



פרשת ואתחנן

שבת נחמו

מנחם אב תשע"ט

### CHOF AV 75 YEARS

This year marks 75 years since the passing of the Rebbe's father, the Gaon and Mekubal Rabbi Levi Yitzchak ז"ל

The Rebbe requested that we study from his teachings on the day of his Yartzheit.

All men and bochorim are invited to a communal Beis Midrash evening on Tuesday night, leil Chof Av.

8:00pm in the Goldhirsch Hall.

Learning materials will be provided and Rabbi Johnson will give a shiur in a Biur of Reb Levik explaining a Mishna in Kiddushin al pi Kabbalah.

Refreshments and lechaim will be served. There will also be a Goiral for a set of Reb Levik's writings.

### KOLLEL IN THE COMMUNITY

Kollel Rabbis are regular presenters at a number of local shiurim in Melbourne including the Wednesday ladies shiur, Torah and tea and the Shabbos ladies shiur.

This week Rabbi Mendel Gurkov gave a Parsha shiur at the Wednesday women's shiur, guiding the participants through an intricate sicha of the Rebbe on Parshas Vaeschanan.

### SHAALOS UTESHUVOS

This week's shiur will be presented by Rabbi Michael Stern. 9:30am Sunday in the Kollel.



## Saying Shema in the darkness of night

The first passage of Shema comes from Parshas Vaeschanan. The Mitzvah requires us to recite the Shema twice each day; בשכבך ובקומך, in the evening and in the morning.

The Avodah of Krias Shema is to crown Hashem as King over the world and reveal His oneness within all existence. This Avodah is reflected in the word שְׁמָא; We have to reveal Hashem's oneness (א) in the 7 Heavens and the earth (ח) and the four directions that define our world (ד).

In Shema we surrender ourselves with Kabbolas Ol to His Kingship and to live our lives in His service.

Because this Avodah is the essence of Yiddishkeit, it is the first Mitzvah discussed in Shas (the Oral Law).

The first Mishna begins מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין - *from when do we begin reciting the Shema at night?* The Mishna discusses the timeframe when one can fulfil the Mitzvah of reciting the evening Shema, presenting the opinion of three sages.

Like each day comprises night and day, throughout our lives we experience phases of night and phases of day. In each of them, we must say Shema.

Daylight represents those times when we have spiritual clarity and illumination. We feel connected and inspired. The light of Hashem shines openly in our lives.

Night is when this light is not present. We face spiritual darkness and confusion, lacking inspiration and struggling to feel connected.

And so the Mishna asks, how can one read Shema in the evening? When we are in a state of daylight it seems so much easier to surrender ourselves to Hashem and live with the purpose of revealing His oneness. But what about those times when we experience spiritual darkness in our lives? How then can we "recite Shema"?

Hashem does not give us a challenge that we cannot overcome. The fact that the Torah gives us this Mitzvah is because our Neshama possesses a pow-

erful inner strength. With this strength we can overcome the spiritual challenges that we may be facing and surrender ourselves to serving Hashem.

But how far can this strength carry us?

Rabbi Eliezer teaches that one may only say Shema during the first third of the night. He defines בשכבך as the time when most people are still wake but are preparing to go to sleep. We may be experiencing "night", but as long as we have not yet "fallen asleep", there is hope for "Shema". Once a person falls asleep spiritually, Rabbi Eliezer says that they are incapable of reciting "Shema".

Rabbi Eliezer was a disciple of the school of Shammai who was known for his strictness. Shammai represents a standard for the spiritual elite.

The Chachamim rule that one may only recite the evening Shema until midnight. Even after one has "fallen asleep", as long as the darkness is not so strong, one can still say "Shema". But once the first half of the night has passed and the darkness becomes more intense, one can no longer recite Shema.

The Chachamim represent the majority. For most people, once the darkness grows too strong, the Avodah becomes too difficult to achieve.

The final opinion is the most lenient. Rabban Gamliel allows one to fulfil the Mitzvah of the evening Shema all the way until dawn. He defines בשכבך as the entire time when most people are asleep.

The darkest part of the night is just before dawn. Even if a person has "fallen asleep" and even when the spiritual darkness that they face is at its greatest intensity, Rabban Gamliel teaches us that we can still overcome it and say "Shema".

Rabban Gamliel was the *Nosi Hador*, the leader of all of Klal Yisroel. A *Nosi* cannot cater only to the elite. Nor can a *Nosi* focus on what is good for the majority. A *Nosi* bares responsibility for every single Jew irrespective of their spiritual standing; to give them hope and to reveal within them the spiritual strength to connect to Hashem and live "Shema".

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# The latest time for saying Kiddush Levana

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

I was not able to recite Kiddush Levana on Motzai Tisha B'av because it was cloudy. The next few nights were cloudy as well. Until when may I still recite Kiddush Levana?

## Kiddush Levana on Motzai Tisha B'av

According to Kabbalah, it is customary it is customary to delay the reciting of Kiddush Levana in the month of Menachem Av until Motzai Tisha B'av<sup>1</sup>. This is the Minhag in Yerushalayim<sup>2</sup>.

The reason for this custom is because in Kiddush Levana we say that the Jewish people will be renewed in the times of Moshiach just as the moon is renewed. Since Tisha B'av is the day on which Moshiach was born<sup>3</sup>, we recite Kiddush Levana on Motzai Tisha B'av<sup>4</sup>.

But not everyone agrees with this practise. There are Poskim, including the Ram"o<sup>5</sup>, that one should not recite Kiddush Levana on Motzai Tisha B'av or after any fast day. The reason is because Kiddush Levana should be said in a state of joy and after the fasting and affliction we are not besimcha<sup>6</sup>.

Mahari"l<sup>7</sup> writes that one should wait until Motzai Shabbos Nachamu. The poskim<sup>8</sup> explain that this is only when Tisha B'av is on Thursday and Motzai Shabbos Nachamu would be the 13th. But if Tisha B'av would be on Tuesday one should not wait until Motzai Shabbos Nachamu since this would be the last night for Kiddush Levana and it may be cloudy. Obviously when Tisha B'av is on Sunday, Motzai Shabbos Nachamu will be passed the latest time for Kiddush Levana.

There is a middle-ground opinion<sup>9</sup> that distinguishes between a regular Tisha B'av and when Tisha B'av falls out on Shabbos and the fast is pushed off to Sunday. On a regular Motzai Tisha B'av one does not recite Kiddush Levana because the Aveilus of Tisha B'av continues until midday of the following day. However when Tisha B'av is pushed off, one may recite Kiddush Levana after the fast since the Aveilus does not continue to the next day.

Those who have the custom of reciting Kiddush Levana on Motzai Tisha B'av should eat something beforehand so that they are no longer fasting and can be joyful<sup>10</sup>. If the Tzibbur is reciting Kiddush Levana immediately after Maariv one should say it with them even before eating<sup>11</sup>. This is because it is preferable to do the Mitzvah with the Tzibbur – ברוב עם הדרת מלך

## The Latest time for Kiddush Levana

The Halacha<sup>12</sup> is that one who sees the moon in its renewal is required to recite the blessing of Kiddush Levana - אשר במאמרו ברא שחקים

When does this period extend to? The Gemora<sup>13</sup> teaches that Kiddush Levana can be recited until the time that the moon's blemish (cavity) has been filled.

Rav Yehuda rules that this means up until 7 days of the month. Halacha follows the Nahardeans who rule that the blessing may be recited until 16 days of the month.

There are a number of opinions in the poskim on how to understand this Gemora and what is the halachic conclusion;

- The Mechaber<sup>14</sup> and Tur rule simply that Kiddush Levana can be recited until 16 days from the Molad but not including the 16th day i.e. 15 days. The Magen Avraham<sup>15</sup> explains that these 15 days are counted as fifteen 24-hour periods (360 hours) from the exact time of the Molad.
- The Ram"o rules slightly differently. A lunar month is actually 29 days, 12 hours and 783 chalakim (each chelek being 1/1080 of an hour). Technically the moon will reach its fullness at the midway point of this measurement. Hence Kiddush Levana may only be recited until 14 days, 18 hours and 22 minutes after the Molad, and not the entire 15th day period<sup>16</sup>.
- There is a third opinion which is even more lenient. Kneses Hagedola<sup>17</sup> interprets the Talmud above literally as being inclusive of the 16th day from the Molad. This opinion is also recorded by the Chasam Sofer<sup>18</sup>. Pri Chadash relies on this opinion to permit someone who has not yet recited Kiddush Levana to do so on the 16th albeit without Hashem's name in the Blessing בלא שם ומלכות
- There are even more lenient opinions that allow Kiddush Levana to be recited in the second half of the month as well<sup>19</sup>. The Chasam Sofer suggests that one may say Kiddush Levana until there are 7 days left in the month.
- Some Poskim<sup>20</sup> allow one to recite Kiddush Levana up until the end of the month by reading the Bracha from the Gemora<sup>21</sup> or from the Tur. It is questionable whether one may recite Hashem's name when reading from the Gemora.

Lechatchila one should be careful to recite Kiddush Levana according to the stricter opinion of the

Ram"o, especially as this matter involves a safeik Bracha Levatala<sup>22</sup>. Bedieved, if one did not recite Kiddush Levana before this point, some poskim rule that one may rely on the Mechaber to recite it with a Bracha, as long as the 15th day has not lapsed<sup>23</sup>.

Concerning reciting Kiddush Levana later than this time, one should consult a Rov for a practical ruling.

It should be noted that these times are calculated from the time of the Molad and not from Rosh Chodesh<sup>24</sup>. This is important to know because in some months, the Molad may be a day before Rosh Chodesh.

Additionally, all times are based on and calculated from the time of the Molad in Yerushalaim. The time used should be the real solar time and not the standard clock time which is based on time zones and does not reflect the exact time based on the geographical location.

Whilst Kiddush Levana is not recited on Shabbos, if Shabbos is the last opportunity Kiddush Levana may be said<sup>25</sup>.

Through learning the halachos of Kiddush Levana and being mehader in its observance, may we merit the fulfilment of the assurance that like the moon, the Jewish people will be renewed והן עתידין להתחדש כמותה

1. Pri Eitz Chaim (Ariza"l), Siddur Yaavetz, Pri Chadash 426:2, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 125:19 and other Poskim including Chayei Adam 118:15
2. See Baer Heitev 462:4 quoting Kneses Hagedolah
3. Yerushalmi Brachos 2:4 and Midrash Rabbah Eichah 1:51
4. Pri Eitz Chaim Shaar Chag Hashavuos
5. Shulchan Aruch OC 426:2
6. Levush 426:4
7. Minhagei Mahari"l
8. Shairei Kneses Hagedola 551:12
9. Sefer HAchaim 426
10. Shvus Yaakov 2:11 quoted in Baer Heitev. The rationale is that one is then in a state of joy.
11. Elya Rabbah 426:11
12. Shulchan Aruch OC 426:1. Sanhedrin 42a
13. Sanhedrin 41b
14. 426:3. This is the opinion of the Rambam Brachos 10:17
15. 426:12 and Mishna Berura 426:17
16. This is also the opinion of the Bach, Shelah, Chayei Adam 118:14 and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 97:10
17. Quoting Rabbeinu Peretz and the Meiri
18. OC 102. The case at hand was where they could not say Kiddush Levana earlier due to a Cholera outbreak.
19. See shemuos vesipurim p184 that the Rebbe Rashab once said Kiddush Levana with a Bracha 17 days past the Molad. This was done without a Gemara.
20. Avnei Nezer 383, Darkei Chaim Veshalom 495, Taamei Haminhagim quoting the Chozeh of Lublin.
21. Sanhedrin 42a
22. Kaf Hachaim 426:53. Even though he was a Sefardi Posek, in a case of safeik Brachos we rule even against the Mechaber.
23. Mishna Berura Biur Halacha ד"ה ולא ט"ו בכלל
24. See Magein Avraham 426:12 for a different opinion that we do count from Rosh Chodesh.
25. Magein Avraham 426:7, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 97:12 and Mishna Berura 426:12.