



PROBING THE PROPHETS

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Nisan- The Month of Ge'ulah

The special readings of both the Maftir and the Haftarah of this Shabbat HaChodesh focus upon the mitzvah of Korban Pesach. Primarily, the text details the ritual that should be followed by B'nai Yisra'el in Egypt one week later, although it also touches upon the observance of Korban Pesach in future years. Besides its spotlight upon the sacrificial rite, however, the Torah takes pains to include the importance of the month of Nisan itself – an important addition as well.

The opening p'sukim of the Maftir reading declare: “Hachodesh hazeh lachem **Rosh Chodashim**” - that you must consider this month (of Nisan) as the ‘head’ of the months, to regard Nisan not only as the first of the months in the year but, also, as “**rosh**”, the

most **significant** month of the year. In keeping with that point, the Torah records a listing of those mitzvot to be observed during **that** month *specifically*, thereby underscoring the importance of the month of Nisan **itself**.

Similarly, Yechezkel HaNavi quotes Hashem's charge (to the soon-to-be-liberated nation) in his opening verses of our haftarah, by saying to his generation: “...**BaRishon**, b'echad **lachodesh...**” “**In the first day of the first month...**”. The prophet proceeds to delineate those laws of the month, primarily, the laws of the paschal sacrifice, just as the Torah does in the twelfth perek of Sefer Sh'mot, but in doing so, he includes the emphasis upon the significance of the month itself.

Rav Yehuda Shaviv enlightens us by quoting the words of the Ramban who reminds us that one year after the first of Nisan, the Mishkan was dedicated (“Chanukat haMishkan”). In his introduction to Sefer Sh'mot, the Ramban submits that this dedication actually marked the conclusion of the ‘ge'ulah’ process that began exactly one year earlier, when the first mitzvot were given to the nation.

This approach is supported in the closing perek of Sefer Sh'mot that opens with G-d's declaration to Moshe: “B'yom hachodesh harishon, b'echad lachodesh'...” “On the first day of the first month...” “takim et mishkan ohel mo'ed” – “you shall erect the Mishkan...” [40;2]. And then in pasuk 17, we learn that Hashem's directive was properly observed “on the first day of the first month of the second month”. The repetition of the command makes it clear that the day and month are

On his second Yahrzeit,
we remember with love

Joe Krycer ז"ל

שלמה יוסף בן ר' חיים צבי ז"ל

He would say
it's not a Shabbat table
without a word of Torah.
May we continue to learn
and do good in his merit

essential to the construction of the Mishkan as that same date is crucial to the initial laws given to Israel.

I include this approach of the Ramban for, I believe, it is essential in order to properly understand the message of Yechezkel in this week's haftarah.

Upon reading the haftarah we realize that it does **not** focus upon the Korban Pesach, as we might have thought. Rather, it speaks of the requirement to sanctify the Mikdash, starting with “**the first day of the first month**”. It does make mention of the sacrifice that must be offered on the 14th day of the month (Korban Pesach), but Yechezkel continues by detailing the other offerings to be brought on the days that follow, i.e., the seven days of the holiday itself.

The bulk of the haftarah (perek 46) makes no mention of Pesach or its korbanot. Instead, it is involved with the importance of the sanctity of the Mikdash and the many rituals and laws that are required to uphold its holiness. It is, therefore, not a message of preparation for the Korban Pesach or the chag itself. It is, rather, a demand of upholding the **KEDUSHA** of the Bet HaMikdash and, with that, the nation itself.

For this reason, we should **not** regard Shabbat HaChodesh as a time to prepare for Pesach but, rather, to prepare for sanctity, holiness and care of that which is holy. The month of Nisan. Therefore, it should not be seen as a month of “miracles” (**NIS**an) nor as the month of Pesach.

Yechezkel makes it clear to us that Nisan is the month of **GE'ULAH** – not simply when we **left** servitude of Egypt but when we **began** the worship of the Divine!!! ■

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