

Weekly Column by

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Time - Life's Most Precious Gift

HaChodesh '19

“This month shall be for you the beginning of all the months” (Sh'mot 12:2). This verse contains the very first Mitzva that Klal Yisrael received as we were about to become a free and independent nation, right before the Exodus from Egypt.

S'forno explains that this Mitzva of Rosh Chodesh was presented first because its essence - that we Jews are masters over our time - is the central concept and definition of being a free individual. Because as slaves in Egypt, we had no time to call our own, as we were totally dependent on the will of our Egyptian task masters.

Thus, as Israel was about to leave Egyptian bondage forever, we were presented with the Mitzva whose essence is the concept of the gift of freedom of time.

It is Beit Din's task to declare when Rosh Chodesh will take place, by one of two methods. Number one, through R'IYA - the actual sighting of the New Moon by two valid witnesses, or - number two, by CHESHBON - calculation, where Beit Din determines through a mathematical formula when it was probable to see the New Moon.

What is the lesson for us today when we have no Beit Din to determine when the New Moon is? Rav Pam zt"l explains that there are two distinct ways in which a person can utilize his time in this world. Number 1, through R'IYA or number 2, with a CHESHBON. For many people, time is spent through R'IYA, how they see fit to waste time. These foolish people do with time whatever they want, failing to realize that the passing of time on Facebook and Smart Phones is a tragic loss never to be re-gained.

However, the intelligent, thoughtful person uses time with a CHESHBON. He is careful to calculate and fulfill his days and hours with Torah and Mitzvot.

We must strive to the best of our ability to use life's most precious gift wisely, by not killing time or wasting time.

Thus, the Hebrew word for time is Z'MAN, which means preparation. G-d gives us time in this world to prepare ourselves for OLAM HABA - Eternal Life in the World To Come. **ESP**