month of Adar. For, that is when HKB”H transforms the “din” associated with the reverse of the name **Havaya**—the name Haman appealed to—into the auspicious name **Havaya** in its proper order—elicited by the tefilah of Esther.

Furthermore, the Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 9a) teaches us that the permutation of the name **Havaya** in its proper order is derived from the first letters of the phrase (Tehillim 96, 11): **“יִשְׂמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ”—let the heavens be glad and let the**

**earth rejoice.** For, when the letters are arranged in this order, the midah of “rachamim” prevails both up in the heavens and down below on earth, giving both cause to rejoice, since the Satan’s efforts to prosecute Yisrael are futile.

Based on this concept, we can begin to comprehend Chazal’s profound statement: **“משוננס אדר מרבין בשמחה”.** They wished to express the great joy in the world during the month of Adar resulting from the transformation of “din” to “rachamim.” As we have learned, Haman attempted to invoke the forces of “din” against Yisrael associated with the reverse permutation **“ז”ה איננו שויה ל”י** by saying **“ז”ה איננו שויה ל”י**. However, in response to Esther’s supplication **“יבוא המלך והמון היום”**, HKB”H transformed them into “rachamim,” bringing joy—**“simchah”**—to the world, as alluded to by the first letters of **יִשְׂמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ**.

This prompted Rav Pappa to add: **Therefore, a Jew who has litigation with a gentile**—namely, the Satan who wants to prosecute Yisrael—**let him avoid him in Av, when his (a Jew’s) fortune is bad, and he should make himself available in Adar, when his fortune is good**—for that is when the Jews were being litigated by the wicked Haman, who intended to prosecute them to the full extent of the “din.” Yet the tables were turned on our evil foes—**ונהפוך הוא אשר**—the permutation associated with “din” was transformed into the permutation of compassion and simchah derived from the first letters of the phrase **יִשְׂמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ**.

With immense pleasure, we can now shed some light on the institution by Chazal of reading the four parshiyos in the month of Adar that align with the four letters of the name **Havaya**. We can also reconcile the difference of opinion between the Kedushas Levi—that these passages align with the letters of the name in reverse order **“hei, vav, hei, yud”**—and the opinions of the Magen Avraham and the Toras Chaim—that they align with the letters of **Havaya** in their proper order—**י-ה-ו-ה**. In reality, both are correct; the four parshiyos represent both the straightforward, auspicious permutation of the sacred name and its reverse permutation. For, the former confers “rachamim” on Yisrael, while the latter imposes the forces of “din” on Yisrael’s enemies.

This also explains very nicely the rationale for establishing these readings specifically during the month of Adar. After all, this is the month when HKB”H, in His infinite mercy, transformed the permutation associated with “din” that Haman intended to invoke against the Jews to the permutation invoked by Esther to treat the Jews compassionately and mercifully. As a result, the Jews were saved and prospered, whereas Haman and his fellow Amalekites were killed and punished. This auspicious combination recurs annually during the month of Adar through the reading of these four special parshiyos.

### The Proper Permutation of the Name Havaya Prevails in Nissan

Let us continue on this sacred journey to explain the matter in greater depth. Now, parshas HaChodesh commands us to designate the month of Nissan as the first and foremost of the months of the year, as it is written: **וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר, הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשִׁים, וְיֵאמֶר Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Mitzrayim, saying, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.”** According to the Ramban, the simple, plain rationale for this mitzvah is to inculcate in us a constant reminder of the miracle of “yetzias Mitzrayim” that HKB”H performed on our behalf in the month of Nissan. He writes:

**All the months of the year are numbered from 1-12 starting from Nissan, so that it will remind us of the great miracle. For, whenever we mention a month, the miracle will be remembered. Hence, the months are not given names in the Torah.**

We find a more profound rationale based on the teaching in the Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 9b) that there are twelve permutations of the name **Havaya**. Each permutation illuminates and prevails during one of the twelve months of the year. The permutation associated with the month of Nissan is the name in its proper, straightforward order that we have learned is derived from the passuk: **וַיִּשְׂמַחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ**.

The Bnei Yissaschar (Rosh Chodesh 1, 4) explains that the gematria of the word **חֹדֶשׁ** equals **312**. **Now, there are twelve permutations of Havaya, and each month is illuminated by its respective permutation. Each Havaya has a gematria of 26; so, 12x26=312, the gematria of חֹדֶשׁ. This term reflects the renewal that occurs each month in accordance with the permutation of Havaya prevalent in that month. With each new permutation comes a new reality.**

As explained, when the permutation of **Havaya** is in its proper order, it indicates that HKB”H reveals Himself in the world with incredible compassion and beneficence. However, when the letters are not in their proper order, it indicates that Hashem’s “rachamim” is not complete. Hence, the permutation associated with the month of Nissan, with all four letters in their proper order, is derived from the passuk: **וַיִּשְׂמַחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ**. For, when HKB”H reveals Himself in the universe with complete “rachamim,” the heavenly family is happy, and the inhabitants of earth have cause to rejoice.

### Nissan Is Called “Chodesh HaAviv”

This explains fabulously why HKB”H established the month of Nissan as the foremost month of the year: **הַחֹדֶשׁ** “הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשִׁים וְיֵאמֶר Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Mitzrayim, saying, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.” After all, its permutation of the name **Havaya**, with all of its letters in the proper, ideal order, is the essential permutation from which all the other eleven permutations are derived. Thus, every month is nurtured by the month of Nissan. So, in reality, the plain explanation of the Ramban and the profound explanation of the kabbalists go hand in hand: HKB”H took Yisrael out of Mitzrayim in miraculous fashion with extraordinary “rachamim” in the month of Nissan, since the permutation of **Havaya** prevalent in Nissan is in its ideal, proper order.

We find a wonderful “remez” to this in the Degel Machaneh Ephraim (Bo). Regarding the month of Nissan, the Torah says (Shemos 13, 4): **הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יּוֹצֵאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב**—**today you are leaving in the month of spring (“aviv”).** The word **אָבִיב** can be split into the two words **אָב יָב** meaning the **father**

(leader and source) of the 12; this implies that Nissan is the source of all twelve months of the year. Here is a summary of his sacred words:

**There are twelve monthly constellations and twelve permutations of the holy name Havaya, which reign during the twelve months of the year. All of the actions of the constellations and the kings are derived from these permutations. This is the allusion in the verse (Mishlei 8,15): "בי'—בי מלכים ימלוכו" (by means of the yud-bet (twelve) permutations, kings will reign. Hence, the month of Nissan is the New Year for kings; because in Nissan, the letters of the name Havaya are in their proper order; all of the other permutations derive from this first and foremost permutation. Therefore, the actions of all the constellations stem from it.**

**As I once heard from the holy Baal Shem Tov, zllh"h, that he once told the famous Maggid of Tortchin in the month of Nissan that now is the time that we must pray, because the first of Nissan is the New Year for kings (R.H. 2a), and all the ministers and governing powers in the world are being appointed at this time. Since at this time, ministers that are not good have been appointed, now is the appropriate time to pray. This is what I heard from his holy mouth. It appears to me that the reason for his comment was based on the fact that the permutation of the name Havaya in effect during this month (Nissan) is Havaya in its proper order—which is the source of all the other twelve permutations.**

This explains fabulously why Chazal instituted the practice to read the four parshiyos in the month of Adar. As we have explained, these passages correspond to the four letters of the holy name both in their reverse order and in their proper order signifying that HKB"ח transformed the permutation connoting "din" to the one connoting "rachamim" on behalf of Yisrael. Additionally, they constitute a vital preparation for the month of Nissan. When we reach the Shabbas of parshas HaChodesh, and we bless the month of Nissan, we ensure that the four letters of Havaya in their ideal, proper order will illuminate the month for us and bode well for us by reading these four parshiyos ahead of time.

## During the Month of Nissan the Permutation of the Future Geulah Shines Brightly

With great pleasure, we will suggest an additional reason for the established practice of reading the four parshiyos in the month of Adar. We have learned in the Gemara (ibid. 11b): "בניסן נגאלו ובניסן עתידין ליגאל. מנלן, אמר קרא ליל שימורים, ליל המשומר בניסן—**in Nissan they were redeemed and in Nissan they are destined to be redeemed again; from where do we know this? The verse states (Shemos 12, 42; regarding the night of the exodus from Mitzrayim): "It is a 'night of anticipation,' a night that has been anticipated since the six days of creation (as the date of the final redemption)." This implies that the future geulah will occur during the month of Nissan on the night of Pesach.**

Now, we are familiar with the passuk (ibid. 17, 16): "ויאמר כי יד על כס י"ה מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדור דור"—**and he said, "For there is a hand on the throne of G-d: Hashem maintains a war against Amalek, from generation to generation."** Rashi comments: **HKB"ח swears that His name is not whole and His throne is not whole until the name of Amalek is completely eradicated.** So long as Amalek exists, the two letters ו"ה remain absent from the four-letter name **Havaya**; only the two letters י"ה remain.

Based on this understanding, we learn that at the time of the future geulah, HKB"ח will restore the letters "vav-hei" missing from the name **Havaya** during galus. We can suggest that the term גאול"ה alludes to this fact. For, when rearranged to spell גאל ו"ה, it indicates that HKB"ח will redeem the letters ו"ה that have been absent during galus. This explains why HKB"ח chose to illuminate the month of Nissan with the name **Havaya** arranged in its proper order. He is alluding to us that the month of Nissan is well-suited to hasten and herald in the future geulah; for that is when HKB"ח's name will be complete with all four of its letters.

We can appreciate the association of the permutation of the month of Nissan with the passuk it is derived from: **ישמחו**—**ה'שמים ותגל ה'ארץ**—based on a wonderful explanation found in the sacred writings of the Yismach Moshe (Beshalach). In the heavens, the greatness of HKB"ח is always apparent—

even during times of galus when HKB”H’s presence is concealed down on earth. Accordingly, even when we are in galus **ה'שמחו ה'שמים**—“**the heavens will be glad,**” since the glory of His sovereignty is apparent there.

Down on earth, however, the glory of His sovereignty will only be apparent at the time of the geulah. But during times of galus, when HKB”H’s presence is concealed, the joy is absent down on earth. Therefore, as long as Amalek exists, causing the presence of Hashem to be concealed down on earth, the letters “**vav-hei,**” which stand for **ו'תגל ה'ארץ**, remain absent, i.e., the holy name is not complete. Only le’asid la’vo, when Hashem’s glory will be apparent both in the heavens and down on earth, will the sacred Name be complete with all

four of its letters. For, only then will both halves of **י'שמחו ה'שמים** be a reality.

We have now successfully explained the reason why Chazal instituted the reading of the four parshiyos in the month of Adar. We have explained that they correspond to the four letters of the name **Havaya** that were transformed from their reverse permutation of “din” to their straightforward permutation of “rachamim.” This transformation is a preparation for the future geulah in the month of Nissan at which time HKB”H will illuminate the entire world with the name **Havaya**, in keeping with the passuk (Yeshayah 52, 8): “**כי עין בעין יראו בשוב הוי"ה ציון**”—**with their own eyes, they will see that Havaya returns to Tziyon.** May this happen swiftly, in our times! Amen.



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To receive the mamarim by email: [mamarim@shvileipinchas.com](mailto:mamarim@shvileipinchas.com)