

This week's פרשה, פרשת בא, has the immortal words (12:2): הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים, marking the first מצוה given to כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל as a nation: רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה. The sefer שמחת התורה by R' Simcha Sheps offers a fascinating insight. He brings a גמרא in ע"א מנחות כ"ט that משה found three topics particularly difficult: תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל שלשה דברים היו קשין לו למשה: מנחות כ"ט ע"א. There were three topics that משה found particularly difficult; עד שהראה לו הקב"ה באצבעו - until הקדוש explicitly showed משה each one with an אצבע, pointing and clarifying, "This is what I mean, this is what I want." ואלו הן מנורה וראש חדש ושרצים. What is the גמרא conveying here? Why did משה struggle specifically with these three?

First, **תורה** symbolizes **מנורה**, as we know (משלי י:כג) found it hard to grasp how our **עולם** of **גשמיות** could connect to the **תורה**, which is **רוחניות**, they are fundamentally divergent concepts. However, **הוא** clarified that the world itself is sustained and exists through the **זכות** of the **תורה**.

Next, שרצים, which are טמא, symbolize the אומות העולם. While כלל ישראל is called אדם (ע"ש יבמות ס"א ע"א), the אומות העולם are not. משה questioned how טהרה could influence טומאה, given the stark contrast between the holiness of כלל ישראל and the impurity of the אומות העולם. הקדוש ברוך הוא responded that the השפעה of כלל ישראל could indeed penetrate and affect the אומות העולם, a dynamic we occasionally see throughout history, but will only be fully realized in ימות המשיח.

Lastly, **הַדָּשׁ** posed a similar conceptual challenge. **מֶשֶׁה** wondered how the **לְבַנָּה**, emerging anew each month, could break through the darkness, symbolizing **גְּלוּת** and **הַסְתֵּר פָּנִים**? How could we survive such profound darkness? Hashem reassured **מֶשֶׁה**, explaining that even when the moon disappears into the night's blackness, it returns, breaking through the **חֹשֶׁךְ**. This renewal symbolizes **קְדוּשָׁה** shining through the darkness.

Each of these concepts shares a common theme: How can כלל ישראל survive and thrive in this עולם הזה? The answer is only because of the תורה זכות. It's through this זכות - not through superior intellect, scientific achievements, or Nobel Prizes - that we maintain our special status. We have the תורה זכות, and in that זכות we shall continue to succeed in עולם הזה with our עבודה of bringing an אור to the גוים. Good Shabbos!

