



WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Women's League Shabbat 2013/5773

Parashat Bo and the Rosh Chodesh connection...

Exodus 12:2: *"This month shall mark for you the beginning of months...."*

This verse from *parashat Bo* is the textual basis for the observance of rosh chodesh (the new month). Today rosh chodesh has been reclaimed by women's groups as a day for celebration and study. Even though rosh chodesh in antiquity did not have the same degree of importance as other holidays, it was celebrated as a sacred event. The Jerusalem Talmud Taanit 1:6 describes it as a day on which women did not work. A later rabbinic source in Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 45 commented on Exodus 32:

Aaron argued with himself, saying: 'If I say to Israel, Give me gold and silver, they will bring it immediately; but if I will say to them, Give ye to me the earrings of your wives and of your sons, the matter will fail' ... as it is said, 'And Aaron said to them, Break off the golden rings.'

The midrash continues

The women heard (this), but they were unwilling to give their earrings to their husbands; and they said to them: 'Your want to make a graven image of a molten image without any power in it to deliver.'

The Holy One, blessed be He, gave the women their reward in this world and the world to come. What reward did He give them in this world? That they should observe the new moons more stringently than the men, and what reward will He give them in the world to come? They are destined to be renewed like the New Moons, as it is said: 'Who satisfies your years with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.'

The custom of special time for women on rosh chodesh, which persisted through the middle ages, has been renewed today in women's rosh chodesh groups all over North America.