

Q&A From the Bais HaVaad Halacha Hotline

Month to Month

Dayan Yosef Greenwald

November 4, 2021

Q The *yahrzeit* of my father *a"h* is the 30th of Cheshvan, but this year Cheshvan has only 29 days. On which day do I observe the *yahrzeit*?

A A lunar cycle, a single orbit of the moon around Earth, takes 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 1080ths (*chalakim*) of an hour, or 44 minutes and 3-1/3 seconds. Because this figure is between 29 and 30 days, and a single day cannot be part of two months, all months have either 29 or 30 days. Since the establishment of our current calendar nearly 17 centuries ago, the months are fixed in duration, with the exception of Cheshvan and

Kislev, each of which is 29 days in some years and 30 in others.

The *Magein Avraham* rules that in your case, where the passing was on 30 Cheshvan, the timing of the *yahrzeit* depends on the structure of the calendar in the year of the first *yahrzeit*. 30 Cheshvan is both the last day of Cheshvan and the first day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev. If the first *yahrzeit* falls in a year with a 29-day Cheshvan, the 29th, being the last day of Cheshvan, is the *yahrzeit*, and in all subsequent years, the last day of Cheshvan—be it the 29th or the 30th—is the *yahrzeit*. But if the first *yahrzeit* is in a year with a 30-day Cheshvan (which means there are two days of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 30 Cheshvan and 1 Kislev), the *yahrzeit* is permanently fixed as Rosh Chodesh Kislev, and the *yahrzeit* will always be either 30 Cheshvan or 1 Kislev, depending on the length of Cheshvan.

The *Sha'arei Teshuvah* disagrees, but the *minhag* follows the *Magein Avraham*. As a result, two people who each lost a parent on 30 Cheshvan can have different *yahrzeits*, depending on the length of Cheshvan in the year of each one's first *yahrzeit*.

