Yom Tov Sheni – Handout

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# Mishnah – Rosh Hashanah 2

## Perek 5

There was a large courtyard in Jerusalem and it was called Beit Ya'azek; it was there that all the witnesses gathered, and the court would examine them there. Large meals were made for them, in order that they be accustomed to come. At first, they did not move from all day. Rabban Gamliel the Elder ordained that they would go two thousand amot on every side…

## Perek 6

How were witnesses examined? The pair that came first were examined first. They would bring in the eldest of them, and say to him: "Say, how did you see the moon; was it towards the sun, or away from the sun? To the north or to the south? What was its elevation and towards which side was it inclining? And how wide was it?" If he said “towards the sun”, he did not say anything.

Afterwards, they would bring in the second witness and examine him; if their words were found to match, their testimony stood. And all the other pairs of witnesses would be asked, not because they would need them, but only that they not leave with bitter spirits, in order that they be accustomed to come.

## Perek 7

The head of the court said, “Sanctified" and all the people answered after him, "Sanctified, Sanctified." Whether seen at its time or not seen at its time, it was sanctified. Rabbi Eliezer bar Tzadok, said, "If it had not been seen at its time, it was not sanctified, because it had already been sanctified by the Heavens."

## Perek 1

If that one is not known to them, they send another with him to certify him. Originally testimony with regard to the new moon was received from anyone. When, however, the Minim disrupted, it was ordained that testimony should be received only from persons known.

## Perek 2

Originally they used to light beacons. When the Cutheans disrupted, they made a rule that messengers should go forth.

## Perek 3

How did they light the beacons? They used to bring long poles of cedar and reeds and olive wood and flax fluff which they tied to the poles with a string, and someone used to go up to the top of a mountain and set fire to them and wave them to and fro and up and down until he saw the next one doing the same thing on the top of the second mountain; and so on the top of the third mountain.

## Perek 4

From where did they light the beacons? From the Mount of Olives to Sartaba, and from Sartaba to Grofina, and from Grofina to Hauran, and from Hauran to Beth Baltin. The one on Beth Baltin did not budge from there but went on waving to and fro and up and down until he saw the whole of the diaspora before him like one bonfire.

# Mishnah – Rosh Hashanah 1:3

On six months messengers go out: On Nisan, because of Pesach; On Av, because of the fast; On Elul, because of Rosh Hashanah; On Tishrei, to correct for the festivals; On Kislev, because of Chanukah; On Adar, because of Purim; And when the Temple existed, they also went out on Iyar, because of the little Pesach.

# Bavli – Berachot 58b

Samuel also said: I am as familiar with the paths of heaven as with the streets of Nehardea…

# Mishneh Torah – Hilchot Kiddush HaChodesh – Chapter 5

## Perek 1

All the statements made previously regarding the prerogative to sanctify Rosh Chodesh because of the sighting of the moon, and establish a leap year to reconcile the calendar or because of a necessity, apply to the Sanhedrin in Eretz Yisrael. They alone or a court of judges possessing semichah that holds sessions in Eretz Yisrael and that was granted authority by the Sanhedrin.

This is derived from the command given Moses and Aaron (Exodus 12:2): "This month shall be for you the first of months" The Oral Tradition as passed down, teacher to student, from Moses our teacher that the verse is interpreted as follows: This testimony is entrusted to you and those who arise after you and who function in your position.

## Perek 2

This concept is a halachah communicated to Moses on Sinai: When there is a Sanhedrin, the monthly calendar is established according to the sighting of the moon. When there is no Sanhedrin, the monthly calendar is established according to the fixed calendar that we follow now, and the sighting of the moon is of no consequence.

## Perek 4

When the Sanhedrin functioned and the calendar was established based on the sighting of the moon, the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael and all the places where the messengers of Tishrei would arrive, would celebrate the holidays for one day only.

The inhabitants of the distant places that were not reached by the messengers of Tishrei would celebrate two days because of the doubt involved. For they did not know the day that the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael established as the new month.

**Perek 5**

In the present era, when the Sanhedrin no longer exists, and the court of Eretz Yisrael establishes the months according to the calendar, according to law, it would be appropriate for Jews throughout the world to celebrate the holidays for one day alone. For the distant regions of the diaspora and the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael rely on the same calendar and establish the festivals accordingly. Nevertheless, the Sages ordained that they retain the custom of their ancestors.

**Perek 6**

Therefore, the inhabitants of all the places that the messengers of Tishrei would not reach in the era when the messengers were sent out should celebrate two days even in the present era, just as they did when the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael established the calendar according to the sighting of the moon.

In the present era, the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael continue their custom and celebrate one day; for they never celebrated two days. Thus, our celebration of the second day of the holidays in the diaspora at present is a Rabbinic institution.

# Bavli – Beitzah 4b

R. Zeira said: Logic supports R. Assi; for we are now well acquainted with the fixing of the new moon and, nevertheless, we do observe two days. Abaye said: Logic supports Rav; for we have learned: In early times they used to light bonfires, but on account of the mischief of the Samaritans the Rabbis ordained that messengers should go forth. Now if the mischief of the Samaritans ceased we would all observe only one day; and even during the Samaritan mischief wherever the messengers arrived they observed only one day. But now that we are well acquainted with the fixing of the new moon, why do we observe two days? — Because they sent from there [Palestine]: Give heed to the customs of your ancestors which have come down to you; for it might happen that the government might issue a decree and it will cause confusion.