Resiliently Resolved

*As the sun and moon each play hard to get, days pass and tides change. Do the tides of stress, deadlines and responsibility flood your life? The key to managing life’s currents lies in learning the delicate art of choreographing the ‘sun’ and ‘moon’.*

* The moon and its relevance to us: The lesser of the two luminaries in the sky and the symbol of the first commandment of G-d to the Jewish people[[1]](#footnote-1). On any given day, half of the moon is illuminated. Its real value i.e. its significance to us, however, is what is visible on earth and relative to the specific day of the lunar month. (This discussion is about lessons from the moon and therefore must remain in a framework of real value- what we observe of the moon and how it relates to us makes all the difference.)
* The rhythm of the moon: Perhaps the reason many people are entranced by the moon is its element of surprise. The moon tonight is somewhat of a mystery because it’ll look different than yesterday’s moon. In contrast to other lights in the night sky, the moon’s light changes from night to night within a month, it waxes and wanes.
* The world, being a macrocosm of man, tells the story of the cycles and patterns in our lives. The moon represents the parts of life that are forever changing. The power to initiate ideas, renew energy, and adapt to the ebb and flow of life are all symbolized by the moon[[2]](#footnote-2). The Hebrew word for month, *Chodesh*, is a derivative of the Hebrew word for ‘new’ indicating that lunar months are a process of constant renewal.
* Anyone who lives near the ocean or any body of water would know at what time to expect receding water levels. The moon exerts a force of gravity on Earth. While most things on earth are stably lodged on Earth’s surface, water is moved easier and therefore responds to moon’s gravitational pull. So, as the moon takes its daily revolution around earth, water levels, depending on the overhead moon, will rise resulting in high tides. At the end of earth that is directly opposite, tides will be very low because all water on earth is slightly moved to the area closest to the moon. This, however, only considers the moon’s gravitational pull on earth (which accounts for most of the effect on water levels). The sun, while responsible for less of the effect, is involved in tide levels as well. When the sun and moon are aligned at 180 degree angles (straight line) the effect of high or low tides is exaggerated. But, the gravity of the sun and moon balance out when the sun and moon are configured at a 90 degree angle with respect to each other and Earth, resulting in higher low tides and lower high tides. Tides are leveled when the sun and moon’s gravitational pull counteract each other.
* The sun and its significance: Whereas the moon symbolizes change and growth, the sun represents the aspects of life in which our resolve is beyond circumstances. The power of consistency, unchanging principles and absolute resolve all fall under the sun umbrella[[3]](#footnote-3).
* Learning to synchronize both the ever-changing and the resolute will be the key to balancing life’s currents and having the strength to rise above the tides. The differences between plastic and glass, a tree that sways with the wind and one that doesn’t move, and martial arts and bodybuilding are all based on the same notion. If there is no flexibility, under pressure, the glass will shatter, the stiff tree will collapse, and the bodybuilder will tear a muscle. However, agility must be accompanied by a tough foundation for strength to be maximized.
* Relating the discussion back to the human psyche: Maturing and being master of situations life throws at us is really a delicate dance between our unwavering integrity and our fluid tolerance for the unknown. It is a blend of the turbulent with the steady, the unpredictable with the absolute resolve, and the welcoming of an unforeseeable future with the appreciation of a bygone past. And specifically when our standards are unshakeable, can our initiatives and self-growth reap measurable results. We must find the right blend of resolution for the basic timeless principles of Torah along with ongoing efforts to find new inspiration and enthusiasm[[4]](#footnote-4).
* Lessons from a leap year: In year such as the one we find ourselves in now, a lunar month is added. The Jewish calendar is established based on the sun determining years and seasons, and the moon determining months. Because the solar year is approximately eleven days longer than twelve lunar months, every two or three years, another month is added to synchronize the sun and moon’s cycles. The synchronization of sun and moon in an annual cycle holds the same lesson for us as ocean tides do. The life of man is quasi-solar and quasi-lunar. Having uncompromising resolve in areas where it’s needed will allow us to succeed in the aspects of life that are constantly changing. Being comfortable in our monotonous routine and not looking to initiate is the extreme ‘sun syndrome,’ while always wishing for something new and exciting and abandoning principles that ground us is the other extreme. Real accomplishment is learning to take our either naturally innovative side or our natural tendency to stick with what we know and fuse the two[[5]](#footnote-5).
1. Exodus 12:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ohr Hatorah, Bracha, p1889 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ohr Hatorah Bereishis, p5. Bo, p301 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Likkutei Sichos 29, Nitzavim-Vayelech [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hisvaduyos, 6 Tishrei 5744 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)