

Dear Friends,

A guten Chodesh to all.

**We're here on Rosh Chodesh Nissan**, when we received the very first mitzvah as a nation. *Hachodesh hazeh lachem*. Thousands of years ago, this was the month when a scattered and downtrodden tribe of slaves, whose noble ancestry was all but forgotten, underwent spiritual rebirth. And we know that b'Nissan asidin lehigael – in Nissan, we will be redeemed. It's a month designated for spiritual rebirth, both in the past and in the future.

And what of the present? What spiritual rebirth is being enacted right now?

There is a beautiful yotzer which we say on Shabbos Hachodesh. It says, *Vayinasein le'am lev chodosh, leshorer befihem shir chodosh* and He gave the nation a new heart, so that their lips would sing a new song.

**What is this new song?**

We've all heard of the expression: same old story. It means something recycled, boring, same old. It lacks freshness and vitality. It doesn't really deserve our notice..

So what's a new story? A new story doesn't have to be entirely different. **It can be the same events, but with a new perspective.** And that makes it new. It's the same events, but viewed through a different lens, so that we get that ah-hah moment, when we least expected it.

On a deeper level, newness, chiddush, **comes from being connected with the Source.** The mekor hachayim is never old, never depleted, never stale. It's constant chiddush.

We're in a new reality today. A new version of the world. Pesach plans have been made and unmade. Travel plans. Business plans. But the newness is not only about bewilderment. Nissan gives us the ko'ach of chiddush.

We're stuck in quarantine—but we're trying to have good conversations with our families. We're forced inside and we're attempting to turn inward and upward, and we're reaching, striving to welcome Hashem into our hearts in a bigger way, each individual in his or her own way.

Chodesh Nissan heralded the birth of a new nation and a new reality, because in chodesh Nissan, we were born as Hashem's children. We had already experienced His miracles. We had already known about His power. And in chodesh Nissan, we experienced His love. We became *beni bechori Yisroel*, we became Hashem's firstborn child.

Let's stop to think about this for a moment. Why is a firstborn special, boy or girl? Because it change a man and a woman into a Tatty and a Mommy. With this baby's birth, they become parents. And so, this child always has a special shine. Of course, we love all our children with all of our hearts. But this child brought about a personal transformation.

As a nation, we have a collective identity of "banim". We are a large family of children that Hashem holds dear. But, as in each family, the bechor has a special status. **Who is the bechor in klall Yisroel?**

The Maharal explains that *each and every one of us* has the status of בכור. As the posuk says in parshas Shemos, *beni bechori Yisroel* – my son, my firstborn, Yisroel. What does this mean? How is that even possible? **Isn't the status of bechor unique and reserved for only one child?**

That is the miracle of our relationship with Hashem. Each and every one of us has a special and individual relationship with Hashem. We are never 'lost in the family'. No one is the 'middle child'. Each one of us is the special pride of Hashem. Each one of us stands in the spotlight of Hashem's stage. Every single one of us a unique and exclusive relationship with Hashem.

Now, I'll ask that you close your eyes, and imagine yourself in that spotlight. You're surrounded by warmth and light. You're enveloped by love. A love so strong that everything outside of that love starts to fade. Worries, cares, stress are growing fainter. The light caresses you and you slowly relax, knowing that it will all be lifted off your shoulders. Take a deep breath, and another one. Tip up your face, and welcome the warmth of that love into your heart.

**With that incredible love, everything looks different.  
The externals may look the same, but we're in a whole new reality.  
A whole new song.**

It's a song about relationship. It's a song that says, when You play a melody, I'll figure out how to be in harmony with that. It's a song that says, I'm suffering right now, and I trust that You will be playing alongside me. It's a song that says, I don't know what the next note will bring, but I trust that You will lead me to the crescendo. And that crescendo will be breathtaking.

May we all revel in Hashem's unique love for each of us. May we feel harmony in our hearts. And may this Rosh Chodesh Nissan be filled with new and joyous song for us all.

Sincerely,

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