

# Chodesh Nisan Video Notes 2019

Nisan/Aviv

Meaning: Miracles/Green Ears - Spring

Month: One

Tribe: Judah – *Encampment Head East (w/Issachar & Zebulon)*

Tribal Banner: Lion, Scepter

Sense: Speech

Mazel: Aries/Tahleh/Ram

Feasts: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits of Barley, Begin Omer Count

Month Names: Month of Miracles, Month of Faith, Month of Redemption, Month of New Year for Kings...

Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "**This month shall be the beginning (head) of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.**" (Ex. 12:1-2 NASB)

The beginning or head of months, a new beginning as the children of Israel are born again as a free nation. Adonai redeemed them from the house of bondage to walk anew with Him. What does this remind you of? Hopefully, it emphasizes one's need to be born again.

The cycle of the year and months mirrors the physical and spiritual birth of people. For example, one year you were born from your mother's womb. Another year, you were reborn spiritually (born from above/born again). Just because one is spiritually born again doesn't mean that they stopped aging physically. Counting one's years from physical birth continues. But, there is a new count that begins when one is born spiritually.

This is like the head of years and the head of months. "This month shall be the head of months to you." This is Passover, the feast that pictures one being born again – walking through the bloody door, water, and entering/rising to a new life free from the House of Bondage. In fact, that is the message of all new moons – you must be born again. They are festivals of the born again.

Aviv is akin to spring, and in the natural creation, one sees the plant and animal kingdom come back to life after the "deadness" of winter. Plants sprout and blossom, trees bud, and animals give birth to babies after their kind. It's as if the Creator is shouting through nature that this IS the season of new birth. How did this birth come about? Through REDEMPTION – the blood of a lamb. Nisan marks the Exodus from Egypt, the pattern given for one's exodus from the realm of sin and death. It is a time of miracles nissim – related to Nissan.

And yet, One still counts their "years" from the time they were physically born on the earth. This is Yom Teruah, Rosh HaShanah, the head of years. The beginning of months is like the daytime of the year, which includes the whole feast cycle of Leviticus 23. The first mazel on this new circuit is the Tahleh (Aries) or Ram. It all begins with the blood of the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

## Sense: Speech

The rabbis associate Nissan with faith as well as speech. They see them as interconnected. Speech is how one confesses, repents, and expresses faith. Thus, rectifying speech is important in the first month, the month of redemption.

In fact, Pesach can be read as two words – *peh sach* – which means, the mouth speaks. In a way, Passover is about “free speech,” as it is the feast of liberation from the house of bondage. And how does one celebrate or commemorate Adonai’s Passover?

Ex. 10:1-2 (TLV) Then Adonai said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, because I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, so that I might show these My signs in their midst, 2 and **so you may tell your son and your grandchildren** what I have done in Egypt, as well as My signs that I did among them, so you may know that I am Adonai.”

Ex. 13:8-9 (NASB) "**You shall tell your son on that day**, saying, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' 9 "And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt.

Deut. 6:20-21 (TLV) “When your son asks you in time to come, saying ‘What are the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances that Adonai our God commanded you?’ **21 then you are to tell your son, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Adonai brought us out from Egypt with a mighty hand.**

One is commanded to speak, to tell others (especially one’s progeny) about the story of the exodus, the redemption. But in order to do so, one must first have faith. They must believe and be grateful for the miracles of the LORD and the wonders He performed not only for ancient Israel, but also the mighty works He has done for us.

Speech (dibur) also means leadership in Hebrew, which is why it is related to the New Year for Kings, because the King rules with his words. As the King of the Universe’s subjects, we don’t live by bread alone, but every word that proceeds from the mouth of God!

Our tongue, our speech, should be in line with His Words. That’s what we are to be speaking about. We tell – testify – of Him.

The tribe of the month, Judah, mirrors this. The matzah we eat this month also affirms this. God is concerned about our words. See *Taste Your Words* videos from my last post.

## Tribe: Judah

"And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "This time **I will praise** the LORD." Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing." Gen 29:35 (NASB)

Judah means praise or thanksgiving. Knowing how to be thankful or grateful is the key to praise and even prayer. But, none of these can happen without rectified speech. Proper speech must begin with thankfulness.

"And this regarding Judah; so he said, "Hear, O LORD, **the voice of Judah**, And bring him to his people. With his hands he contended for them, And may You be a help against his adversaries.'" Deu 33:7 (NASB)

Judah represents a mouth that gives praise, thanksgiving, and prayer to God. The “voice of Judah” above is rendered as prayer in the Targum. As the first tribe in the year of months, this teaches that praise, thanksgiving, and prayer should be at the forefront of a redeemed (born anew) heart, and expressed through speech.

The prayer upon waking (everyday), composed by the tribe of Judah, is modeh/modah ani. Consider the words:

Modeh/Modah ani lifanekha melekh chai v'kayam shehechezarta bi nishmahti b'chemlah, rabah emunatekha.

**I give thanks** before you, King living and eternal, for You have returned within me my soul with compassion; abundant is Your **faithfulness!**

In the book, *Duties of the Heart*, the author explains that the beginning of rectifying one’s morality IS giving thanks. Indeed, can one come to the point of conviction and repentance without first recognizing the great provision, the lamb, God has provided for them? Thankfulness is intertwined with faith, speech, and redemption.

Are you dealing with discontentment? Jealousy? If so, the cure is gratefulness. A thankful heart has no room for dissatisfaction; instead, it is joyful and satisfied in the finished work of the LORD. It believes and trusts in Him fully for all things. It will not envy its neighbor, because it is sure that Adonai is not withholding one thing from them. It knows that He knows what’s best for each of His children.

In other words, with full faith and an open mouth, it proclaims, “**Dayenu!**” It would have been enough. Every single thing the LORD has done for each of us was enough, for we deserved nothing, and yet He gave everything.

This leads to rejoicing, as it should. The feasts chronicle Adonai’s work: past, present, and future. This is why the *moedim* are called “festivals of joy” in the Bible and in tradition.

But, a heart that is sick and burdened with ungratefulness and discontentment only finds the life sucking misery of jealousy and envy and divisions. Their mouth speaks words of scorn, hate, sarcasm, critical judgment, and contempt. They can’t thank the Father for their own life, much less rejoice with others over their victories and blessings. Beloved, if you find yourself with even an inkling of these traits, this is the time to rectify your speech, which begins in your heart.

Use your mouth to confess your dissatisfaction, hurts, and envies to the Father.

## Mitzvot & Matzot

In Dr. Alewine's past two Torah classes, she connected the mitzvot (commandments) and eating matzah in a profound way. Matzot (Unleavened Breads) and Mitzvot (Commandments) are spelled the same in Hebrew.

Commandments = Mitzvot = מצוות

Unleavened Breads = Matzot = מצות

In her message, Dr. Alewine pointed out the urgency of being obedient when one hears the commandment. Just as lingering or the passing of time allows dough to become chametz or leavened, hesitation in obedience corrupts the purity of the commandment. Other things, such as pride and doubt, have time to permeate the unleavened word. Thus, obeying even before (especially before) one understands is fundamental to one's faith. Can obedience even be called "faith" if one fully sees (understands)?

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things **not seen.**" (Heb. 11:1 NKJV)

## Why Matzah?

Ex. 12:34 (NASB) So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls **bound up in the clothes on their shoulders.**

Ex. 12:39 (NASB) They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into **cakes of unleavened bread** (ugot matzot). For it had not become leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, **nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.**

Why do we remove chametz and eat matzah at Passover? At first glance, the answer seems simple enough. We eat unleavened bread because at the original Pesach, our ancestors didn't have time for their dough to rise, they left Egypt in haste.

But isn't it a rather odd thing that their dough or bread is the focus at this point? Of all the things that could be noted about their departure, why is bread at the center of it all?

In Exodus 12:34, the Torah makes a point to tell us that the people tied their kneading bowls into their clothes and carried them on their **shoulders**. Imagine all the Israelites doing this. Does this

sound strange to you? One's shoulders depicts a burden or government as pictured by the two stones that rested on the shoulders of the High Priest.<sup>1</sup>

"You shall put the two stones on the **shoulder pieces** of the ephod, as stones of memorial for the sons of Israel, and **Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for a memorial.** (Ex. 28:12 NASB)

What sort of burden or yoke did Israel carry on their shoulders as they left Egypt? What or Who governed them? Obviously, Adonai broke the yoke of slavery off the nation, and when He did, it was as swift as the judgment upon Sodom. The constant in these stories is TIME. There is no time to dilly dally. There is no time to let the staff of life sit around to become sour or chametz. There is no time to hesitate, only to act and act quickly. And then, to watch:

It was a **night of watching** by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so **this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD** by all the people of Israel throughout their generations. (Ex. 12:42 ESV)

Passover is a night of "watching" or keeping vigil, not just to commemorate the past – though that sets the stage so we know what to look for – but to be watching for the future redemption to come. Indeed, Adonai repeatedly reminds Israel and all nations in His Word that:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Ex. 20:2 NASB)

He is the Redeemer, the Savior, the Deliverer. He rescues with swift justice, and a strong arm. The staff of life, one's sustenance and bread, doesn't have time to rise. Matzah and chametz share the same ingredients; the difference is that chametz has had time for a foreign substance to cause it to puff up. No wonder the psalmist says, "**Today**, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart." (Ps. 95, Heb. 3 & 4) There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. We must diligently be watching for it; meanwhile, we remain obedient to the commandments (mitzvot). They are the bread of haste (matzot).

**The commandments (mitzvot) are what sustain and govern the FREE people of Adonai. In this way, they are one's (matzot). They need to be eaten daily. "Give us this day, our daily bread..."**

**Eat the Scroll**

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<sup>1</sup> Compare with: (Is. 9:4-6 NASB) For You shall break the **yoke of their burden** and the **staff on their shoulders**, The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. 5 For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire. 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And **the government will rest on His shoulders**; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

**Your words were found and I ate them**, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts. (Jer. 15:16 NASB)

Messiah gave a hard saying in John 6 that was difficult to receive. In fact, some stopped following Him after He delivered this Passover message.<sup>2</sup> Read the whole chapter for the best context, or at least review these verses:

John 6:53-60 (TLV) So Yeshua said to them, “Amen, amen I tell you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.** 54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For **My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink.** 56 **He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.** 57 Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who eats of Me will also live because of Me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven—not like the bread your fathers ate and then died. He who eats this bread will live forever.” 59 He said these things while teaching at the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 So when many of His disciples heard this, they said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can listen to it?”

Was Messiah teaching something crazy? Or, was there already precedent in the Torah and the prophets for His message? Perhaps, it helps to consider what bread is. Grains are the staple of human sustenance. We call it the “staff of life.” Food is assimilated into our bodies, becoming one with our flesh and blood. In the natural, bread gives and sustains life. John said that the “Word became flesh.” (John 1:14) This concept was also understood by Jeremiah (quoted above) and Ezekiel:

"Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; **eat this scroll**, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So **I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll.** He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." **Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.** Then He said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them." (Ezek. 3:1-4 NASB)

The prophets that “ate the scroll” or words of Adonai were to become one with the Word, so they could deliver a hard message to a rebellious people. Though the taste was like sweet amber honey on their tongue, it was bitter to their belly (figurative of the flesh).

"Then the voice that I heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel standing on the sea and on the land.” So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little scroll. And he tells me, “**Take and eat it. It will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.**” So I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth; but when I had swallowed it, my stomach was made bitter. And they tell me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”” (Rev. 10:8-11 TLV)

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<sup>2</sup> John 6:4 (TLV) Passover, the Jewish feast, was near.

Eating the Word is akin to eating the mitzvot (commandments). They are as sweet as honey to the tongue's discerning taste buds, but difficult to digest in the stomach. When we eat matzot, we are consuming or digesting YHWH's mitzvot. They change us from the inside out. Most commandments are carried out externally. Matzah is internal; thus, it is perfectly fitting to compare it to eating Messiah's body, the Living Word. Following Messiah is bittersweet as it requires a measure of self denial.

"Then Yeshua said to His disciples, "If anyone wants to follow after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." (Mat. 16:24 TLV)

Every year at Chag HaMatzot, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Adonai asks His people to do just that. Matzah is dubbed the "bread of affliction" for a reason.

"You shall not eat leavened bread with it; **seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread**, the **bread of affliction** (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), so that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt." (Dt. 16:3 NASB)

Why do we eat the bread of haste or affliction for **seven** days? Seven marks a complete week, the time it took Adonai to create the heavens and the earth. It is the same amount of time it took to dedicate His House, the Temple. The seventh day is Shabbat, a time of rest from work and toil. **By completing a week of eating matzah, one has figuratively dedicated their temple (body) to the LORD.** They have acknowledged Adonai as the creator of heaven and earth, their governing authority, and the God of their stomachs (appetites/desires). They are declaring YHWH to be the "I Am" that delivered them from the house of bondage and slavery. In a sense, one's obedience in this area is like eating the scroll or ingesting Messiah, as the psalmist declares:

"Then I said: "Here I am, I have come—in **the scroll of a book it is written about me. I delight to do Your will**, O my God. Yes, **Your Torah is within my being.**" (Ps. 40:8-9 TLV)

Is eating matzah (the Word) a joy as Jeremiah says or a delight as the psalmist declares? If we want to know what it is to "eat" and "drink" the Messiah, we must learn the lesson of the humble Matzah cracker.

## **Humble Cakes**

The Matzah doesn't have time for pride, selfish ambition, critical judgement, jealousy, moral depravity, malice, or worldly drama, to puff it up, distorting its pure taste and texture. It is humble, lowly, and poor, but rich and mighty in spirit. That is the flavor of real freedom and liberty. That is what happens when one "eats" the scroll, crunches a Matzah disc, and eats the broken body of Yeshua.

In fact, this is the key to all mitzvot. They are not meant to be mere outward motions, but internalized actions that change us and the world at large. This is how we become one with Messiah. This is how we tikkun olam or repair the world. **We are what we eat.**

Recall the time when Adonai redeemed you from the Egypt of sin and death. Was there an urgency to leave in haste? What did you carry on our shoulders? Messiah's yoke? Is He not our bread of life? Is He not also unleavened, without sin? Has the "bread" that you've consumed since been different, like the matzah?

The haste, urgency, and swiftness of Adonai's redemption is all captured by the matzah. Today, if you hear His voice, do not delay in following Him. Tie His Word upon your shoulders; wear the light yoke of the Messiah. Flee Egypt before the cares of the world, doubt, and fear have time to taint the pure Word. Quickly bake unleavened cakes and eat them in faith.

This year, during Unleavened Bread, may each crunch of the Matzah remind us of the purity of our calling and the great cost of our freedom.

Blessing for the Month:

May it be thy will, Adonai our God and God of our forefathers, to renew for us Aviv for good and for blessing. Grant us long life, a life of peace, a life of goodness, a life of blessing, a life in which we earn a livelihood, a life of physical vigor, a life that reflects reverence for God and dread of sin, a life that is free from shame and disgrace, a life of wealth and honor, a life in which a love of Torah and an awe of Heaven shall be within us, a life in which the desires of our heart shall be fulfilled for good. Amen.

He Who performed miracles for our forefathers, and redeemed them from slavery to freedom, may He soon redeem us and gather our dispersed from the four corners of the earth, for all Israel is united in fellowship, and let us say, Amen.