

# ASK THE RABBI

**Question:** In today's time when we know what day Yom Tov is, why do we keep a second day of Yom Tov?

**Answer:** In the times of the Beit Hamikdash there was no calendar with the dates of the chagim. In fact we didn't know what day Sukkot or Pesach was going to be until Rosh Chodesh of that very month. Rosh Chodesh was set by witnesses testifying about the full moon. From Rosh Chodesh Bnei Yisrael had fifteen days to know when Sukkot or Pesach was to be.

Since every month could either be 29 or 30 days, and everyone knew that Pesach or Sukkot was either 44 or 45 days from the previous Rosh Chodesh. Therefore Yom Tov could have been either one of two days.

When Rosh Chodesh was declared the high court would send out messengers to outlying communities to tell them which day Rosh Chodesh was so that they could know which of the two days Pesach or Sukkot were. If a town lived too far for the messengers to reach them, and they wouldn't find out when Rosh Chodesh was, they would keep both days of Yom Tov out of doubt.

Even though today we have a set calendar and know which day Pesach and Sukkot are, we keep the custom of our forefathers and keep both days of Yom Tov. We don't keep the second day of Yom Tov out of doubt, but rather out of preservation of minhagim of old.