

Rosh Chodesh ([New](new.html) Moon) - חדש ראש

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to examine Rosh Chodesh, the [New](new.html) Moon, as a [mitzva](cmds613.html) and as a celebration.

The [first](one.html) Rosh Chodesh was [Adam](adam.html)‘s birthday. That [first](one.html) Rosh Chodesh was also [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h.[[1]](#footnote-1) Man’s relationship with Rosh Chodesh, therefore, has special meaning as [Adam](adam.html)‘s birthday and [the birth](thebirth.html)day of the [world](worlds.html). That [first](one.html) Rosh Chodesh was also the day when [Adam](adam.html) and Chava sinned and crashed the [world](worlds.html). That fateful Rosh Chodesh was also the day that [Adam](adam.html) repented and was forgiven.

 We [know](daat.html) that [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h is a day of [atonement](kippur.html) for the [sin](sin.html) of [Adam](adam.html), for it is the day which [Adam](adam.html) sinned and was forgiven. Just as [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h is the [first](one.html) day of the solar [cycle](cycles.html), so too Rosh Chodesh is the [first](one.html) day of the lunar [cycle](cycles.html). On [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html) we do not bring the [sacrifice](korbanot.html) of Rosh Chodesh. The [Gemara](orallaw.html), in Eruvin, explains that [one](one.html) [Korban](korbanot.html) is sufficient for [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h and for Rosh Chodesh. Rav Tzadok explains that both korbanot come to atone for the same [sin](sin.html), the [sin](sin.html) of [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Rosh Chodesh has a special Maftir and a special Ashlamata (Haftarah) [festival](festival.html) readings which are read, in addition to the normal Torah portion and Ashlamata, on [Shabbat](sabbath.html). These readings interrupt both the [Annual](annual.html) and the [Triennial](shmita.html) / [Septennial](shmita.html) Torah [cycles](cycles.html).

# Introduction

Rosh Chodesh literally means, “beginning renewal” and idiomatically means the “beginning of the month” or “[new](new.html) moon”. Strong’s renders the following definition:

7218 **ro’sh**, roshe; from an unused root appar. mean. to shake; the [head](body.html) (as most easily shaken), whether lit. or [fig](bethphag.html). (in many applications, of place, [time](time.html), rank, etc.):-band, beginning, captain, chapiter, chief (- est place, man, things), company, end, X every [man], excellent, [first](one.html), forefront, ([be-]) [head](body.html), height, (on) high (-est part, [[priest](priests.html)]), X lead, X poor, principal, ruler, sum, top.

2320 **chodesh**, kho’-desh; from 2318; the [new](new.html) moon; by impl. a month:-month (- ly), [new](new.html) moon.

--------------- Dictionary Trace ---------------

2318 chadash, khaw-dash’; a prim. root; **to be** [**new**](new.html); caus. to rebuild:-renew, repair.

The calculations for Rosh Chodesh were the fulfillment of prophecy and they represented great wisdom:

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 4:5-6*** *See, I have* [*taught*](teacher.html) *you decrees and* [*laws*](law.html) *as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great* [*nation*](nations.html) *is a wise and understanding people.”*

“You shall guard and you shall do...” Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said in the [name](name.html) of Rebbe Yonatan, from where do we [know](daat.html) that it is a [mitzva](cmds613.html) for each man to calculate the seasons and the months? It is written, “You shall guard and you shall do, for it is evidence, in the [eyes](body.html) of the [nations](nations.html), of the wisdom and understanding that has been given to you.”

What is the wisdom and understanding that Israel possesses “in the [eyes](body.html) of the [nations](nations.html)“? We must say that it refers to the calculation of the seasons and months. Concerning [one](one.html) who knows how to calculate and does not do so, the verse says:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 5:12*** *They did not contemplate* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*‘s deeds, and they have not paid attention to the work of His* [*hands*](fourteen.html)*.*

The difference between Israel and the [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html) is that we use a lunar [calendar](calendar.html) and they use a solar [calendar](calendar.html). “The [sun](hachama.html) and the moon can be said to represent these [two](two.html) opposing viewpoints. The [sun](hachama.html) is constant and unchanging. Its fixed path symbolizes the [nation](nations.html)'s belief that the [world](worlds.html) has always existed and that nothing [new](new.html) is ever introduced by a higher guiding [Hand](fourteen.html). The moon, on the other [hand](fourteen.html), is constantly changing. This symbolizes the faith of Israel, who see the whole of nature as something [new](new.html) and innovative, that is under constant supervision and that therefore has the potential for change.” It was later given to the women since they had not ever abandoned this faith in [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s guidance by making the Golden Calf.[[3]](#footnote-3) “Rosh Chodesh is the day that emphasizes our separation from the [nations](nations.html). [Jews](gen-jew.html) believe in the [world](worlds.html)‘s [creation](bara.html) from nothing and in all the [consequences](conseq.html) of that belief. Our lives are therefore always being renewed in [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s service and are constantly filled with vitality.” This perspective is brought out vividly in the [Talmud](orallaw.html):

[***Succah***](succoth.html) ***29a*** *It was* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: R. Meir said, Whenever the luminaries are in eclipse, it is a bad omen for Israel since they are inured to blows. This may be compared to a school* [*teacher*](teacher.html) *who comes to school with a strap in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*. Who becomes apprehensive? He who is accustomed to be daily punished. Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*, When the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *is in eclipse it is a bad omen for idolaters; when Lavanah (Moon) is in eclipse, it is a bad omen for Israel, since Israel reckons by Lavanah (Moon) and idolaters by the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*. If it is in eclipse in the* [*east*](east.html)*, it is a bad omen for those who* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *in the* [*east*](east.html)*; if in the west, it is a bad omen for those who* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *in the west; if in the midst of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *it is bad omen for the whole* [*world*](worlds.html)*. If its* [*face*](body.html) *is red as* [*blood*](body.html)*, [it is a* [*sign*](signs.html) *that] the sword is* [*coming*](coming.html) *to the* [*world*](worlds.html)*; if it is like sack-cloth, the arrows of* [*famine*](famine.html) *are* [*coming*](coming.html) *to the* [*world*](worlds.html)*; if it resembles both, the sword and the arrows of* [*famine*](famine.html) *are* [*coming*](coming.html) *to the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. If the eclipse is at sunset calamity will tarry in its* [*coming*](coming.html)*; if at dawn, it hastens on its way: but some say the order is to be reversed. And there is no* [*nation*](nations.html) *which is smitten that its gods are not smitten together with it, as it is said, And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. But when Israel fulfill the will of the Omnipresent, they need have no* [*fear*](fear.html) *of all these [omens] as it is said, Thus saith* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*,’ Learn not the way of the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, and be not dismayed at the* [*signs*](signs.html) *of* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, for the* [*nations*](nations.html) *are dismayed at them, the idolaters will be dismayed, but Israel will not be dismayed.*

# Is Rosh Chodesh a [festival](festival.html)?

The Torah seems to place Rosh Chodesh on a par with the other [festivals](festivals.html). In [Numbers](nchart.html) chapter 28, the Musaf (additional) services for Rosh Chodesh are listed along with the other [festivals](festivals.html). The order, in [Numbers](nchart.html) 28 and 29, is:

 morning (Shacharit)

 afternoon (Mincha)

 [Shabbat](sabbath.html)

 Rosh Chodesh

 [Pesach](passover.html)

 Hag ha-[Matzah](chametz.html) the [first](one.html) day

 Hag ha-[Matzah](chametz.html) the [seventh](seven.html) day

 Hag ha-Bikkurim - [Shavuot](shavuot.html)

 [Yom Teruah](teruah.html)

 Yom HaKippurim

 [Succoth](succoth.html)

The Rosh Chodesh sacrifices are identical in [number](nchart.html) and in kind with those of [Pesach](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html). In post [Temple](temple.html) times, a Musaf service was established for Rosh Chodesh along with the other [festivals](festivals.html). Rosh Chodesh was marked by many festive elements. There was a celebratory meal, and family gatherings were a natural for such occasions:

***I Shmuel (Samuel) 20:18-29*** *Then Jonathan said to David: “Tomorrow is the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon* [*festival*](festival.html)*. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. I will shoot* [*three*](three.html) *arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. Then I will send a boy and say, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to him, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,’ then come, because, as surely as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *lives, you are safe; there is no danger. But if I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then you must go, because* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has sent you away. And about the matter you and I discussed--remember,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is witness between you and me forever.” So David hid in the* [*field*](field.html)*, and when the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon* [*festival*](festival.html) *came, the king sat down to* [*eat*](eating.html)*. He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David’s place was empty. Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, “Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean--surely he is unclean.” But the next day, the second day of the month, David’s place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, “Why hasn’t the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?” Jonathan answered, “David earnestly asked me for permission to go to* [*Bethlehem*](bethlehem.html)*. He said, ‘Let me go, because our family is observing a* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your* [*eyes*](body.html)*, let me get away to see my brothers.’ That is why he has not come to the king’s table.”*

After the Beit Din had sanctified the [new](new.html) moon and uttered a blessing to [HaShem](hashem.html), special additional (Musaf) offerings were presented to [HaShem](hashem.html).

The traditional service includes a candle lit to burn for [twenty](twenty.html)-[four](four.html) hours. Some use a floating light because it resembles the moon floating in the sky. As on the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) or [festivals](festivals.html), [two](two.html) challot (special egg bread) are served; they are round or crescent shaped, preferably, thus invoking the shape of the moon. A [new](new.html) fruit will be sought for the menu for the sake of making a Shehecheyanu. The egg soup, traditionally served at the [seder](haggada.html), is often included as a symbol of life immersed in liquid. A quiche of circular shape, or a nut loaf, are popular choices for the menu. During the meal, zemirot such as verses from the Hallel or special Rosh Chodesh songs are sung.

Over the course of later history, by association, the day was considered especially appropriate for housewarmings, dedications, wearing [new](new.html) clothes, and saying Shehecheyanu over [new](new.html) fruit. It was also called the day of good beginnings (Remember that all things go after the beginning as it is the most potent moment – we shall look at this concept a bit later.).

The joyous spirit of the day, in biblical times, is suggested by [two](two.html) references:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***)10:10*** *Also at your times of rejoicing--your* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *feasts and* [*New*](new.html) *Moon* [*festivals*](festivals.html)*--you are to sound the trumpets over your* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*s and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God.”*

***Hosea 2:11*** *I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly* [*festivals*](festivals.html)*, her* [*New*](new.html) *Moons, her* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *days--all her* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *feasts.*

[HaShem](hashem.html) does not specifically call Rosh Chodesh a rest day, but it is alluded to in:

***Amos 8:4-7*** *Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land Saying, “When will the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *be ended that we may market wheat?”--skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, Buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has sworn by the Pride of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*: “I will never forget anything they have done.*

Rosh Chodesh was celebrated only [eleven](eleven.html) times a year. In [Tishri](feasts.html), [Yom Teruah](teruah.html) coincides with Rosh Chodesh; to this day, the [new](new.html) moon of [Tishri](feasts.html) is not proclaimed in advance, in the [synagogue](synagog.html); [Yom Teruah](teruah.html) rather than Rosh Chodesh is dominant liturgically.

The Torah does not list Rosh Chodesh with [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [festivals](festivals.html) in Leviticus chapter 23, never the less it is a [festival](festival.html) as we shall see. Let’s note that Rosh Chodesh is specifically called a day of rejoicing in this passage from the Torah and is put on a par with [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and the other [festivals](festivals.html):

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 10:1-10***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses: “Make* [*two*](two.html) *trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for calling the* [*community*](community.html) *together and for having the camps set out. When both are sounded, the whole* [*community*](community.html) *is to assemble before you at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. If only* [*one*](one.html) *is sounded, the leaders--the heads of the clans of Israel--are to assemble before you. When a trumpet blast is sounded, the* [*tribes*](tribes.html) *camping on the* [*east*](east.html) *are to set out. At the sounding of a second blast, the camps on the south are to set out. The blast will be the signal for setting out. To* [*gather*](gather.html) *the assembly, blow the trumpets, but not with the same signal. “The sons of Aaron, the* [*priests*](priests.html)*, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you and the* [*generations*](toldot.html) *to come. When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God and rescued from your enemies. Also at your times of rejoicing--your* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *feasts and* [*New*](new.html) *Moon* [*festivals*](festivals.html)*--you are to sound the trumpets over your* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*s and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God.”*

In the Nazarean Codicil, Rosh Chodesh is put on a par with [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and the other [festivals](festivals.html):

***Colossians 2:16-17*** *Let no man therefore condemn you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the* [*new*](new.html) *moon, or of the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the* [*body*](body.html) *of* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*.*

There are several other things which connect the [festivals](festivals.html) with Rosh Chodesh:

1. We rest on [festivals](festivals.html); women rest on Rosh Chodesh.[[4]](#footnote-4) Some have a Minhag to reduce work on Rosh Chodesh.
2. We have a Musaf for [festivals](festivals.html); we have a Musaf for Rosh Chodesh.
3. We have special additions (yaale v’yavo) to the [Amida](amida.html) for [festivals](festivals.html); we have special additions (yaale v’yavo) to the [Amida](amida.html) for Rosh Chodesh.
4. We have special sacrifices on the [festivals](festivals.html); we have special sacrifices on Rosh Chodesh[[5]](#footnote-5) ([Two](two.html) oxen, a ram, [seven](seven.html) lambs and their respective libations of wine, flour, and oil[[6]](#footnote-6)).
5. We have special Torah and Ashlamata (from Parshat Pinchas) for [festivals](festivals.html); we have a special Torah and Ashlamata for Rosh Chodesh (from Parshat Pinchas). These special readings interrupt the [triennial](shmita.html) Torah [cycle](cycles.html).
6. We have additional aliyot on [festivals](festivals.html); we have an additional aliya on Rosh Chodesh.
7. We say Hallel on [Festivals](festivals.html); we say half Hallel on Rosh Chodesh[[7]](#footnote-7).
8. Fasting ([mourning](mourning.html)) is forbidden on the [festivals](festivals.html); fasting ([mourning](mourning.html)) is forbidden on Rosh Chodesh[[8]](#footnote-8).
9. We [eat](eating.html) special meals in honor of the [festivals](festivals.html); we [eat](eating.html) a special meal or [food](food.html) in honor of Rosh Chodesh[[9]](#footnote-9).
10. We wear special clothes for [festivals](festivals.html); we wear special clothes for Rosh Chodesh.
11. [Festivals](festivals.html) are called [Moedim](settimes.html); Rosh Chodesh is called [Moed](settimes.html).[[10]](#footnote-10)
12. We light candles for [festivals](festivals.html); some Sephardim light a candle on Rosh Chodesh.
13. Sustenance for [festivals](festivals.html) is not fixed on [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html); sustenance for Rosh Chodesh is not fixed on [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html)[[11]](#footnote-11).

As to the Minhag to recite Half Hallel on Rosh Chodesh, Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik in his YahrzeitShiur on 4 Tevet, 5717, explained the statement in Arachin 10b, Rosh Chodesh, which is called [Moed](settimes.html)*,* should require the recitation of Hallel. There is no prohibition to work on this day” as follows: A [festival](festival.html) such as [Passover](passover.html) possesses sanctity because of:

*a) Musaf* the additional-[sacrifice](korbanot.html) offered in the [Temple](temple.html);

b) Prohibition of work;

c) Obligation to make the pilgrimage to [Jerusalem](city.html);

d) Special [*mitzvot*](cmds613.html) such as [*matza*](chametz.html)*.*

All [festivals](festivals.html) have [one](one.html) or more of these qualities. Rosh Chodesh, however, is distinguished only by *Musaf* and is thus a [festival](festival.html) in the [Temple](temple.html) *only,* where Hallel was recited as *din* ([law](law.html)) not *Minhag.* The *Minhag* to recite Hallel on Rosh Chodesh consists in extending the *sanctity* from the [Temple](temple.html) to [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [communities](community.html) outside its precincts.

The day before Rosh Chodesh is also [known](daat.html) as Yom *HaKip*[*purim Katan*](katan.html). This means that the day before Rosh Chodesh is a minor Yom HaKippurim. The devout will fast on the last day of the month and reflect upon his actions on the [first](one.html) day of the month.

The [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[12]](#footnote-12) quotes an amazing comment of Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish that the he‑goat offered on Rosh Chodesh is called “a [sin](sin.html) [offering](korbanot) unto the Lord” because it is an [atonement](atonemen.html) for [HaShem](hashem.html) Himself for having made the moon smaller than the [sun](hachama.html). Arising out of this is the idea, expressed in the Rosh Chodesh liturgy, that Rosh Chodesh affords pardon for Israel’s [sins](sin.html). Additionally, during the Musaf [prayer](prayer.html) service of Rosh Chodesh, we call Rosh Chodesh a “[time](time.html) of [atonement](atonemen.html)”. Thus in [atonement](atonemen.html), we see another [connection](connection.html) between the [festivals](festivals.html) and Rosh Chodesh.

## [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Mevarchim

The [Shabbat](sabbath.html) before Rosh Chodesh is [known](daat.html) as [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Mevarchim, which means “the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) of blessing”. We have an additional Ashlamata[[13]](#footnote-13) to prepare us for this special day. After the Torah reading in the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) service, the [prayer](prayer.html) leader holds the [Torah scroll](letters.html), recites a blessing hoping for a good month, then announces the day of the upcoming week when the [new](new.html) month will begin and the [name](name.html) of the [new](new.html) month.

[Shabbat](sabbath.html) Mevarchim is not observed during the month of [Elul](elul.html) to announce the beginning of the month of [Tishri](feasts.html), the month in which [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html)[[14]](#footnote-14) occurs.

Thus, we announce Rosh Chodesh ahead of [time](time.html), but we do not announce for [festivals](festivals.html). This would seem to give special significance to Rosh Chodesh.

Finally, when the Sanhedrin sanctified the [new](new.html) moon it set the [calendar](calendar.html) date for the [festivals](festivals.html) of that month. The date of the [festivals](festivals.html), therefore, depended on the [new](new.html) moon for their proper celebration. [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html), which falls on Rosh Chodesh, is a [festival](festival.html) which no [one](one.html) knows the day or hour it begins because it’s beginning depends on the sanctification of the [new](new.html) moon. We have a [midrash](orallaw.html) that makes this point: The [angels](angels.html) ask [HaShem](hashem.html), “When is [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html)?” “I do not [know](daat.html),” [HaShem](hashem.html) responds. “Let us all go down to the bet din and see what they have decreed.”

## Machar Chodesh

If Rosh Chodesh occurs the day after [Shabbat](sabbath.html), then the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is termed [Shabbat](sabbath.html) *Machar Chodesh*–literally, “tomorrow is the [[new](new.html)] month”–and has a special haftarah, I Samuel 20:18-42, that relates an episode with David and Jonathan involving the [new](new.html) moon.

# The [First](one.html) [Mitzva](cmds613.html)

The [first](one.html) [mitzva](cmds613.html) given to the congregation of Israel is:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:1-2***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, “This month is to be for you the* [*first*](one.html) *month, the* [*first*](one.html) *month of your year.”*

This is the very [first](one.html) [commandment](cmds613.html) given to the [nation](nations.html) as a whole, an indication that the concept of Rosh Chodesh, or the [New](new.html) Moon, is very meaningful. Moreover, a thousand years later in [Eretz Israel](city.html), during the period of Syrian-Greek persecution that culminated in the miracle of [Chanukah](chanukah.html), Rosh Chodeshwas [one](one.html) of only [three](three.html) [commandments](cmds613.html) whose observance the oppressors prohibited. The other [two](two.html) forbidden [commandments](cmds613.html) were the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) and [circumcision](circumcz.html); that Rosh Chodeshwas on a plane with those central observances is sufficient indication of its great significance.

This can be understood on [two](two.html) levels. **Only the court can proclaim Rosh Chodesh** based on the testimony of witnesses who observed the re-appearance of the moon, and upon this proclamation, **the** [**Jewish**](gen-jew.html)[**calendar**](calendar.html) **is based**. Unless the [new](new.html) months can be proclaimed, there is no [calendar](calendar.html), and without a [calendar](calendar.html), there can be no [festivals](festivals.html). Thus, if the Syrian-Greeks had succeeded in eradicating the observance of Rosh Chodesh, they would have succeeded in eliminating large [numbers](nchart.html) of other [mitzvot](cmds613.html), as well.

Thus, we see that the [first](one.html) [command](cmds613.html), given to the congregation of Israel, was to:

**1.** Set up a [calendar](calendar.html), based on the moon,

**2.** With [Nisan](feasts.html) as the [first](one.html) month.

Notice that this [first](one.html) [command](cmds613.html) is given to Moses and Aaron as representing the highest [authority](authority.html) in the [nation](nations.html). From this, it is derived that the [authority](authority.html) for sanctifying the [new](new.html) moon and for establishing the order of the months lies with the highest [authority](authority.html) in the [nation](nations.html), namely the Sanhedrin, as the [Talmud](orallaw.html) relates:

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***22a*** [*MISHNA*](orallaw.html)*. IF A FATHER AND A SON HAVE SEEN THE* [*NEW*](new.html) *MOON, THEY SHOULD BOTH GO [TO* [*JERUSALEM*](city.html)*], NOT THAT THEY CAN ACT AS JOINT WITNESSES[[15]](#footnote-15) BUT SO THAT IF* [*ONE*](one.html) *OF THEM IS DISQUALIFIED[[16]](#footnote-16) THE OTHER MAY JOIN WITH SOME OTHER WITNESS. R. SIMEON, HOWEVER, SAYS THAT A FATHER AND SON AND ALL RELATIVES ARE ELIGIBLE TO TESTIFY TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE* [*NEW*](new.html) *MOON. R. JOSE SAID: IT HAPPENED ONCE WITH TOBIAH THE PHYSICIAN THAT HE SAW THE* [*NEW*](new.html) *MOON IN* [*JERUSALEM*](city.html) *ALONG WITH HIS SON AND HIS EMANCIPATED SLAVE, AND THE* [*PRIESTS*](priests.html) *ACCEPTED HIS EVIDENCE AND THAT OF HIS SON AND DISQUALIFIED HIS SLAVE, BUT WHEN THEY APPEARED BEFORE THE BETH DIN THEY ACCEPTED HIS EVIDENCE AND THAT OF HIS SLAVE AND DISQUALIFIED HIS SON.*

[*GEMARA*](orallaw.html)*. R. Levi said: What is the reason of R. Simeon? — Because it is written, and the Lord* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months,[[17]](#footnote-17) which implies, ‘this testimony shall be valid [when given] by you’.[[18]](#footnote-18) And the Rabbis? — [It implies], this evidence shall be entrusted to you.[[19]](#footnote-19)*

This [authority](authority.html) is reiterated in:

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***25a*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: Once the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *were covered with clouds and the likeness of the moon was seen on the* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*ninth*](nine.html) *of the month. The public were minded to declare* [*New*](new.html) *Moon, and the Beth din wanted to sanctify it, but Rabban Gamaliel said to them: I have it on the* [*authority*](authority.html) *of the house of my father’s father that the renewal of the moon takes place after not less than* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*nine*](nine.html) *days and a half and* [*two*](two.html)*-thirds of an hour and* [*seventy*](seventy.html)*-*[*three*](three.html) *halakin.[[20]](#footnote-20) On that day the mother of Ben Zaza died, and Rabban Gamaliel made a great funeral oration over her, not because she had* [*merited*](merit.html) *it, but so that the public should* [*know*](daat.html) *that the Beth din had not sanctified the month.[[21]](#footnote-21)*

‘[HaShem](hashem.html) said to Moses and to Aaron: “... this month shall be for you the beginning of months ...” And at the moment when Moses our [teacher](teacher.html) received this [command](cmds613.html), the Holy [One](one.html), blessed be He, transmitted to him the precise rules for intercalating the [New](new.html) Moon. Thus, He made [known](daat.html) to Moses the method for establishing the times and the seasons.’[[22]](#footnote-22)

Moses and Aaron were told by [HaShem](hashem.html), in the oral [law](law.html),[[23]](#footnote-23) that normally there should be [two](two.html) witnesses who actually see the [new](new.html) moon, in order to sanctify it on the [thirtieth](thirty.html) day. If no witnesses come on the [thirtieth](thirty.html) day, it is automatically sanctified on the [thirty](thirty.html)-[first](one.html) day.

***Sanhedrin 10b*** *THE INTERCALATION[[24]](#footnote-24) OF THE MONTH BY* [*THREE*](three.html)*. [The Tanna of the* [*Mishna*](orallaw.html)*] mentions neither the ‘calculation’[[25]](#footnote-25) nor the ‘sanctification’[[26]](#footnote-26) , but the INTERCALATION of the month. [Why then the need of* [*three*](three.html) *for this?] Suppose it is not sanctified [on the* [*thirtieth*](thirty.html) *day] it will then be automatically intercalated! — Abaye therefore said: Read then, THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE MONTH. It is also* [*taught*](teacher.html) *to the same effect: The sanctification of the month and the intercalation of the year is to be determined by* [*three*](three.html)*. So, R. Meir holds. But, asked Raba, does not the* [*Mishna*](orallaw.html) *say, the INTERCALATION? — Hence, said Raba, the Mishnah means that the sanctification made on INTERCALATION, that is on the intercalary day,[[27]](#footnote-27) is determined by* [*three*](three.html)*; but on the day after it there is to be no sanctification. And this represents the opinion of R. Eliezer b. Zadok, as it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: R. Eliezer b. Zadok says: If the* [*new*](new.html) *moon has not been visible in* [*time*](time.html)*, there is no need for the Sanctification next day, as it has already been sanctified in* [*Heaven*](heaven.html)*.[[28]](#footnote-28)*

Many assume that the witnesses were necessary because the Sanhedrin lacked the ability to calculate the [time](time.html) of the [new](new.html) moon. This is not born out by the facts. Consider: Why would the witnesses look on the [thirtieth](thirty.html) day, except they [knew](daat.html) that that was the [first](one.html) [time](time.html) it might be visible. Also we should note that the last Sanhedrin calculated the [new](new.html) moons so accurately that they were able to sanctify every [new](new.html) moon for nearly [two](two.html) thousand years!

# [Synagogue](synagog.html) Service

The [Temple](temple.html) services were given to King David in a [dream](dreams.html) and written down for his son, Solomon, as we can see from this next passage:

***Divrei HaYamim (I Chronicles) 28:11-19*** *Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the* [*temple*](temple.html)*, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of* [*atonement*](atonemen.html)*. He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. He gave him instructions for the divisions of the* [*priests*](priests.html) *and Levites, and for all the work of serving in the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, as well as for all the articles to be used in its service. He designated the weight of gold for all the gold articles to be used in various kinds of service, and the weight of silver for all the silver articles to be used in various kinds of service: The weight of gold for the gold lamp stands and their lamps, with the weight for each lamp stand and its lamps; and the weight of silver for each silver lamp stand and its lamps, according to the use of each lamp stand; The weight of gold for each table for consecrated bread; the weight of silver for the silver tables; The weight of pure gold for the forks, sprinkling bowls and pitchers; the weight of gold for each gold dish; the weight of silver for each silver dish; And the weight of the refined gold for the altar of* [*incense*](ketoret.html)*. He also gave him the plan for the chariot, that is, the* [*cherubim*](angels.html) *of gold that spread their wings and shelter the* [*ark*](ark.html) *of the* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “All this,” David said, “I have in writing from the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the details of the plan.”*

Since the [synagogue](synagog.html) service is modeled after the [Temple](temple.html) service, it would be instructive to see what is done in the [synagogue](synagog.html) today. We’ll start by examining the readings from the Tanach[[29]](#footnote-29):

## The Torah for weekday Rosh Chodesh

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 28:1-15***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Give this* [*command*](cmds613.html) *to the Israelites and say to them: ‘See that you present to me at the* [*appointed*](settimes.html)[*time*](time.html) *the* [*food*](food.html) *for my offerings made by* [*fire*](fire.html)*, as an aroma pleasing to me.’ Say to them: ‘This is the* [*offering*](korbanot) *made by* [*fire*](fire.html) *that you are to present to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*:* [*two*](two.html) *lambs a year old without defect, as a regular* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *each day. Prepare* [*one*](one.html) *lamb in the morning and the other at twilight, Together with a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil from pressed olives. This is the regular* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *instituted at Mount* [*Sinai*](stages.html) *as a pleasing aroma, an* [*offering*](korbanot) *made to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *by* [*fire*](fire.html)*. The accompanying drink* [*offering*](korbanot) *is to be a quarter of a hin of fermented drink with each lamb. Pour out the drink* [*offering*](korbanot) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *at the* [*sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*. Prepare the second lamb at twilight, along with the same kind of grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *and drink* [*offering*](korbanot) *that you prepare in the morning. This is an* [*offering*](korbanot) *made by* [*fire*](fire.html)*, an aroma pleasing to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “‘On the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day, make an* [*offering*](korbanot) *of* [*two*](two.html) *lambs a year old without defect, together with its drink* [*offering*](korbanot) *and a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of* [*two*](two.html)*-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *for every* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*, in addition to the regular* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *and its drink* [*offering*](korbanot)*. “‘On the* [*first*](one.html) *of every month, present to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *a* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *of* [*two*](two.html) *young bulls,* [*one*](one.html) *ram and* [*seven*](seven.html)[*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *lambs a year old, all without defect. With each bull there is to be a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of* [*three*](three.html)*-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of* [*two*](two.html)*-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; And with each lamb, a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is for a* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*, a pleasing aroma, an* [*offering*](korbanot) *made to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *by* [*fire*](fire.html)*. With each bull there is to be a drink* [*offering*](korbanot) *of half a hin of wine; with the ram, a* [*third*](three.html) *of a hin; and with each lamb, a quarter of a hin. This is the monthly* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *to be made at each* [*new*](new.html) *moon during the year. Besides the regular* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *with its drink* [*offering*](korbanot)*,* [*one*](one.html)[*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *goat is to be presented to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *as a* [*sin*](sin.html)[*offering*](korbanot)*.*

# Kiddush Lavanah [Synagogue](synagog.html) Service

[***Psalm***](psalms1.html) ***148:1-6*** *Halleluiah! Praise* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *from the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*; praise Him in the heights. Praise Him, all bright* [*stars*](mazaroth.html)*, Praise Him, the most exalted of the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and the waters that are above the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*. Let them praise the* [*Name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, for He commanded and they were created. And He established them forever and ever, He issued a decree that will not change.*

[*One*](one.html) *should look at the moon before reciting this blessing:*

*Blessed are You,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God, King of the universe whose word created the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*, whose breath created all that they contain. Statutes and seasons He set for them, that they should not deviate from their assigned task. Happily, gladly they do the will of their Creator, whose work is dependable. To the moon He* [*spoke*](mashal.html)*: renew yourself, crown of glory for those who were born in the* [*womb*](thebirth.html)*, who also are destined to be renewed and to extol their Creator for His glorious sovereignty. Blessed are You,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *who renews the months.*

*Recite* [*three*](three.html) *times:*

Blessed is your Molder; blessed is your Maker; blessed is your Owner; blessed is your Creator.

*Recite* [*three*](three.html) *times:*

*Upon reciting the next verse, rise on the toes as if in dance*

Just as I dance towards you but cannot touch you, so may none of my enemies be able to touch me for evil.

*Recite* [*three*](three.html) *times:*

Let fall upon them [fear](fear.html) and terror; at the greatness of Your arm, let them be still as stone.

*Recite* [*three*](three.html) *times:*

As stone let them be still, at Your arm’s greatness; terror and [fear](fear.html), upon them let fall.

*Recite* [*three*](three.html) *times:*

David, King of Israel, is alive and enduring.

*Extend greetings to* [*three*](three.html) *different people:*

Shalom Alechem (peace be with you!)

Alechem shalom (Upon you, peace!)

*Recite* [*three*](three.html) *times:*

May there be a good [sign](signs.html) and a good fortune for us and for all Israel. Amen.

***Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 2:8-9*** *- The voice of my beloved - Behold! It came suddenly, leaping over mountains, skipping over hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Behold! He was* [*standing*](mashal.html) *behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices.*

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 121*** *- A song to the ascents. I raise my* [*eyes*](body.html) *to the mountains; whence will come my help? My help is from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, Maker of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and earth. He will not allow your* [*foot*](heel.html) *to falter; your Guardian will not slumber. Behold, He neither slumbers nor sleeps - the Guardian of Israel.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is your Guardian;* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is your Shade at your right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*. By day the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *will not harm you, nor the moon by night.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will protect you from every evil; He will guard your soul.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will guard your departure and your arrival, from this* [*time*](time.html) *and forever.*

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 150*** *- Halleluiah! Praise God in His* [*sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*; praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise His as befits His abundant greatness. Praise Him with the blast of the* [*shofar*](shofar.html)*; praise Him with lyre and harp. Praise Him with drum and dance; praise Him with organ and flute. Praise Him with clanging cymbals; praise Him with resonant trumpets. Let all souls praise God, Halleluiah!*

The academy of Rabbi Ishmael [taught](teacher.html): Had Israel not been privileged to greet the countenance of their Father in [Heaven](heaven.html) except for once a month, it would have sufficed them. Abaye said: Therefore [one](one.html) must recite it while [standing](mashal.html).

Who is this who rises from the desert clinging to her Beloved!

May it be Your will, [HaShem](hashem.html), my God and the God of my forefathers, to fill the flaw of the moon that there be no diminution in it. May the light of the moon be like the light of the [sun](hachama.html) and like the light of the [seven](seven.html) days of [creation](bara.html), as it was before it was diminished, as it is said: ‘The [two](two.html) great luminaries’. And may there be fulfilled upon us the verse that is written: They shall seek [HaShem](hashem.html), their God, and David, their king. Amen

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 67*** *- For the Conductor, upon Neginos, a* [*psalm*](psalms1.html)*, a song. May God favor us and bless us, may He illuminate His countenance with us, Selah. To make* [*known*](daat.html) *Your way on earth, among all the* [*nations*](nations.html) *Your* [*salvation*](salvation.html)*. The peoples will acknowledge You, O God, the peoples will acknowledge You, all of them.* [*Nations*](nations.html) *will be glad and sing for joy, because You will judge the peoples fairly and guide the* [*nations*](nations.html) *on earth, Selah. Then peoples will acknowledge You, all of them. The earth has yielded its produce, may God, our own God, bless us. May God bless us and may all the ends of the earth* [*fear*](fear.html) *Him.*

*(Aleinu and V’Anachnu)*

It is incumbent upon us to praise the Master of all, to exalt the creator of the [world](worlds.html), for He has made us distinct from the [nations](nations.html) and unique among the families of the earth. Our destiny is not like theirs; our calling is our task.

We therefore bow in [awe](fear.html) and thanksgiving before the [One](one.html) who is sovereign over all, the Holy [One](one.html), blessed be He. For He stretched forth the [heavens](heaven.html) like a tent and established the earth. Truly there is none like our Lord and King. As the Torah says, “You shall [know](daat.html) this day and reflect in your [heart](body.html) that it is the Lord who is God in the [heavens](heaven.html) above and on the earth beneath, there is none else.”

We hope, [HaShem](hashem.html) our God, to soon behold Your majestic glory when all abominations shall be removed and all false gods shall be at an end.

Then shall the [world](worlds.html) be perfected under the rule of the Lord Almighty and all mankind shall call upon Your [name](name.html). For to You every knee must bow and every [tongue](spirit.html) declare that You are God.

Reign over us soon and forever. May the kingdom of David’s greater son be established forever.

For then shall the words be fulfilled, “[HaShem](hashem.html) shall be king forever”, and, “[HaShem](hashem.html) shall be king over all the earth; on that day [HaShem](hashem.html) shall be [one](one.html), and his [name](name.html) [one](one.html)”.[[30]](#footnote-30)

End of [synagogue](synagog.html) service.

## Haftarah for [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Erev Rosh Chodesh

***I Shmuel (Samuel) 20:18-42*** *Then Jonathan said to David: “Tomorrow is the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon* [*festival*](festival.html)*. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. I will shoot* [*three*](three.html) *arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. Then I will send a boy and say, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to him, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,’ then come, because, as surely as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *lives, you are safe; there is no danger. But if I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then you must go, because* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has sent you away. And about the matter you and I discussed--remember,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is witness between you and me forever.” So David hid in the* [*field*](field.html)*, and when the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon* [*festival*](festival.html) *came, the king sat down to* [*eat*](eating.html)*. He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David’s place was empty. Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, “Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean--surely he is unclean.” But the next day, the second day of the month, David’s place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, “Why hasn’t the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?” Jonathan answered, “David earnestly asked me for permission to go to* [*Bethlehem*](bethlehem.html)*. He said, ‘Let me go, because our family is observing a* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your* [*eyes*](body.html)*, let me get away to see my brothers.’ That is why he has not come to the king’s table.” Saul’s anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, “You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don’t I* [*know*](daat.html) *that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!” “Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” Jonathan asked his father. But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan* [*knew*](daat.html) *that his father intended to kill David. Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the month he did not* [*eat*](eating.html)*, because he was grieved at his father’s shameful treatment of David. In the morning Jonathan went out to the* [*field*](field.html) *for his meeting with David. He had a small boy with him, And he said to the boy, “Run and find the arrows I shoot.” As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. When the boy came to the place where Jonathan’s arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, “Isn’t the arrow beyond you?” Then he shouted, “Hurry! Go quickly! Don’t stop!” The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master. (The boy* [*knew*](daat.html) *nothing of all this; only Jonathan and David* [*knew*](daat.html)*.) Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said, “Go, carry them back to town.” After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side [of the stone] and bowed down before Jonathan* [*three*](three.html) *times, with his* [*face*](body.html) *to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together--but David wept the most. Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, saying, ‘*[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’” Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.*

It is apparent from the above passage that, even in the days of Samuel and Saul, already Israel was celebrating Rosh Chodesh, the [New](new.html) Moon, for [two](two.html) days. We celebrate for [two](two.html) days when the preceding month is [twenty](twenty.html)-[nine](nine.html) days.

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***19b*** *R. Joshua b. Levi testified on behalf of the holy* [*community*](community.html) *of* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *concerning the* [*two*](two.html) *Adars, that they are sanctified on the day of their prolongation.[[31]](#footnote-31) This is equivalent to saying that we make them defective but we do not make them full, and excludes the statement made in a discourse by R. Nachman b. Hisda; [for R. Nachman b. Hisda stated in a discourse]: ‘R. Simai testified in the* [*name*](name.html) *of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi concerning the* [*two*](two.html) *Adars that if they [the Beth din] desired they could make both of them full, and if they desired they could make both of them, defective, and if they desired they could make* [*one*](one.html) *full and the other defective; and such was their custom in the Diaspora. In the* [*name*](name.html) *of our* [*teacher*](teacher.html)*,[[32]](#footnote-32) however, they said:* [*One*](one.html) *is always to be full and the next defective, unless you have been informed that* [*New*](new.html) *Moon has been fixed at its proper* [*time*](time.html)*‘.[[33]](#footnote-33)*

## On [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Rosh Chodesh, in the [annual](annual.html) [cycle](cycles.html), we read the normal weekly Torah portion and this special Torah portion:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 28:9-15*** *“‘On the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day, make an* [*offering*](korbanot) *of* [*two*](two.html) *lambs a year old without defect, together with its drink* [*offering*](korbanot) *and a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of* [*two*](two.html)*-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *for every* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*, in addition to the regular* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *and its drink* [*offering*](korbanot)*. “‘On the* [*first*](one.html) *of every month, present to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *a* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *of* [*two*](two.html) *young bulls,* [*one*](one.html) *ram and* [*seven*](seven.html)[*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *lambs a year old, all without defect. With each bull there is to be a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of* [*three*](three.html)*-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of* [*two*](two.html)*-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; And with each lamb, a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is for a* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*, a pleasing aroma, an* [*offering*](korbanot) *made to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *by* [*fire*](fire.html)*. With each bull there is to be a drink* [*offering*](korbanot) *of half a hin of wine; with the ram, a* [*third*](three.html) *of a hin; and with each lamb, a quarter of a hin. This is the monthly* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *to be made at each* [*new*](new.html) *moon during the year. Besides the regular* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *with its drink* [*offering*](korbanot)*,* [*one*](one.html)[*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *goat is to be presented to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *as a* [*sin*](sin.html)[*offering*](korbanot)*.*

## On [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Rosh Chodesh, in the [triennial](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html), we read the following Torah portion:

**Bamidbar (**[**Numbers**](nchart.html)**) 27:15 – 28:26.**

## Haftarah for [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Rosh Chodesh:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 66:1-24*** *This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: “*[*Heaven*](heaven.html) *is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “This is the* [*one*](one.html) *I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. But whoever sacrifices a bull is like* [*one*](one.html) *who kills a man, and whoever offers a lamb, like* [*one*](one.html) *who breaks a dog’s* [*neck*](body.html)*; whoever makes a grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *is like* [*one*](one.html) *who presents pig’s* [*blood*](body.html)*, and whoever burns memorial* [*incense*](ketoret.html)*, like* [*one*](one.html) *who worships an* [*idol*](idolatry.html)*. They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations; So I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no* [*one*](one.html) *answered, when I* [*spoke*](mashal.html)*, no* [*one*](one.html) *listened. They did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me.” Hear the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, you who tremble at his word: “Your brothers who hate you, and exclude you because of my* [*name*](name.html)*, have said, ‘Let* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *be glorified, that we may see your joy!’ Yet they will be put to shame. Hear that uproar from the* [*city*](city.html)*, hear that noise from the* [*temple*](temple.html)*! It is the sound of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *repaying his enemies all they deserve. “Before she goes into labor, she gives* [*birth*](birth.html)*; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a* [*nation*](nations.html) *be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives* [*birth*](birth.html) *to her children. Do I bring to the moment of* [*birth*](birth.html) *and not give delivery?” says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “Do I close up the* [*womb*](thebirth.html) *when I bring to delivery?” says your God. “Rejoice with* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who* [*mourn*](mourning.html) *over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting* [*breasts*](body.html)*; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance.” For this is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: “I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of* [*nations*](nations.html) *like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*.” When you see this, your* [*heart*](body.html) *will rejoice and you will flourish like grass; the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will be made* [*known*](daat.html) *to his servants, but his fury will be shown to his foes. See,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is* [*coming*](coming.html) *with* [*fire*](fire.html)*, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of* [*fire*](fire.html)*. For with* [*fire*](fire.html) *and with his sword* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “Those who consecrate and* [*purify*](purity.html) *themselves to go into the gardens, following the* [*one*](one.html) *in the midst of those who* [*eat*](eating.html) *the flesh of pigs and rats and other abominable things--they will meet their end together,” declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and* [*gather*](gather.html) *all* [*nations*](nations.html) *and* [*tongues*](spirit.html)*, and they will come and see my glory. “I will set a* [*sign*](signs.html) *among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the* [*nations*](nations.html)*--to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the* [*nations*](nations.html)*. And they will bring all your brothers, from all the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, to my holy mountain in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *as an* [*offering*](korbanot) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*--on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels,” says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in ceremonially* [*clean*](purity.html) *vessels. And I will select some of them also to be* [*priests*](priests.html) *and Levites,” says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “As the* [*new*](new.html)[*heavens*](heaven.html) *and the* [*new*](new.html) *earth that I make will endure before me,” declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, “so will your* [*name*](name.html) *and descendants endure. From* [*one*](one.html)[*New*](new.html) *Moon to another and from* [*one*](one.html)[*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “And they will go out and look upon the dead* [*bodies*](body.html) *of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their* [*fire*](fire.html) *be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.”*

## Welcoming the Shechinah[[34]](#footnote-34)

Since Kiddush Lavanah is considered to be an act of greeting the Shechinah, its blessing is distinguished from other blessings in the requirement that it be recited while [standing](mashal.html), at a [time](time.html) of joy, while dressed in fine clothing, and in public, as if [one](one.html) were going out to greet a King.

The blessing for the [new](new.html) moon is generally recited on Motzei [Shabbat](sabbath.html), before the tenth day of the month, or on the [first](one.html) day that the [new](new.html) moon is visible, in fulfillment of the principle that the diligent fulfill [mitzvot](cmds613.html) at the [first](one.html) possible opportunity. During the winter, it is not advisable to wait for Motzei [Shabbat](sabbath.html) for [fear](fear.html) of clouds.

In the month of [Sivan](feasts.html), Kiddush Lavanah is recited on Motzei [Shabbat](sabbath.html) so as to combine the blessing with the joy of the [festival](festival.html).

Even if [one](one.html) recites the blessing during the week, rather than on Motzei [Shabbat](sabbath.html), it is appropriate that he wear fine clothing in honor of this [mitzva](cmds613.html) and that he [purify](purity.html) his spirit and his [heart](body.html) before the act of welcoming the Shechinah.

During the month of [Av](feasts.html), because of the spirit of [mourning](mourning.html) that prevails, Kiddush Lavanah is not said before the [ninth](nine.html) of the month. The custom is to recite it after the end of the fast on the [ninth](nine.html) of [Av](feasts.html), but to [eat](eating.html) something [first](one.html). Similarly, because of our preoccupation with the anguish of our [sins](sin.html) before they are forgiven, during [Tishri](feasts.html), Kiddush Lavanah is not recited before Yom HaKippurim. Rather, we wait until the end of the fast and recite Kiddush Lavanah when we leave the [synagogue](synagog.html) and prior to [eating](eating.html). Among Sephardic [communities](community.html), the custom is to recite Kiddush Lavanah before Yom HaKippurim so that [one](one.html) may have an additional source of [merit](merit.html) prior to his judgment.

In accord with the view of the Vilna Gaon, it is customary in many [Jerusalem](city.html) synagogues not to wait for after [Tisha B’Ab](tishabav.html) or after Yom HaKippurim before reciting Kiddush Lavanah but to abide by the principle that the diligent fulfill [mitzvot](cmds613.html) at the earliest opportunity.

Those who are especially careful in fulfilling the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) make every effort to recite Kiddush Lavanah with a minyan, in fulfillment of the verse:

***Mishle (Proverbs) 14:28*** *The King’s glory is in the multitudes.*

When reciting Kiddush Lavanah, [one](one.html) should not stand under a roof; nor should it be said while [one](one.html) is looking through a window or an open door. Rather [one](one.html) should go outside, as [one](one.html) would do were he greeting a king. However, if [one](one.html) finds it difficult to leave his home, the blessing may be recited inside, provided that the door or window through which he can see the moon is open and that there is nothing intervening between his [eyes](body.html) and the moon. If the glass of the window is [clean](purity.html) and he can see through it clearly, [one](one.html) may recite the blessing without opening the window if he cannot open it because of the cold, etc.

Kiddush Lavanah is not recited before [three](three.html) full days and nights have passed from the [time](time.html) of the Molad, the appearance of the [new](new.html) moon. Some authorities say, until [seven](seven.html) full days and nights have passed. It may be recited until [one](one.html) half of the moon has passed; i.e., until the point that is halfway between the Molad of that month and the Molad of the [coming](coming.html) month, since up to then the moon is in the process of renewal and achieving fullness. After half of the month has passed, the moon begins to diminish and Kiddush Lavanah may not be said.

Although Kiddush Lavanah is not recited on [Shabbat](sabbath.html), i.e. Friday night, or on [festival](festival.html) nights, if it will be impossible to recite it on the next night, e.g. if [Shabbat](sabbath.html) or the [festival](festival.html) is the last night of the month on which [one](one.html) can recite it, it may be said.

Women do not recite Kiddush Lavanah.

When reciting the blessing, [one](one.html) should [first](one.html) look up at the moon so as to see it at the [time](time.html) of the blessing, but should not look at it while reciting the entire service, for we [pray](prayer.html) not to the moon but to the He Who created it. When reciting the blessing, [one](one.html) should stand in a manner befitting the service.

Among some [communities](community.html), it is customary to sing and dance after Kiddush Lavanah.

## The [Psalm](psalms1.html) for Rosh Chodesh

Rosh Chodesh is a monthly [festival](festival.html), as is of course witnessed in the [cycle](cycles.html) of the moon. Renewal can be seen as starting over after a series of failings. Renewal can also be seen as a beginning at a [new](new.html) stage after the completion of a prior stage. In the [psalm](psalms1.html) of Rosh Chodesh, Tehillim 104, we find a description of the functioning of the [world](worlds.html). Every piece of [creation](bara.html) has been set in its place. The water, land, and trees have all been set firmly. Animal life has been set into motion. Man again functions in his created role. This can be viewed as a renewal of [creation](bara.html) as it was meant to be when the [first](one.html) [Shabbat](sabbath.html) settled upon the earth. Hence it is renewal: we find that it refers not merely to the original [creation](bara.html), but to a [future](future.html) [creation](bara.html) when [sins](sin.html) will be wiped off the earth, and evil doers will be no more. This “back to the [future](future.html)” [experience](experience.html) is the goal of Rosh Chodesh. This is a renewed [world](worlds.html), a messianic view of the already existing [world](worlds.html).

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 104:1-35*** *Praise* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, O my soul.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a* [*garment*](garment.html)*; he stretches out the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *like a tent And lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. He makes winds his messengers, flames of* [*fire*](fire.html) *his servants. He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a* [*garment*](garment.html)*; the waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; They flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth. He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the* [*field*](field.html)*; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate--bringing forth* [*food*](food.html) *from the earth: Wine that gladdens the* [*heart*](body.html) *of man, oil to make his* [*face*](body.html) *shine, and bread that sustains his* [*heart*](body.html)*. The trees of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the pine trees. The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the coneys. The moon marks off the seasons, and the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *knows when to go down. You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beasts of the forest prowl. The lions roar for their prey and seek their* [*food*](food.html) *from God. The* [*sun*](hachama.html) *rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens. Then man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening. How many are your works,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond* [*number*](nchart.html)*--living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there. These all look to you to give them their* [*food*](food.html) *at the proper* [*time*](time.html)*. When you give it to them, they* [*gather*](gather.html) *it up; when you open your* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your* [*face*](body.html)*, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the* [*dust*](rock.html)*. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the* [*face*](body.html) *of the earth. May the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *endure forever; may* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *rejoice in his works-- He who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke. I will sing to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. But may sinners vanish from the earth and the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *be no more. Praise* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, O my soul. Praise* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

What blessing can’t you say when you’re on the moon?

Answer: Kiddush Lavanah, the blessing on seeing the [New](new.html) Moon. (In Sephardic [communities](community.html) it is called “Birchat Ha-Lavanah”, the blessing of the moon.)

The blessing said when sighting the [New](new.html) Moon can be recited only at night when you can benefit from the moon’s light. Even at night, if it’s cloudy and you see only a vague image of the moon you don’t say the blessing, since you don’t benefit from its rays. So too, if you were actually [standing](mashal.html) on the moon you wouldn’t be able to say the blessing of Kiddush Lavanah, because you wouldn’t be deriving benefit from the moon’s rays![[35]](#footnote-35)

**\* \* \***

Historically, the Torah records that Rosh Chodesh was celebrated in the past. We can see this in:

***I Shmuel (Samuel) 20:18*** *Then Jonathan said to David: “Tomorrow is the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty.*

This passage is read on the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) before Rosh Chodesh. This passage is rife with connections to Rosh Chodesh.

[First](one.html), and most obvious, is the fact that Rosh Chodesh is *tomorrow*. Historically we [know](daat.html) that this was a period of transition between the kingship of [Benyamin](benyamin.html) (Saul) and the kingship of Judah (David). This is the transition from [one](one.html) month to the next. It is analogous to a [new](new.html) king taking the throne. As the reign of Saul was waning, the reign of David was [coming](coming.html).

We can see that Saul’s son, Jonathan, is not planning on continuing his father’s reigns, but rather he is doing what he can to prepare the [world](worlds.html) for the reign of the [new](new.html) dynasty. The family of [Benyamin](benyamin.html) was responsible for the eradication of [Amalek](amalek.html). Once King Saul failed in this task, the stage was set for the rise of the dynasty of Judah. Before the reign of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David, we can expect a king from [Benyamin](benyamin.html) who will finally eradicate [Amalek](amalek.html) and willingly turn the kingship to the house of Judah. We have examined this sequence of [events](feasts.html) in greater detail in our [study](study.html) titled: [Temple](temple.html).

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) records that [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon gave [seventy](seventy.html) years of his life to David. This [connects](connection.html) [Adam](adam.html) and David. It makes this a very important beginning.

We can also see that Rosh Chodesh will be celebrated in the [future](future.html) because the Tanach records this for us as well:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 66:22-24*** *“As the* [*new*](new.html)[*heavens*](heaven.html) *and the* [*new*](new.html) *earth that I make will endure before me,” declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, “so will your* [*name*](name.html) *and descendants endure. From* [*one*](one.html)[*New*](new.html) *Moon to another and from* [*one*](one.html)[*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “And they will go out and look upon the dead* [*bodies*](body.html) *of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their* [*fire*](fire.html) *be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.”*

# A [Sin](sin.html)-[Offering](korbanot) for [HaShem](hashem.html)?

Why is the goat [offering](korbanot) of Rosh Chodesh the only [sacrifice](korbanot.html) of its kind referred to as “a [sin](sin.html)-[offering](korbanot) for [HaShem](hashem.html)?” [Two](two.html) seemingly diverse Talmudic interpretations dovetail to supply the answer:

“Let this goat be an [atonement](atonemen.html)”, Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish explains the reasoning of [HaShem](hashem.html), “for My reducing the light of the moon”.

The [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[36]](#footnote-36) relates the efforts of [HaShem](hashem.html) to placate the moon after ordering it to reduce its light as a response to that luminary’s challenge that there was no room in the universe for [two](two.html) heavenly luminaries of similar power. [Jews](gen-jew.html) would calculate their [calendar](calendar.html) according to the moon and tzaddikim such as [Yaakov](israelja.html), Shmuel, and David would be called “small” in association with the lesser light of the moon. When all of this failed to completely appease the moon [HaShem](hashem.html) ordered Israel to bring a [sin](sin.html) [offering](korbanot) on the [New](new.html) Moon. The [atonement](atonemen.html) of this [sacrifice](korbanot.html), points out Rabbi Yehuda, is essentially for those [sins](sin.html) of entering the [Sanctuary](mikdash.html) or [eating](eating.html) sacrificial flesh while in a state of [impurity](purity.html) of which [one](one.html) never becomes aware. “A [sin](sin.html)-[offering](korbanot) for [HaShem](hashem.html)“ means a [sin](sin.html) which only [HaShem](hashem.html) is aware of. [HaShem](hashem.html) wished to give Israel this opportunity for [atonement](atonemen.html), explains Tosafot, and designated Rosh Chodesh, the [Festival](festival.html) of the [New](new.html) Moon, as the [time](time.html) for [offering](korbanot) it in order to placate the moon for its reduction of light.[[37]](#footnote-37)

# During The [Millennium](millenium.html)

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 46:1-7*** *“‘This is what the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: The gate of the inner court facing* [*east*](east.html) *is to be shut on the* [*six*](six.html) *working days, but on the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day and on the day of the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon it is to be opened. The prince is to enter from the outside through the portico of the gateway and stand by the gatepost. The* [*priests*](priests.html) *are to* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *his* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *and his fellowship offerings. He is to worship at the threshold of the gateway and then go out, but the gate will not be shut until evening. On the Sabbaths and* [*New*](new.html) *Moons the people of the land are to worship in the presence of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *at the entrance to that gateway. The* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *the prince brings to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *on the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day is to be* [*six*](six.html)[*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *lambs and a ram, all without defect. The grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *given with the ram is to be an ephah, and the grain* [*offering*](korbanot) *with the lambs is to be as much as he pleases, along with a hin of oil for each ephah. On the day of the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon he is to offer a young bull,* [*six*](six.html) *lambs and a ram, all without defect. He is to provide as a grain* [*offering*](korbanot)[*one*](one.html) *ephah with the bull,* [*one*](one.html) *ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he* [*wants*](needs.html) *to give, along with a hin of oil with each ephah.*

Since Rosh Chodesh was celebrated in the past, and will be celebrated in the [future](future.html), why in [heaven](heaven.html) don’t we celebrate it today? Obviously, the offerings can’t be brought because we have no [Temple](temple.html), but we can obviously celebrate the parts that are permissible.

The Song of Solomon also alludes to the relationship between Rosh Chodesh and [Messiah](mashiach.html):

***Kohelet (Song of Solomon) 2:8-9*** *Listen! My lover! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills. My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice.*

Judah and Tamar had twins: Zerach and Peretz. Zerach[[38]](#footnote-38) was so called on account of the [sun](hachama.html) which always shines, and Peretz[[39]](#footnote-39) on account of the moon which is sometimes breached [i.e. its light is sometimes hidden (at the end of the month) and sometimes completely intact.] But Peretz [symbolizing the moon] was the [first](one.html) born, although the [sun](hachama.html) is greater than the moon? [i.e. why should the firstborn be symbolized by the smaller orb?] In a sense Zerach, who stuck out his [hand](fourteen.html) [first](one.html), was to be the firstborn; but Peretz, the ancestor of the House of David, was given the Divine privilege of actually being the [first](one.html) born. The Davidic dynasty is likened to the moon because it underwent various [stages](stages.html) of ascendancy and descendancy.

Since the Davidic dynasty evolved from Peretz who was likened to the moon, the Talmudic Sages[[40]](#footnote-40), - when wishing to inform the [Jews](gen-jew.html) in other countries that the [New](new.html) Moon had appeared and been sanctified, would use the message ‘David King of Israel lives and exists’[[41]](#footnote-41)

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) [teaches](teacher.html) the following about Tehillim ([Psalm](psalms1.html)) 81:3-4:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 81:3*** *Blow the* [*horn*](shofar.html) *at the* [*new*](new.html) *moon, at the covering of the moon our feast day.*

***Sanhedrin 11b*** *Now on which feast is the moon covered? We must say on the* [*New*](teruah.html) *Year (*[*Rosh HaShana*](teruah.html) *-* [*Yom Teruah*](teruah.html) *- Feast of Trumpets). And it is thereupon written:*

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 81:4*** *For this is a statute for Israel, a judgment of the God of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*.*

*Just as judgment is executed by day, so also must the sanctification of the month take place by day.*

*The sight of the* [*new*](new.html) *moon which has reappeared is another occasion for celebrating this aspect of* [*creation*](bara.html)*, and our awareness of it, by expressing gratitude for the renewal of life, and hopefulness for the* [*future*](future.html)*.*

*Rabbi Yochanan said: Whoever blesses the* [*new*](new.html) *moon at the proper* [*time*](time.html) *is considered as having welcomed the presence of the Shechinah.*

# Customs

“Originally, the [New](new.html) Moon was not fixed by astronomical calculations, but was solemnly proclaimed after witnesses had testified to the reappearance of the crescent of the moon. On the 30th of each month, the members of the High Court assembled in a courtyard in [Jerusalem](city.html), named Beit Ya’azek, where they waited to receive the testimony of [two](two.html) reliable witnesses; they then sanctified the [New](new.html) Moon. If the moon’s crescent was not seen on the 30th day, the [New](new.html) Moon was automatically celebrated on the 31st day.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

Entertaining the witnesses and taking their testimony, as well as the actual sanctification of the [New](new.html) Moon, all had to take place during daylight hours as this is a Mishpat.

In addition to the witnesses, the Molad for the [new](new.html) moon is also calculated by the Beit Din (Court) that has had their ordination conferred on them in a direct line from Moses. The Beit Din is the only [body](body.html) that is authorized by [halacha](walking.html) to sanctify the [new](new.html) moon. Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch elaborates for us:

*“But that it is not at all the planetary occurrence in the sky that fixes the beginning of the month, so that all that would be necessary would be for the* [*law*](law.html)*-officers to take note of such occurrence, is clearly evident from* [*laws*](law.html) *that refer to the case where on the 30th, while yet daytime, the* [*new*](new.html) *moon is visible and has been seen by the judges, the court, and by all Israel; or of the case where the thorough examination of the witnesses who come and testify that they have seen it, has been satisfactorily completed by day, but in either of these cases, if night has fallen before the judges have pronounced “it is consecrated”, then the 30th ins not the* [*first*](one.html) *of the month, in spite of the fact that the* [*new*](new.html) *moon has actually been seen by everybody, or alternatively has been vouched for, and completely confirmed and established, the* [*new*](new.html) *moon only starts on the 31st. This is striking evidence that it is not the actual condition up above, but the consecrating declaration of the representatives of Israel that is the decisive factor on which the beginning of the month depends. This, the fact that the* [*nation*](nations.html) *itself fixes the date of the beginning of the months is what the* [*command*](cmds613.html) *refers to...”*

*“... It is not to be the conjunction of the moon with the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*; not the moon receiving the rays of illumination afresh, that is to induce the beginning of our months, it is not that, to which our celebration of the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon is to be dedicated. But each* [*time*](time.html) *the moon finds the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *again, each* [*time*](time.html) *it receives its rays of light afresh,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*wants*](needs.html) *His people to find Him again and to be illuminated with fresh rays of His light, wherever and however, in running their course, they have had to pass through periods of darkness and obscurity. The moon finding itself again in conjunction with the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *is only a model for our finding ourselves again with* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the rejuvenation of the moon a picture of and an incentive to, our own rejuvenation.* [*Moed*](settimes.html) *is literally conjunction.”[[43]](#footnote-43)*

# Observations

Women do not have to work on the day of the [new](new.html) moon. A woman’s [cycle](cycles.html) is the same as the moon’s [cycle](cycles.html). As a woman is renewed so too is the moon renewed. This intimate relationship is captured in the definition of “menses” from which menstruation is derived:

***men·ses*** *(mèn¹sêz) plural noun (used with a sing. or pl. verb) The monthly flow of* [*blood*](body.html) *and cellular debris from the uterus that begins at puberty in women and the females of other primates. In women, menses ceases at menopause. Also called catamenia.* [Latin mênsês, pl. of mênsis, month.][[44]](#footnote-44)

A month is, of course, related to the moon: A unit of [time](time.html) corresponding approximately to [one](one.html) [cycle](cycles.html) of the moon’s phases, or about [thirty](thirty.html) days or [four](four.html) weeks.[[45]](#footnote-45)

So, it becomes obvious the there is a relationship between women and the moon. No wonder, then, that there is a custom for women to abstain from hard work on Rosh Chodesh.

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) rules that work is permitted on Rosh Chodesh, but describes a tradition that women abstain from work on the day.[[46]](#footnote-46)

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***23a*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html) *‘Beacon fires are lit only for the* [*new*](new.html) *moon which has been seen at its proper* [*time*](time.html)*,[[47]](#footnote-47) [to announce that] it has been sanctified. When are they lit? On the night following its announcement.[[48]](#footnote-48) This means to say that we light beacons for defective months but not for full months. What is the reason? — R. Zera said: It is a precaution on account of a defective month which ends on Friday. [In that case] when do we light? On the termination of* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*; and if you were to insist that we should light up also for full months, this might give rise to confusion, since people would say: This month may be defective, and the reason why beacons were not lit yesterday is because it was impossible,[[49]](#footnote-49) or perhaps it is full and they are lighting up at the proper* [*time*](time.html)*. But why should we not light up whether for a full month or a defective month, and when* [*New*](new.html) *Moon is on Friday not light up at all, so that since we do not light at the termination of* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*, in spite of the fact that we usually light for a full month, people will* [*know*](daat.html) *that it is defective? — This nevertheless may lead to errors, since people will say, this month is full, and the reason why they have not lit up is because they have been prevented.[[50]](#footnote-50) But why not light up for the full months and not at all for the defective months? — Abaye replied: So as not to deprive the public of* [*two*](two.html) *working days.[[51]](#footnote-51)*

## Rosh Chodesh and [Shabbat](sabbath.html)

The [new](new.html) moon and [Sabbath](sabbath.html) seem to be somehow linked. Notice the scriptures that use them together:

***2 Melachim (Kings) 4:23*** *“Why go to him today?” he asked. “It’s not the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon or the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*.” “It’s all right,” she said.*

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 66:22-23*** *“As the* [*new*](new.html)[*heavens*](heaven.html) *and the* [*new*](new.html) *earth that I make will endure before me,” declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, “so will your* [*name*](name.html) *and descendants endure. From* [*one*](one.html)[*New*](new.html) *Moon to another and from* [*one*](one.html)[*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 46:1*** *“‘This is what the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: The gate of the inner court facing* [*east*](east.html) *is to be shut on the* [*six*](six.html) *working days, but on the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day and on the day of the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon it is to be opened.*

***Amos 8:5*** *Saying, “When will the* [*New*](new.html) *Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *be ended that we may market wheat?”--skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales,*

Matthew 24:26-31 speaks of the messianic hope and the arrival of the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David. This expectation is exemplified in our Rosh Chodesh [prayers](prayer.html) where we sing: David Melech Israel, chai, chai, ve’chai ya...

***Matityahu (Matthew) 24:26-31*** *“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the* [*east*](east.html) *is visible even in the west, so will be the* [*coming*](coming.html) *of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will* [*gather*](gather.html)*. “Immediately after the distress of those days ‘the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html) *will fall from the sky, and the heavenly* [*bodies*](body.html) *will be shaken.’ “At that* [*time*](time.html) *the* [*sign*](signs.html) *of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the* [*nations*](nations.html) *of the earth will* [*mourn*](mourning.html)*. They will see the Son of Man* [*coming*](coming.html) *on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his* [*angels*](angels.html) *with a loud trumpet call, and they will* [*gather*](gather.html) *his elect from the* [*four*](four.html) *winds, from* [*one*](one.html) *end of the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *to the other.*

Further our [prayers](prayer.html) for [Mashiach](mashiach.html) reach a crescendo on the ultimate Rosh Chodesh: [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html). On Hashanah, our Shacharit [prayers](prayer.html) are divided into [three](three.html) sections: Malchiyot, Zichronot, and Shofarot. Malchiyot because this is when we declare the kingship of [HaShem](hashem.html) as manifested in [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David.

At [Yom Teruah](teruah.html) we also have a Rosh Chodesh. The moon will be in the west! Will the moon reflect the Shechinah of the Son of Man when He returns?

***Malachi 4:1-2*** *“Surely the day is* [*coming*](coming.html)*; it will burn like a* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is* [*coming*](coming.html) *will set them on* [*fire*](fire.html)*,” says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my* [*name*](name.html)*, the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.*

## In the [future](future.html)

In sefer Revelation, a [sod](sod.html) level sefer, we read about a Rosh Chodesh celebration in the [future](future.html):

***Revelation 22:2*** *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the* [*tree of life*](eternal.html)*, which bare* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the* [*nations*](nations.html)*.*

This pasuk suggests that the Rosh Chodesh celebrations of the [future](future.html) will involve *healing*. Note that the fruits of [one](one.html) of the [twelve](twelve.html) trees will ripen on Rosh Chodesh.

## Beginnings

Rosh Chodesh represents a *beginning*. Beginnings, in Torah, are very potent. For example, the moment of conception of a human being is a [time](time.html) when both the [male](male%2Bfemale.html) and the [female](male%2Bfemale.html) chromosomes divide in half. The remaining halves then unite to form a [new](new.html) being. The genes that were laid down at this moment are the descriptors that will define this person for the rest of his life. Not only do they describe his [physical](physical.html) components like the color of his [eyes](body.html) and [hair](hair.html), but they also define his temperament and his likes and dislikes. In fact, Chazal [teach](teacher.html) that that moment also gives the memories of the father to his progeny. In some way, the child *knows* about the father. While the beginning has occurred in [secret](sod.html), never the less, its potency is great as it contains everything in a compressed form.

Rosh Chodesh, the beginning of a month, is a little bit like the flash of inspiration, which leads to a blueprint, which leads to a completed building. That moment of inspiration contains everything! That moment is hidden, but the end will reveal that it contained everything.

Our Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that the sound made by the [shofar](shofar.html) is the sound of the human neshama, the soul. This is a sound without corruption, the raw sound of the neshama. The bend of the [shofar](shofar.html) is said by the mystics to be the transition between this [world](worlds.html) and the next.

The [shofar](shofar.html) is the depth or root of speech. Teshuva (repentance) means to go back to the moment of [creation](bara.html), to go back into the [womb](thebirth.html) to the moment of conception. We return to our fetal state, our moment of [creation](bara.html). This return is what Chazal meant by Zichronot, memory or remembering as a function of [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html). We return to the moment when the memories (sperm) of the father are given to us. Chazal use this same concept to [teach](teacher.html) us that the sound [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon heard on wakening from his [creation](bara.html), was the sound of a [shofar](shofar.html), the sound made by his neshama as it entered him. This suggests that the [shofar](shofar.html) can take us back to the very moment when our neshama entered us.

This same concept will help us to understand why a ram was found at the very moment that [Isaac](isaac.html) expired and was resurrected. At that moment a [shofar](shofar.html) became available.

Thus, we see that the Rosh Chodesh of [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html) is a VERY potent moment! Chazal, therefore, [teach](teacher.html) that we should be very careful about our actions on this day. Not only is it the beginning of the month, but it is also the beginning of the year. Since the end goes after the beginning, it makes sense that we should pay attention to beginnings.

# [New](new.html) Moon Calculations

The [oral Torah](orallaw.html) tells us how the Sanhedrin calculated the [time](time.html) of Rosh Chodesh. These calculations were used to check the veracity of the witnesses.

**1.** The beginning of the lunar month occurs at the moment of conjunction between the [sun](hachama.html) and the moon; i.e. at the moment when the position of the moon is exactly between the earth and the [sun](hachama.html). At this point, termed as the Molad, or “[birth](birth.html)“, the moon is not visible from the earth. At least [six](six.html) hours must pass before a very small portion of the moon will reappear. The day on which this occurs is regarded as the [first](one.html) day of the [new](new.html) month. (Rashi)

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***20b*** *— The latter statement would be seen to be false,[[52]](#footnote-52) the former statement is not seen to be false.[[53]](#footnote-53)*

*Samuel said: I am quite able to make a* [*calendar*](calendar.html)*[[54]](#footnote-54) for the whole of the Diaspora. Said Abba the father of R. Simlai to Samuel: Does the Master* [*know*](daat.html) *[the meaning] of this remark which occurs in [the Baraitha* [*known*](daat.html) *as] the* [*secret*](sod.html) *of the* [*Calendar*](calendar.html)*?[[55]](#footnote-55) ‘If the* [*new*](new.html) *moon is born before midday or after midday’? — He replied: I do not. He then said to him: Since the Master does not* [*know*](daat.html) *this, there must also be other things which the Master does not* [*know*](daat.html)*. When R. Zera went up [to Israel], he sent back word to them [in* [*Babylon*](bavel.html)*]: It is necessary that there should be [on* [*New*](new.html) *Moon] a night and a day of the* [*new*](new.html) *moon.[[56]](#footnote-56) This is what Abba the father of R. Simlai meant: ‘We calculate [according to] the* [*new*](new.html) *moon’s* [*birth*](birth.html)*. If it is born before midday, then certainly it will have been seen shortly before sunset. If it was not born before midday, certainly it will not have been seen shortly before sunset’. What is the practical value of this remark? — R. Ashi said: To [help us in] confuting the witnesses.[[57]](#footnote-57)*

*R. Zera said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Nachman: The moon is invisible for* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *hours [round about* [*new*](new.html) *moon]. For us [in* [*Babylon*](bavel.html)*]* [*six*](six.html) *of these belong to the old moon and* [*eighteen*](eighteen.html) *to the* [*new*](new.html)*;[[58]](#footnote-58) for them [in Israel]* [*six*](six.html) *to the* [*new*](new.html) *and* [*eighteen*](eighteen.html) *to the old.[[59]](#footnote-59) What is the practical value of this remark? — R. Ashi said: To confute the witnesses.*

*The Master has just said: It is necessary that there should be [on* [*New*](new.html) *Moon] a night and a day of the* [*new*](new.html) *moon. Whence is this rule derived? — R. Johanan said: [From the text]. From evening to evening;[[60]](#footnote-60) Resh Lakish said: [From the text], Until the* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*first*](one.html) *day of the month in the evening.[[61]](#footnote-61) What practical difference is there between them? — Abaye said: The difference between them is only* [*one*](one.html) *of exegesis.[[62]](#footnote-62) Raba said: They differ in regard to [the hours up to] midnight.[[63]](#footnote-63)*

**2.** The moon resembles a cosmic clock which orbits the earth on the average of 29 days, 12 hours plus 793 parts of an hour (29.53059 days). This figure allows for computing in advance all [new](new.html) moons and their respective holidays.

**3.** In order to calculate the appearance of any [new](new.html) moon in advance (especially [Tishri](feasts.html) and [Nisan](feasts.html)) it is necessary to [know](daat.html) in addition to the rate of the moon’s orbit, the exact moment at which the cosmic clock went into operation.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:14-15*** *And God said, “Let there be* [*lights*](lights.html) *in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as* [*signs*](signs.html) *to mark seasons and days and years, And let them be* [*lights*](lights.html) *in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so.*

**A.** According to the position of Rebbi Eliezer[[64]](#footnote-64) when [Adam](adam.html) was created on the [sixth](six.html) day of [creation](bara.html), that day was the [first](one.html) of [Tishri](feasts.html), [New](teruah.html) Year’s day. Days 1,2,3,4, and 5 of [Creation](bara.html) took place successively on the 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29th of the month of [Elul](elul.html) of the previous hypothetical year. This entire hypothetical year preceding the [first](one.html) [New](teruah.html) Year’s day is called Shanat Tohu or Primordial Year.

[New](teruah.html) Year’s Day, [Tishri](feasts.html) 1, is called Yom Harat Olam, the [birth](thebirth.html)-day of the [world](worlds.html) referring not to the [world](worlds.html) which was created on the 25th of [Elul](elul.html) but to [Adam](adam.html) for whom the [world](worlds.html) was created.[[65]](#footnote-65)

**B.** According to the Oral Tradition[[66]](#footnote-66) the [first](one.html) [New](new.html) Moon occurred exactly at the end of the second hour of the [sixth](six.html) morning (12 + 2 hours from [sun](hachama.html) set at the end of the [fifth](five.html) day of [Creation](bara.html)) when [Adam](adam.html) was created. This [first](one.html) [New](new.html) Moon is called 6/14 (14 full hours into the [sixth](six.html) day) and is coded in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) as V/YD. (Vav equals 6, Yod-Dalet equals 14). The Oral Tradition therefore reveals that the verse “they shall be as [signs](signs.html)...” places the [first](one.html) actual [New](new.html) Moon, not on the [fourth](four.html) day when the luminaries were suspended, but on the [sixth](six.html) day of [Creation](bara.html), when [Adam](adam.html), for whose use they were made, was created.

**5.** Now we [know](daat.html) not only the mean-length of the lunar month but the exact moment when the “cosmic clock” went into operation (V/YD). We may now ascertain the appearance of any [New](new.html) Moon is advance by calculating the [number](nchart.html) of months that have passed since the [first](one.html) [New](new.html) Moon (V/YD) and multiplying by 29.53059. (For a discussion of “simple” (12 months) and “plenary” or “pregnant” years (13 months) which would have to be taken into consideration for such a calculation see Rambam *Sanctification 6:10-13*.

**6**. However, it is critical to bear in mind that the hypothetical year (Shanat Tohu) that preceded the [first](one.html) actual [New](new.html) Moon V/YD consisted of only [five](five.html) days ([Elul](elul.html) 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29) and that the present [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [calendar](calendar.html) takes the beginning of Shanat Tohu as its starting point in order not to omit these 5 days! Our calculations therefore must make up for the approximately 11 months 24.5 days which are missing if we would start at V/YD.

**7**. In order to prevent unnecessary complications of this sort and enable us to calculate in whole years, the sages employed a method which is scientifically accepted today as well, of calculating backwards or extrapolation.

**8**. Calculating backwards: By means of extrapolation we can calculate the [first](one.html) hypothetical [New](new.html) Moon which would have occurred if the [World](worlds.html) ([time](time.html)) had been created at the beginning of the year instead of at its end. By simply calculating backwards 12 lunar month [cycles](cycles.html) of 29 days 12 hours 793 parts from V/YD we arrive at Molad Tohu, the Primordial [New](new.html) Moon.

**9**. It is understood that this extrapolation is built in such a way that from the Molad Tohu a period of exactly 12 months would bring us forward to the [first](one.html) actual [New](new.html) Moon V/YD.

**10.** The advantage of employing the concept of Molad Tohu (Primordial [New](new.html) Moon) as the starting point for the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [calendar](calendar.html), allows us to work in whole years in the ascertaining of any [New](new.html) Moon we wish to [know](daat.html).[[67]](#footnote-67)

**11.** The calculation: When we subtract [twelve](twelve.html) times 29 days 793 parts from the 14th hour of the [sixth](six.html) day (V/YD) we obtain the Primordial [New](new.html) Moon: 2 days 5 hours 204 parts (or 5 hours and 204 parts of an hour into the second day of the [first](one.html) week of the previous hypothetical year). In [Hebrew](hebrew.html) this [number](nchart.html) is coded B/H/RD, 2d 5h 204p. (Beit equals 2, hey equals 5, Resh-dalet equals 204).

B/H/R/D is derived from Genesis chapter [one](one.html). If we were to list out the [first](one.html) chapter of Bereshit (Genesis) as [one](one.html) [letter](letters.html) after another, with no spaces, we could find the B/H/R/D encoded at 42 [letter](letters.html) increments. This 42 [letter](letters.html) increment is based on the 42 [letter](letters.html) [name](name.html) of G-d: *The Book of Our Heritage*, by Eliyahu Kitov.

Rambam,[[68]](#footnote-68) who lived about 1200 AD, commented on the synodic Lunar month of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [calendar](calendar.html) as being 29 days, 12 hours, and 793/1080 of the next hour, for a total of 29 + 12/24 + 793/(1080x24) = 29.530594 days.

Bachya[[69]](#footnote-69) used an ELS[[70]](#footnote-70) with spacing 42 that started with the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of Genesis:

- D

then went to the 42nd [letter](letters.html) following that D - R

then went to the 42nd [letter](letters.html) following that R - H

then went to the 42nd [letter](letters.html) following that H - B

to produce the sequence DRHB, which he showed to produce the 29.530594 day synodic Lunar month.

Bachya did not claim to have discovered the Torah-coding of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Lunar month, but gave credit to Nechunya.[[71]](#footnote-71)

\* \* \*

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1. Sanhedrin 38b [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Pri Tzadik Bereshit, Rosh Chodesh Kislev [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rosh Chodesh is a holiday for women, given to them as a reward for refusing to donate their jewelry for the golden calf. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 417). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Chullin 60b [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Bamidbar (Numbers) 28:11-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. There are two basic reasons for reciting Hallel. First, we recite Hallel on festival days in order to praise HaShem as we celebrate His festival (see RAMBAN, Shoresh 1, who understands that reciting Hallel is part of the mitzva of Simchat Yom Tov). Second, we recite Hallel in order to commemorate a miraculous salvation from danger. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Shulchan Aruch 418:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 419:1-2, Mishna Berurah, Orach Chayim 418:2, Ben Ish Chai, Vayikra 10, 1 Samuel 20:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Bamidbar 10:10, Pesachim 77a and Shavuot 10a, Taanit 29a, Leviticus 23:4 and *Rashi ad loc.* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The Tur in Hilchot Rosh Chodesh [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Chullin 60b [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 1 Shmuel (Samuel) 20:18-42 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Jewish New Year. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Near relatives being disqualified from offering evidence together. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. I.e., found by the Beth din to be unreliable. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Shemot (Exodus) 12:1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Even if you are near relatives. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The communal leaders, to sanctify the month on the strength of it. Nothing, however, is implied about relatives. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Lit., ‘parts’ (sc. of one hour), 73/1080 X 60 m == 4 m 3 1/3 sec. The new moon, therefore, could not be seen on the twenty-ninth day. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. As a funeral oration would not be delivered on New Moon, which was regarded as a holy day. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *Midrash Sod Halbbur*. On the Mystery of the New Moon. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Rosh HaShana 1 and 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The commencement of the month was dated from the time when the earliest visible appearance of the new moon was reported to the Sanhedrin. If this happened on the 30th day of the current month, that month was considered to have ended on the preceding 29th day, and was called deficient. But if no announcement was made on the 30th day, that day was reckoned to the current month, which was then called full, and the ensuing day was considered the first of the next month. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The ‘calculation’ as to which and how many months were to be intercalated. It was an established rule that no year should consist of less than four nor more than eight full months. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The proclamation by formal ‘sanctification’ of the new moon on the thirtieth day. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The thirtieth day. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. I.e., it is patent to all that the next day is the new moon, as no month exceeds 30 days. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. An Acronym for: “Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim” which literally means the “Law the Prophets and the Writings”, which are the names used by Yeshua in the Nazarean Codicil when speaking of the so-called *Old Testament*. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Tehillim (Psalm) 104:1-2, Debarim (Deuteronomy) 4:39, Tehillim (Psalm) 10:16, Zechariah 14:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The thirtieth day is known as the day of prolongation (עיבור יום) as it is the day which is added to make the preceding month full (v. supra p. 21, n. 7). In the case of the two Adars the thirtieth day of each is sanctified as the New Moon of the next month. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Rab. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. I.e., that the Beth din is Jerusalem fixed the New Moon of Adar II on the thirtieth day of the first Adar, the thirtieth day always being regarded as the ‘proper time’ of New Moon. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. This section is an excerpt from “The Book of Our Heritage” , by Eliyahu Kitov. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 426:1 Rema, Magen Avraham 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Chullin 60b [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Shavuot 9a [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Zerach means ‘shining’. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Peretz means ‘breach’. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Rosh Hashanah 25a [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ramban citing Sefer HaBahir [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. From the Jewish Encyclopedia [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Compare also Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, chapter 45 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. I.e., on the thirtieth day of the outgoing month. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. ‘the day of the prolongation’. V. supra, p. 81, n. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. On account of Sabbath. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Through having drunk too much on Sabbath, and become intoxicated (Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. It was customary to abstain from work on New Moon (v. Tosafot s.v.משום). In this case the thirtieth day would always he kept as New Moon from doubt, and if the actual day fixed was the thirty-first, there would be two days New Moon. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Because other people might have seen the new moon. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Because it could not be proved that they had not seen it (Rashi). R. Hananel: Provided they had seen a semblance of the new moon]. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Heb. עבור lit., ‘taking across’: the word used for the prolonging of the year and the month. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. This was a Baraitha made up of enigmatic sentences like the one which follows. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. I.e., that there should be no appearance of the old moon in this period, viz., after the closing of the twenty-ninth day; otherwise New Moon cannot be proclaimed on the thirtieth. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Because if the conjunction is calculated to have been after midday and they claim to have seen the new moon before nightfall, they are not telling the truth. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Which would imply that in Babylon the new moon is not visible till eighteen hours after its birth (Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Which would imply that in Israel the new moon is visible six hours after its birth (Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:32, in connection with fasting on the Day of Atonement. This shows that the day follows the night in reference to the festivals. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Shemot (Exodus) 12:18, in connection with eating unleavened bread on Passover. This shows that the festivals end at even. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Lit., ‘the interpretation of exegeses. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. According to R. Johanan, the ‘night’ referred to is on the same footing as the night of the Day of Atonement which commences at nightfall. But according to Resh Lakish, it is on a par with the first night of Passover, which, in relation to the Paschal lamb, was a continuation of the afternoon before. Hence Resh Lakish holds that even if the old moon was seen in the early part of the evening, the next day may still be declared New Moon. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Pirke D’Rebbi Eliezer chapter 8, Pesiqta Rabbati 46, Midrash Vayikra Raba Parashat Emor chapter 29a. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Rashi’s commentary to Machzor Vitri. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Tosafot on Rosh HaShana 8a, Rabbi Ovadiah ben David on Rambam *Sanctification* of the month 6:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. The missing 11 months 29.5 days of the first hypothetical year are automatically included. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Maimonides [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. 13th century AD. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. ELS = equidistant letter sequence. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. 1st century AD. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)