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Modern man, having graduated from the Machine Age into the Atomic Age, has finally managed to conquer space. The expression "This is a small world" is more than a cliché repeated by two people who discover that they have common friends. It is an astute observation on the technological advancement of modern civilization. Radio and telegraph have reduced distances in communications. And jet aircraft have made the globe of Earth seem as ridiculously small as a basketball. Space has indeed been firmly mastered.

But if Space has been conquered, how about Time? Has our civilization been as successful in mastering Time as it has Space? At first sight, we would be inclined to answer "Yes". Difficult and complicated processes which took months to do by hand are now achieved in days by machine. The making of a suit or dress took weeks of tedious labor in the days of our grandparents. Now it is done, in mass-production, in hours. Where a man once worked 60 or 70 hours a week for his daily bread, he now accomplishes the same in a 40 hour week and still has time for a 2 or 4 week vacation. It seems, therefore, that we have conquered Time too.

On second thought, however, we have done nothing of the sort. The fact that we have Time on our hands does not mean that we have Time in our hands. For the stark and tragic fact is that we Americans do nothing with that extra Time that our civilization has made available to us. As a matter of fact if I were asked what was the major disease from which most Americans suffer today, I would not hesitate to answer, "Boredom". Not Cancer, not Heart disease, not atom-fright, not even laxity in morals, but just plain boredom. For it is this boredom that is at the root of all spiritual diseases. A man has a two week summer vacation. What a wonderful opportunity for reading what so must be read! Or what a chance for thinking; thinking of the basic values of life, thinking of your personal relationships with family and friends, or for re-thinking your

entire mode of existence. But what does he do? The typical two week vacation at beach or country resort involves the most extravagant waste of time, an extravagant waste which would never be tolerated in industry and business. But after the first two days of saying "hello" to old friends and "how-do-you-do" to new ones, after cramming in all the shows and vaudeville, and after a passing feint at athletics, never seriously intended, vacation has become routine, it has lost its novelty. Time drags on. "Time", said the Greek Philosopher Diogenes, "is the image of eternity". "Time", says the Jewish thinker Professor Heschel, "is the border of eternity". "Time", says modern man, bored with the hours of freedom bequeathed to him by modern science, "is an eternity". And this boredom, this eternity of nothingness, results, in so many cases, in extremes in drinking, gambling and immorality. Let no one deny that a good deal of that damnable looseness of morals which is so characteristic of our vacation resorts is a direct result of boredom. No, modern man has not conquered Time; Time has conquered him.

The Jew, all throughout history, has rebelled against this misuse and subservience to Time. LIMNOS YAMEINU KEN HODA, exclaims the saintly Psalmist, "Teach us to number our days". Teach us, the Jew has asked of g-d, to use our days, our hours, and even our minutes, usefully. For the ability to "number our days", the ability to exploit time and use it properly, is more than the dream of an Efficiency Expert. For It involves the very meaning of Time - and that is, Freedom. The mastery of Time means the mastery of one's self, and hence Freedom. The free man is not a slave to Time; the slave, however, is subjugated by the clock and tyrannized by the calendar.

Our Rabbis, in their remarks on Parshas Ha'chodesh, must have had in mind this relation between Time and Freedom. The very first commandment given to the people of Israel, and about which we learn in today's special reading, was the Mitzvah of preparing a calendar. "And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, in the land of Egypt, Leimor,

saying, HA'CHODESH HAZEH ROSH CHODOSHIM, this month shall be to you chief of months; The first shall it be unto you of the months of the year. And our Rabbis comment that the words "in the land of Egypt saying" indicate that this commandment could not have been given to Israel while yet in Egypt proper, to a nation of slaves, but only to Israel on the shores of the Red Sea, to a nation marching across the threshold of Freedom. Until Israel left Egypt, our Rabbis tell us, it was G-d who would determine the Calendar. That is, the Jews would know only by Divine revelation when their various holidays came about and when the new month started. VE'KIVAN SHE'YATZA YISROEL MI'MITZRAYIM M'SARAN LAHEM, but once Israel left its bondage of Egypt, once they became free men, G-d gave them the right to determine the calendar; to control, as it were, Time. Thus, the new month would not begin until the Beth Din, the Jewish Court, declared that it had begun. Passover would not be observed until the Beth Din would sanctify the holiday. Leap years could not be observed until sanctioned by the Jewish courts.

What our Sages meant obviously, is that only a free man knows what to do with Time; and, conversely, the man who has no conception of Time is a slave. Only a man whose Time belongs to him, and who does and accomplishes something during that time, can claim to be free. The Time of the slave is owned by his master. The Time of the slave cannot be used creatively by him. Time that is misused and unused becomes a tyrannical master who imposes slavish mentalities upon his subjects. For Freedom means more than the right to vote or the right to protest. It means the right for me to use my time the way I wish. I have left my personal Egypt only when I have learned the secret of HA' CHODESH HAZEH, the free use of Time.

According to this definition, modern man is not a free man. For he is enslaved by Time, and bound by the chains of boredom. The man who is bored has not choice but to continue being bored. The effect of boredom

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is like that of opium, or any other narcotic; the habit is hard to break. Time's grip on man becomes firmer. And eventually this boredom kills his business initiative and destroys his home-life. Eventually, this man created in the image of G-d, who has become the impish slave of Time, ends up a pitiful mess on a psychiatrist's couch..

Let me give you an example of one man who attained this sort of Freedom, the Freedom which comes from mastering Time. Maimonidies, the famous Jewish Sage of the 12th century, is that person. He was a terribly busy person. His mornings were occupied as chief physician to the Sultan at Cairo. Morning after morning he attended to the medical needs of the Royal household. Immediately afterward, he had to attend to his duties as the leader of all Egyptian and Spanish Jewry. Problems in politics, and all branches of Law, were brought before him. When he finally returned to his suburban home in Fostat, as he so picturesquely describes in his letter to his student Ibn Akin, he found an office full of patients - poor people with big problems and terrible diseases. But Maimonidies was so fatigued by that time, that he usually lay stretched out on his couch, his eyes barely open. And thus his patients came into him and presented their problems to him while he, in this state of fatigue, would prescribe for them. And then just at sundown, from the time the sun set until it became dark, in that short space of time, BI'ZMAN SHELO YOM VELO LAILAH, in the time when it was neither day nor night, Maimonidies would do his studying, his thinking, his philosophizing. As soon as it was dark, however, his patients would return and he would thus continue until he was physically incapable of staying awake. Imagine! This man who is rated in Jewish History as next to Moses alone; this greatest luminary of all the Middle Ages; this man who bequeathed to the world the "Mishna Torah", the greatest code of Jewish Law ever written; this man who wrote the "Guide for the Perplexed", the outstanding philisophical work of medieval Europe; this man who wrote countless treatises in mathematics, medicine and astronomy; created and accomplished

all this BI'ZMAN SHELO YOM VELO LAILAH, by exploiting the time which was neither day nor night. What a wonderful example of a man who thoroughly mastered Time and thus became the symbol of Freedom: the boldest thinker, the staunchest exponent of Judaism, and the most glorious figure of the History of Israel in Exile. Time mastered is Freedom gained. You cannot bless the new moon until you have left Egypt.

But of course when we say that Time must be used and mastered, we mean that it must be used for a noble purpose and mastered for the sake of a holy ideal. It depends on what you use Time for. Exploit it for the sake of more profit, and you have become, although not the slave of Time, the slave of business and the almighty dollar. Use it for your own prestige and self-glorification, and you have become the slave of the headlines and the publicity-release. Use it for a G-dly purpose, however, and you have become the servant of G-d, and that makes you a free man. Spend those three hours on Saturday morning in bed and you have become the pitiful slave of Time. Spend them in Shul and you have risen to the level of a free man, for you have become the servant of G-d, and only the servant of G-d is the master of Time. Spend Tuesday night at the movies or in front of the Television screen and you have declared your bondage to ~~merciless Time~~ ^{the projector, the antennae}. Spend it at a lecture or at an adult class and you have attained Freedom, obedience to G-d. For it is impossible to kill Time without having your Freedom killed by it. "The Servants of Time", proclaims Yehuda Halevi, poet of the Golden Era, "are the slaves of slaves; the servant of G-d, he alone is free".

Only by such Freedom, by doing away with boredom and using Time for noble ends, can man attain real happiness. The slave is never really happy; even his songs sound like the clanking of his chains. The free man, master of Time, alone can find true bliss. Unlike Shakespeare who pessimistically means that Time

"Feeds on the rarities of Nature's truth,
"And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow";

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and unlike the philosophers of Tin Pan Alley who declare that

"I've got Time on my Hands", Judaism and Jews sing with King David the words: "BE'YADCHA ITOSAI", "my Time, Oh G-d, is in your hands".

When a man places his Time in the hands of G-d, he has killed boredom, he has shown that he understands the true meaning of Time, and that he has attained Freedom and achieved happiness.

On this Shabbos Parshas Ha'Chodesh, as we read of the First Commandment in the Bible, which concerns the mastery of Time, we hope and pray that G-d teach us to overcome the disease of boredom, to place our Time in His hands and at His service, and to thus achieve Freedom and Happiness.

BENEDICTION : As the season of Freedom approaches, we place our Time at **Your** disposal and dedicate it to Your service. For we know that Time is not a printed calendar; it is, rather, a blank diary in which every man is free to write the story of his destiny.