

Cheshvan is the eighth month of the year. Its *mazal*, zodiac sign, is Scorpio, *Akrov*.

There are no holidays in Cheshvan. That is one of the reasons for the fact that Cheshvan is called *Mar Cheshvan*, as *mar* means bitter.

Nonetheless, there were some very significant events that took place in Cheshvan. The Flood began on the seventeenth of the month, and ended over a year later, on the twenty-seventh of the month. (This is according to Rabbi Eliezer, who says that the world was created in Tishrei; Rabbi Yehoshua, who believes that the world was created in Nissan, is of the opinion that the Flood began and ended in Iyar.)

Cheshvan was also the month in which Shlomo finished constructing the Temple.

In describing that event, the Tanach calls this month by the name *Bull* (Melachim I, 6:38). One explanation for the name Bull is that the Flood, *Mabul*, began in Cheshvan.

In Cheshvan there are three optional fast days, commonly called *Behab*, an acronym for Monday-Thursday-Monday. These three fasts follow the holiday of Succos. After the festivities of this long holiday, *Behab* is a chance to step back from the excesses of the world. While most people do not fast on these three days, *Selichos* is said during *shacharis*.

Although *Behab* could actually start in the last week of Tishrei, the Rabbis did not wish to institute additional fast days in that festive month.

Behab occurs after Pesach as well, in the month of Iyar.

Cheshvan 5751

"A Match Made in Heaven" (Based on a Midrash)

By CHAYA SARAH CANTOR

The lines were growing by dozens each day,
The weight causing boards of the great ark to sway.
Two by two they walked in, birds of all size and feather,
While lions and bears glanced in fear at the weather.

Soon they all watched the sky, now an ominous hue,
And wondered exactly what they had to do.
Some turned to the man steering them left and right,
Assuming that he was the one with the might.

"Move forward, come quickly," cried Noah, "keep pace."
He ignored the light splashes of rain on his face.
With more hurried movements he packed them inside,
And motioned to his wife to prepare for the ride.

All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky,
All quickly obeyed, not wishing to die.
"We've no time to lose, for the flood has begun!"
He lifted the ramp, and then called to his son.

"No, wait!" called a voice. "You forgot about me!"
Noah glanced around, wondering who on earth that could be.
"Here I am!" called a creature, who came into view.
He hurried to Noah, who asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm Sheker," said the thing, as he alighted on wood.
"Falsehood, Deceit, everything else that's not good.
Like a spider I spin a web of tales and cunning,
And those who love to tell lies, they come running."

"I'm sorry," said Noah, and he folded his arms,
"But I think that I'm somewhat immune to your charms.
I'm afraid that this ark is no place for you,
Besides, you can only come in two by two."

"Two by two?" cried the thing, and he gave a good start.
"Right, couples only," said Noah, ready to part.
"Though I certainly do not intend to be cruel,
But it's Hashem, and not I, who sets the rule."

"No, wait!" Sheker jumped, and he frantically called,
"This just isn't fair, and I am appalled.
Unless I have a mate, I can't come inside?"
"That's right," said Noah. "From the rain you can't hide."

"And if I find someone?" asked the thing.
"Then you promise?"
"Yes," replied Noah, "and for once, please be honest.
For male and female, Hashem has created.
And to enter this ark you must be mated."

Frantically Sheker began to look around,
But nary a match was there to be found.
For none of the animals left were to his taste,
And at the splashing of raindrops above he made haste.

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laws in a binding fashion.

From the Talmud's depiction it is clear that Rabban Gamliel was very disturbed by the banishment of Rabbi Eliezer, but felt that he had no choice given the seriousness of the matter. Rabbi Eliezer's opinions were no longer reported in the house of study. Only after his death -- after the threat to the Sanhedrin had passed -- was his reputation as one of the greatest of all scholars restored.

new laws were established; an entire order of the Mishnah, Ediyos, was set aside for the recording of these laws.

According to the Babylonian Talmud, Rabban Gamliel was eventually restored to a position of co-leadership with Rabbi Eleazar Ben Azariah. The Jerusalem Talmud has a different version, saying that Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah remained alone as *nasi*, with Rabban Gamliel assuming the deputy position, *av bais din*, head of the Rabbinical court.

A Match Made in Heaven (Continued from page 15)

"How odd," thought the thing as he glanced at the town,
And its people who were trying to knock the ark down.
"Before I was liked, I was always invited,
But the landscape looks as if it's been blighted.

Beforehand I was constantly highly regarded,
There is no reason that I am now to be discarded.
The world will still be here, even after the rain,
Then people, I know, will all want me again.

But this is absurd. I have no time to lose!"
And the thing went in search of a partner to choose.
Just as the clouds above thundered with a blast,
The thing beamed in triumph. "I've found her at last!"

She was crouched on a boulder, scowling when he came
Anxiously toward her and asked, "What's your name?"
"My name?" She laughed. "I have several to use,
I'm Misfortune, I'm Mishap, and just plain Bad News.

I'm blamed for the troubles you see all around you.
The ills in the world that are apt to confound you.
I'm feared, yet revered, in a world where man
Thinks he can get away with whatever he can!"

"Then we're perfect!" cried Sheker. "A match made
above!
And with such a marriage there's bound to be love.
Come on, let's go," he said, voice imploring,
"I can hear the clouds in the sky loudly roaring."

"Just a minute!" she snapped, and remained in her seat.
"I find this improper. Didn't we just meet?
So soon in our courtship you want us to wed?
I'm sure just as soon you'll forget what you've said."

"Forget you?" cried Sheker. "Why, didn't you hear?
I said we were perfect. There's no cause for fear.
I can see the two of us now, hand in hand,
Making our presence felt throughout the land."

"Nevertheless, I need legal proof,
In order for us to share the same roof.
If you love me, as you say, then what will you give?
In order that with you I can now live."

"Give you?" cried Sheker. "I'm a professional liar,
My words, I'm afraid, cannot go much higher.
But," and he pondered, "tell you what I'll do.
Whatever I make, I will give it to you."

"Everything?" she asked. "Everything," he replied.
"And I assure you: on me people always relied.
For I was there whenever truth did fail,
And where virtue collapsed, I did prevail."

"You drive a hard bargain, but I accept!" she declared,
"Together we're forever entwined and ensnared.
For wherever you succeed, I am right behind you,
Well, I certainly am glad that I did find you!"

The air vibrated loudly, and thunder did bark,
The two of them hurried like wind to the ark.
"Let us in, let us in!" Noah heard Sheker's plea,
"I have kept my word. Now please help us flee."

Reluctantly Noah bade the newlyweds enter,
Gaily Misfortune followed her mentor.
They patiently waited for the rain to subside,
And when it was done they at last flew outside.

Soon Sheker was busy, continuing his work,
And wherever he was, Misfortune did lurk.
Soon he made money, and brought home what he
earned,
But his wife lost it quickly, and sadly he learned,

That a match made in heaven it certainly was,
And both of them went together, because
Whatever Deceit had gained through his guile,
Misfortune would lose after awhile.

For without integrity, nothing can last,
And present day treasures become pleasures past.
When acquired by Sheker, and his cunning and stealth,
His dear wife Misfortune will squander the wealth.

When something is true, it can stand on its own,
But falsehood can never survive all alone.
Perhaps that is why Sheker needed a mate,
For his dear wife Mishap is forever his fate.

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