

Rosh Chodesh was the first mitzvah given to the Jews because even though it didn't outline a value that must be acted upon, it infused within the former slaves a sense of ownership, pride, and control. No one wants to leave the oppression of one person to be told how to treat their neighbor, rather they must be given the ability to take control of something, specifically themselves.

To us as Jews, this ideal is crucial. Never, throughout all of our extensive history, since this enslavement, have we allowed ourselves to be subjugated. Never have we forgotten who we are. Even when we were in the hell-torn depths of the concentration camps did we lose faith or forget our values. In fact, there are stories of brave men and women who refused to eat Chametz (even though they were given such little food) on Pesach as to not transgress the holiday.

We are not slaves; we thank God for this every single day at the beginning of davening. Rather, we are free. What that means is we have control of our time and control of ourselves. As we just passed Rosh Chodesh Shevat earlier this week, we should realize that this control allows us to make personal judgment, and make a change for the betterment of ourselves. Take your time to consider who are today, where you were yesterday, and what you want to be tomorrow.

***Shabbat Shalom!
Benji Zoller—Sandman***

