

Dear Friends,

We live in a paradox. On the one hand, the world continues as it always has. There are patterns in nature. **Winter is followed by spring. Day is followed by night.**

But there's another side to this coin. Hemachadesh b'tuvo b'chol yom tamid means that **the world is in a state of constant recreation**. It's hard to live with this thought, consciously, all the time, because we crave not just order but predictability. If I don't know that the sun will rise this morning, then how can I function?

On the other hand, if we lose sight that each day the sun rises because Hashem wills it, then we cut ourselves off from **the power of chiddush**.

Klal Yisrael received the mitzvah of Kiddush Haschodesh just before the very first month—Nissan. And in parshas Bo, Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch gives the most exhilarating understanding of this mitzvah.

This is what he says:

To a person without emunah, there is no chiddush. Today comes from yesterday and will evolve into tomorrow. To him, there is no yesh me'ayin of the Creation, and there is no yesh me'ayin in a person's human development.

That's why it was in Mitzrayim, the place where there was no emunah at all, where they worshipped idols, that Hashem pointed out the narrow crescent of the new moon. A new nation was to be born, and the very first mitzvah was Kiddush Hachodesh. Why? Because we were given a model. Sailing across the sky each month was a whole new world view. **And that is: just as the moon renews itself, we are free to create our own renewal.** Just as we

embrace the possibility with chiddush with every Rosh Chodesh, **we live every day with the possibility of chiddush, that we can start afresh.**

We're in unpredictable days. Everything that we thought of as permanent, as a given, as normal—is overturned. How do we react?

Klal Yisrael as a whole—and women in particular—have the koach of chiddush. We can take a sky filled with darkness, and point to a sliver of light. We can observe the changes that are required of us in this time— child care, yom tov preparations, schedule changes, and we can even embrace them. **We can leap into the chiddush that is asked of us right now.**

Chiddush is scary. But what happened in Mitzrayim? In defying the Egyptians, klall Yisroel said - we're no longer your slaves. But an additional process had to take place. Because our identity can't only be that 'we're not Egyptians'. It has to become – 'we are now Jews'. It's not just that we're not slaves. We are now a mamleches kohanim. And so we were given the mitzvah of Kiddush Hachodesh. **Inside us is a special power. We can take the darkness and find within it the power of renewal.**

That's happening already.

Those who have made simchas in the past challenging weeks have shared story after story of how, stripped of all the externals—without so many of the people on their guest lists, they have celebrated with a joy that was all the more meaningful. Mothers are sharing how they're getting to know their childrens resilience and strengths - even while we're all having a hard time with so much of this.

Different can be difficult. But change can also be chiddush. As normal life is turned upside down, we have within us the capacity for renewal.

It may be hard.

It may be harder than ever before.

But in digging deep inside, we're accessing places that we never knew existed.

And we're witnessing a regeneration. We're bonding with family. We're no longer interested in our latest shopping order, shoe trend, or elaborate appetizer. We just want to access the light, that glimmering glowing shine of the moon, that will help us focus and that will bring us strength. **For we are not a people who are here today, just because we survived yesterday. We are a people engaged in the art of becoming.**

May we have the strength and wisdom to articulate good things. May we find the inspiration to share words of chizuk with one another. May Hashem send siyatte dishmaye to our efforts and may we all find ourselves ensconced in peace, tranquility and hope b'karov.

Wishing you a great start to your week!

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