

# The Moon, The Shechinah and Egalitarianism

- In tefilat Kiddush Halevanah, the sanctification of the new moon, which we'll be saying motsaei Shabbat, we say

וַיְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ...לְמִלְאֵת פְּגִימַת הַלְּבָנָה, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בָּהּ שׁוֹם מִיַּעוֹט. וַיְהִי אֹר הַלְּבָנָה כְּאֹר הַחֲמָה....

May it be Your will...to fill the defect in the moon, so that there be no lack in it, and may the light of the moon be as the light of the sun.

- This refers to a midrashic tradition that already on the fourth day of creation imperfection entered the world, and God reduced the moon's light. Thus the moon's light is weaker than the sun's, and so too it is born and dies each month.
- Among its many meanings, the moon symbolizes the people of Israel. The diminishing of the moon is understood as the galut: the exile of the People Israel from Eretz Yisrael into the lands of the nations. And thus the renewal of the moon is the redemption of Israel: the renewal of Jewish collective life in the Land.
- Our prayer that it may be God's will to renew the light of the moon means that we strive for it to be our will also. And even in our own beit midrash (study hall) at the Yeshivah, we participate in the renewal of the moon's light, in that you have gathered together from galut to come to Jerusalem to learn Torah. Of course, the more of you who choose to make the Eretz Yisrael your home, the more powerful that light becomes.
- But there's another way that our beit midrash participates in the renewal of the moon. The moon also symbolizes the divine feminine, the Shechinah, the female aspect of the way God is revealed in the world. And like the people of Israel, the divine feminine is also just beginning to emerge from a long exile, an exile which is parallel to the historical status of women in the world.
- Now, to understand how we participate in the renewal of the moon as the divine feminine we need to look at the Mitsvot in a certain way. God commands us to perform the Mitsvot, and thus the Mitsvot are in a sense a manifestation of the Will of God. When we direct our bodies and minds to the Mitsvot, we become vessels of the Commandments, vessels of God's Will. During these moments, in which we are sanctified in the Mitsvot, its as if we become, in all our individuality, human manifestations of God's Will. Each one of us reveals a different aspect of that Will since no two of us are the same.
- And now think about our beit midrash. Every time a woman directs her body and mind to fulfilling Mitsvat Talmud Torah, to wearing Tsitsit, to laying Tefillin, to reading from the Torah, it is as if Hashem's Will is manifested in female form. Aspects of the Shechinah, the divine feminine, which have been concealed and exiled for generations, are revealed and find a resting place in the human being who becomes their vessel.
- And so the light of the Shechinah, repressed for so long, illuminates our beit midrash. And that light, like the light emerging for habayit hashlishi, the third establishment of the state of Israel, is the renewed light of the moon, which we will sanctify this motsaei shabbat.

- Shabbat shalom

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