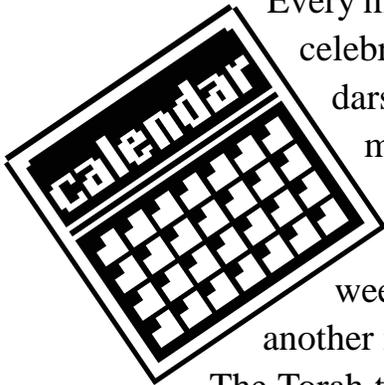


רֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ

Rosh Chodesh



Every month is a new gift from HaShem. “Rosh Chodesh” is the celebration of the “new moon” by which we make our calendars. “Rosh” (רֵאשׁ) means “head” and “chodesh” (חֹדֶשׁ) means “new month” or “moon” in Hebrew. The Jewish people were to thank HaShem for the time He had given them. On every Shabbat we thank HaShem for another week, and on every Rosh Chodesh we thank Him again for another month.

The Torah teaches us that at every New Moon, we are to assemble together as a congregation and show our thanks to HaShem for the life He has given us. In ancient times we offered sacrifices at the Temple and blew the shofar to let everyone know a new month had begun. Since the Temple has been destroyed and we live outside of the Land of Israel, we are unable to bring our sacrifices for Rosh Chodesh. We can get together, however, and blow the shofar to mark the beginning of the new month. We can also remember to give something to those who are need as we begin a new month. In fact, the new month is a good time to empty out your Tzedekah box and give the money to someone who is in need. That would help us remember that all we have comes from HaShem as He takes us from month to month.

Another reason HaShem tells us to remember the New Moon or the New Month is because He wants us to live our lives by His schedule, not our own. As we come to the month of Adar and celebrate Purim, we are reminded that the very next month is Nisan, the month that brings Pesach and Chag HaMatzot, “Passover” and the “Feast of Unleavened Bread.” HaShem instructed us to make Nisan our first month as we count our festivals, so that Pesach stands as the first festival in our year. Then, in the month of Sivan comes Shavuot, followed in the Fall by Rosh HaShannah, Yom HaKippurim, and Sukkot in the month of Tishri. Hanukkah is in Kislev, and Purim in Adar. You can see that if we want to live our lives by G-d’s calendar, we have to keep track of the months!

Did you know that some years we have 13 months rather than 12? Some years we add another Adar, called Adar II or Adar ב. We do this so that our months keep up with the seasons. After all, we are commanded to celebrate Pesach in the Spring!