

מִצְוֹת
עֲשֵׂה
#153

 We learn this mitzvah from Parshas Bo: (במדבר י"ב)

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשׁ חֹדְשִׁים

Today in *Sefer Hamitzvos*, we learn the same *mitzvah* one last time: How the *Beis Din* needs to make a calendar and calculate the months and the years. This is the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Hachodesh*.

 The details of this mitzvah are explained in Mishnayos & Gemara: Mesechta Sanhedrin perek Alef, Mesechta Rosh Hashana and Brachos

When the Alter Rebbe was 9, he learned certain parts of math and science that help us understand how the sun and moon work. When he was ten, he made a *Yiddishe* calendar for 15 years!

When the Alter Rebbe was just 12, he gave a *shiur* on the Rambam's *halachos* of *Kiddush Hachodesh*, which explain when we see the new moon for *Rosh Chodesh*. These *halachos* are complicated, and it made the *Talmidei Chachomim* in *shul* feel very embarrassed next to this young boy!

The Torah teaches us how the world should be according to Torah. Sometimes you first need to understand how the world works to understand what the Torah wants! One of the examples is that you need to know some math and science to understand the way the Yiddishe calendar works. That's why the Alter Rebbe learned these things.

The Alter Rebbe, who was a posek in Niglah and Nistar (he wrote the Shulchan Aruch and Tanya) knew everything that you need to know in order to understand halacha.

See Hayom Yom Zayin Shevat

מִצְוֹת
עֲשֵׂה
#59

 We learn this mitzvah from Parshas Behaalosecha: (במדבר י"ד)

וּבְיוֹם שְׂמִיחַתְכֶם וּבְמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם וּבְרֵאשֵׁי חֹדְשֵׁיכֶם וּתְקַעְתֶּם בַּחֲצֹצְרוֹת

Today we also learn a new *mitzvah*, to blow trumpets at certain times. We blow them when we bring the special *korbanos* of *Yom Tov*, a happy time. We also blow them in a sad time — when we are *davening* to Hashem because hard things are happening. They can remind us that it's from Hashem, and we have to do *teshuvah*.



The details of this mitzvah are explained in Mishnayot & Gemara:
Sifri, Mesechta Rosh Hashana, Mesechta Taanis

Rambam: Hilchos Kiddush HaChodesh, Hilchos Taaniyos

PERAKIM YUD-CHES AND YUD-TES

In today's Rambam, we are finishing the *halachos* of *Kiddush Hachodesh*! In *perek Yud-Ches* and *Yud-Tes*, we learn more about how the *Beis Din* knows if the witnesses are telling the truth that they saw the moon. They make calculations to figure out if it is possible to see the moon on a certain night.

But just because there IS a new moon doesn't mean that anyone can see it! Sometimes the moon is very low in the sky and someone needs to be on top of a mountain to see it, or it might be hidden behind clouds.

The Rambam explains what the *Beis Din* does if nobody sees the moon for many months — they can't just make every month be 30 days long, because that will mess up the calendar! The *Beis Din* follows a pattern, like we do nowadays: one long month, and then one short month. That way, even if there are no witnesses, the Yidden will all be keeping a proper calendar.

One of the questions the *Beis Din* asks people is, "Which way was the moon pointing when you saw it?" The Rambam explains how the *Beis Din* knows if their answer makes sense: It depends on where the sun is! The part that we can see of the moon is because the sun is shining on it and making it lit up. (You can try this yourself using a ball and a flashlight in a dark room!)

The sun's "path" (orbit) around the earth and the moon's orbit aren't like two circles on a flat piece of paper. They are both tilted in different directions, so sometimes the sun is a little bit higher or lower in the sky than the moon is. Since it is shining down at the moon, or up at the moon, it makes the moon look like it's pointing in a different direction! (You can try this with your flashlight too!)

The Rambam tells us how to calculate this ourselves, so we can know which way the moon should be pointing on *Rosh Chodesh*.

PEREK ALEF

We also learn the first *perek* of a new set of *halachos* about fasts that the *Chachomim* make for the whole town. If something scary happens, we need to *daven* to Hashem of course, and also fast to ask for Hashem to help us. The Rambam talks about WHO needs to fast, and WHEN we're not supposed to make this kind

of fast.

The Rambam says that if a person says that something just happened by chance, it is cruel! Hashem wants us to do *teshuvah*, and by saying that it was just by nature, it will stop us from doing *teshuvah* properly, and we won't be able to get all of Hashem's special *brachos*.