hline

The Former and Latter Rains

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)

hline

[I. Introduction 1](#_Toc158777817)

[II. The Spring Festivals are like the Fall Festivals 4](#_Toc158777818)

[III. Nisan is Like Tishri 7](#_Toc158777819)

[Passover 7](#_Toc158777820)

[Yom HaKippurim 7](#_Toc158777821)

[Heshvan 18 7](#_Toc158777822)

[Lag B’Omer 12](#_Toc158777823)

[Fast Days 14](#_Toc158777824)

[Purim 14](#_Toc158777825)

[Shushan Purim 14](#_Toc158777826)

[IV. The Aaroninc Benediction at the Kotel 15](#_Toc158777827)

[V. Talmudic Allusions 15](#_Toc158777828)

[VI. Midrashic Allusions 17](#_Toc158777829)

[VII. Bimodal Connections 17](#_Toc158777830)

[VIII. Tu B’Av 27](#_Toc158777831)

[IX. Selected Essays 30](#_Toc158777832)

[X. Bi-polarity of Torah 38](#_Toc158777833)

hline

# I. Introduction

In this paper I would like to explore the calendrical and theological relationships between the spring months and the fall months, between the spring festivals and the fall festivals. In eretz Israel there are the rains of fall and the rains of the spring.[[1]](#footnote-1) These are the literal former and latter rains. From an agricultural perspective it is important to understand this. Yet, there is a far more important concept that the Prophet is trying to convey. We have learned elsewhere that water is always a remez for *Torah*. And the Hebrew word for *rain*, geshem, is always a remez to the physical. It is therefore important that we understand that the Prophet wants us to understand the former and latter rains in relationship to the Torah.[[2]](#footnote-2)

I am doing this research as a result of the teaching I received from my teacher, His Eminence Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai. His Eminence explained that there is a bimodality in the months and in the festivals that they contain. Further, we can see from the triennial (two triennial cycles in a septennial cycle), or Shmita, Torah reading cycle, that this bimodality extends to our Torah reading cycle. Thus as there is a Tishri (fall) cycle and a Nisan (spring) cycle to our Torah reading, so these two correspond to the months, the festivals, and the two Messiahs. Thus the former and latter rains are also prophetic!

If we look, we can see there are actually two "seventh" months in the Jewish calendar, and the Jewish year can actually be looked as an alternating cycle of two Shabbat month cycles nestled compactly into a twelve month yearly calendar by means of a one month overlap at each end.

The Jewish year has two new years of creation, Nisan and Tishri, as per the Babylonian Talmud,[[3]](#footnote-3) the month of each of which is the seventh month counting from the other. Tishri is the seventh month from Nisan, and Nisan is the seventh month from Tishri.

As such we can conceive of the Jewish year as a thirteen month cycle comprised of two overlapping “Shabbat of months” cycles, (and each year similarly overlaps by a month with the adjacent year, so that the year can fit into a stable 12 month annual cycle.) Each cycle begins with a New Year and culminates in a seventh sabbatical festive month, which in turn marks the first month of the new cycle.

Perhaps a deeper way to view the cycles would be to see each of the two half-year periods as running from one solstice to the next, and containing a cycle of holidays (not in exactly the same form or order) that parallel each other in many significant respects, with each cycle being centred on a seven day festival at approximately the time of the equinox, beginning at the time of the full moon, that embodies and gives expression to the character of the cycle.

Each cycle centers on major seven-day festival around time of equinox. Some other commonalities of the two cycles may be as follows:

-Seven day festival culminates in completion/atzeret that is celebration of Torah

-Month preceding the festival (Elul or Adar) is month of transformation (Elul is teshuva and Purim/Adar is “ve’nahapoch hu” - turnaround)

-The first and tenth days of the festival month have special distinctions - (Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippurim – vs - New Year of Nisan and Shabbat HaGadol, on the 10th in its original year). The first day is a new year in both cases.

-Each cycle has apparent solstice-related observance: (1) 17th of Tammuz, leading to Tisha B’Av – time when light begins to decrease – Represents a beginning of galut/exile , and

(2) Chanukah – when the light begins to increase, represents an end of galut/exile.

Chazal, our Sages, have a dispute, recorded in the Gemara, as to whether the world was created in Nisan or in Tishri:

***Rosh HaShana 10b*** *R. Johanan said: Both of them [R. Meir and R. Eleazar] based their views on the same verse, viz., And it came to pass in the one and six hundredth year, in the first month, on the first day of the month. R. Meir reasoned: Seeing that the year was only one day old and it is still called a year, we can conclude that one day in a year is reckoned as a year. What says the other to this? — [He says that] if it were written, ‘In the six hundred and first year’, then it would be as you say. Seeing, however, that it is written, ‘In the one and six hundredth year’, the word ‘year’ refers to ‘six hundred’, and as for the word ‘one’, this means ‘the beginning of one’. And what is R. Eleazar's reason? — Because it is written, ‘In the first month on the first day of the month. Seeing that the month was only one day old and it is yet called ‘month’, we can conclude that one day in a month is reckoned as a month; and since one day in a month is reckoned as a month, thirty days in a year are reckoned as a year, a month being reckoned by its unit and a year by its unit.*

*(We infer from what has just been said that both [R. Meir and R. Eleazar] were of opinion that the world was created in Nisan.)*

*It has been taught: R. Eliezer says: In Tishri the world was created; in Tishri the Patriarchs were born; in Tishri the Patriarchs died; on Passover Isaac was born; on New Year Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were visited; on New Year Joseph went forth from prison*

We know from such disputes that both positions are correct and that we need to study to understand *how* they are correct. In this case, we will see that this dispute is resolved by a proper understanding of the bimodality of the months. As a short way of explaining this dispute; let me say that one is talking about the conception of the world and one is speaking of the actual birth.

From this dispute we can begin to get a glimmer of the fact that the spring and fall are two sides of the same coin. This paper will demonstrate the truth of the bimodality of the months.

Like a sphere with two poles, the Jewish year has two “heads” or primary points of reference, each of which is equally its beginning. Our annual journey through time is actually two journeys: A Tishri-to-Elul journey, and a Nisan-to-Adar journey. Every day on the Jewish calendar can be experienced on two different levels, ***for it simultaneously exists within these two contexts***.

Lets start by looking at *Yoel (Joel) 2:23* as translated by several different versions

NAS:

***Yoel (Joel) 2:23*** *So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the \Lord\ your God; For He has given you the early rain for {your} vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.*

NIV:

***Yoel (Joel) 2:23*** *Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in HaShem your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.*

KJV:

***Yoel (Joel) 2:23*** *Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in HaShem your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first [month].*

Strong’s defines FORMER RAIN as:

*4175 mowreh, mo-reh'; from 3384; an archer; also teacher or teaching; also the early rain (see 3138):-(early, former) rain.*

Strong’s defines MODERATELY as:

*6666 tsedaqah, tsed-aw-kaw'; from 6663; rightness (abstr.), subj. (rectitude), obj. (justice), mor. (virtue) or fig. (prosperity):- justice, moderately, right (-eous) (act, -ly, -ness).*

Strong’s defines LATTER RAINS as:

*4456 malqowsh, mal-koshe'; from 3953; the spring rain (comp. 3954); fig. eloquence:-latter rain.*

*-------------- Dictionary Trace ----------------*

*3953 laqash, law-kash'; a prim. root; to gather the after crop:-gather.*

So, the remez of this verse indicates that the teacher of righteousness will come in the autumn! Now lets note when these rains occur during the year, according to the Talmud:

***Ta'anith 5a*** *GEMARA. R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: Does then the former rain [fall] in Nisan? The former rain surely [falls] in Marcheshvan. It has been taught: Former rain, [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan.*

***Ta'anith 6a*** *Our Rabbis have taught: Former rain [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan. You say, Former rain in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan; perhaps it is otherwise, former rain in Tishri and latter rain in Iyar? The text [therefore] adds, in its due season.[[4]](#footnote-4)*

The Targum Pseudo Yonatan echoes this refrain:

**Devarim 11:14** then will I give you the rain of your land in its time, the early in Marcheshvan, and the latter in Nisan, that you may gather in your corn, your wine, and your oil.

The early rains come in Cheshvan and the latter rains come in Nisan. This conveys the order that we will use when we reference the various ideas that spring from this pasuk. Our Hakhamim have taught us that Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah were supposed to come fifty days after Succoth in the same way that Shavuot comes fifty days after Pesach, as we shall soon see. Thus we would expect to begin the Torah readings in Tishri and we would start the second cycle in Nisan.

The Torah records that the flood, in the days of Noah, began in Cheshvan (Marcheshvan):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 7:10-12*** *And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month--on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.*

It rained for forty days and forty nights, stopping on Kislev 28, the fourth day of Chanukah. I found it interesting that in our study titled BIMODAL we observed that the reading about the flood lined up with Lag B’Omer. Chazal teach that the flood began on Heshvan 17, and the first full day of flooding was Heshvan 18, which was called the second month at that time. This has a bimodal connection to Lag B’Omer, which took place on Iyar 1 (currently the second month) 8. In fact, all of the customs of Lag B’Omer are related to the flood.

\* \* \*

The two main “aspects” of the Torah (the aspect that uses the name “*Elokim*” and the aspect that uses the Tetragrammaton) parallel the two aspects of the dual calendar of the Torah – the months according to the lunar calendar and the seasons according to the solar calendar – and it is clear from the Torah itself that both these aspects combine to form the dual calendar.

The folowing table illustrates the symmetry of the months:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ohr Yashar**  **(Straight light)**  **Male**  **[External]** | **Ohr Chozer**  **(Curved / returning light)**  **Female**  **[Internal]** |
| **Nisan**  Shabbat HaChodesh  Fast of the firstborn  Shabbat HaGadol - Love of HaShem.  (Learn to clean outside [Chametz].)[[5]](#footnote-5)  Purim  Pesach  Pesach 7th day  Shavuot | **Tishri**  Rosh HaShana  Fast of Gedalia  Shabbat Shuva – Fear of HaShem.  (Learn to clean inside [Teshuva].)  Yom Kippurim  Succoth  Hoshana Rabba  Shemini Atzeret |
| **Iyar**  Pesach Sheni (2nd chance for Pesach)  Lag B’Omer (Iyar 18) | **Heshvan**  The flood (Heshvan 18) |
| **Sivan**  Shavuot (atzeret) | **Kislev**  Shemini Atzeret (Moved because of rain)  Chanukah (2nd chance for Succoth – moved because of war. Corresponds to Pesach Sheni.) |
| **Tammuz**  Fast of Tammuz 17 | **Tevet**  Fast of Tevet 10 |
| **Av**  Tisha B’Av    Tu B’Av | **Shevat**  Severe famine in jerusalem before the destruction of the First Temple. ***Jeremiah 32:9***  Tu B’Shevat |
| **Elul**  Yom HaKippurim (a day like Purim)  25th of Elul, Adam was created.  (Tu B’Ab is forty days earlier.)  Month preceding Succoth is month of  transformation (Elul is teshuva and Purim/Adar  is “ve’nahapoch hu” – turnaround Est. 9:1) | **Adar**  Purim  25th of Adar, Adam was conceived.  (Tu ’Shebat is forty days earlier.)  Month preceding Passover (Elul or Adar) is month of transformation (Elul is teshuva and Purim/Adar is “ve’nahapoch hu” – turnaround Est. 9:1) |

# II. The Spring Festivals are like the Fall Festivals

A Difference:

Pesach (Passover) is one long Yom Tov, and therefore does not require a new recitation of the full Hallel each and every day, whereas Succoth is eight different YamimTovim, each of which warrants a recitation of the full Hallel. The fact that the Musaf is identical on all seven days of Pesach, but changes each day of Succoth indicates this distinction.

The following charts graphically illustrate this relationship between the spring and the fall festivals:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tu B’Shevat Rosh HaShanah  (New Year) for trees.  (Beit Shammai said the proper day was the first of Shevat; Beit Hillel said the proper day was the 15th of Shevat.)  Holiday of seven species.  **30 days till Purim.** | Purim The bride-to-be is tested.  Begin cleaning leaven out of our house.  Eating and drinking are required.  10/30th of the year. The 5th of 12/13 months.  Holiday of wine.  **30 days till Pesach.** | Pesach 7 day feast  In the spring.  Read Psalms 66 on the second day of Pesach (diaspora).[[6]](#footnote-6)  The bride is chosen.  Requirements for eating matza the first day (after havdallah time).  Conclusion of the first triennial Torah cycle and the beginning of the second triennial cycle.  Same Mussaf each day.  Holiday of Matza and **four** questions, sons, cups.  **50 days till Shavuot.** | Shavuot (Atzeret)  The Torah is given on Mt. Sinai. We read the ten commandments.  The bride is made ready, by betrothal.  No food requirement. Dairy custom. | Pesach Sheni A second chance to celebrate Pesach.  A one day feast. |
| Physical renewal | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **Rosh HaShanah**  **(Yom Teruah)**  New Year for counting years.  First of Tishri.  Holiday of auspicious foods.  **10 days till Yom HaKippurim.** | **Yom HaKippurim**  (a day like Purim).  The bride is married.  Begin cleaning sin out of our lives.  Eating is a requirement.  (on the day before.)  10/30th of the month.  **5 days till Succoth.** | **Succoth**  7 day feast  In the fall.  Read Psalms 66 on the second day of Succoth (diaspora).  The marriage feast.  Requirements for eating in the Succah the first day (after havdallah time).  Conclusion of the second triennial Torah cycle and the beginning of the first triennial cycle.  Different Musaf each day.  Holiday of **four** species.  **8 days till Shemini Atzeret.** | Shemini Atzeret + Simchat Torah We rejoice in the Torah and finish Devarim (Deuteronomy) and start Bereshit (Genesis).  The bride rejoices.  No food requirement. | Chanukah A second chance to celebrate Succoth.  An eight days feast.  Holiday of pure olive oil. |
| Spiritual renewal | | | | |

Each cycle has apparent solstice-related observance:

(1) 17th of Tammuz, leading to Tisha B’Av – time when light begins to decrease – Represents a beginning of galut/exile , and

(2) Chanukah – when the light begins to increase, represents an end of galut/exile.

# III. Nisan is Like Tishri

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tekufah of Nisan (Vernal Equinox) **Nisan – The First Month** Ripening of grain | | | | | | | | | | |
| **1**  New Year for counting months.  The pur is cast.  The Mishkan and Temple start operating. | **10**  Sacrifice (Passover lamb) is selected.  Israelites enter the promised land.  Abraham and household are circumcised  Physical freedom begins.  Judgment of the firstborn.  Shabbat HaGadol – the Great Sabbath. We examine a lamb for blemishes. | **14-15**  **Passover**  Festival Sabbath  HaShem’s people enter protective abode.  Passover Seder.  Messiah dies.  Israel must eat matza.  Lulav is burned with bedikat chametz | **16**  Leviticus 22:26 - 23:44  Psalms 66 (diaspora). | **17** | **18**  Read *Shir HaShirim* and *Exodus*  *33:12 – 34:26*   Ezekiel 37:1-14  on the weekly Sabbath during Pesach | **19** | **20** | **21**  **7th day of Pesach**  Festival Sabbath  Exodus  13:17-15:26  (7th day)  Deuteronomy 14:22 - 16:17  (8th day Sabbath)  Deuteronomy 15:19 –16:17  (8th day) | **Iyar 18**  **Lag B’Omer**  Bow and arrow | **Sivan 6**  **Shavuot** Atzeret  Festival Sabbath  Deuteronomy 14:22 - 16:17  (2nd day Sabbath)  Deuteronomy 15:19 –16:17  (2nd day)  Torah was given  Large loaves waved.  Pilgrimage festival.  Read the book of *Ruth*  No distinctive practice for the people. |
| Passover Feast of Matza – the bread of affliction.  Israelites begin living in Succoth while traveling.  Pilgrimage festival.  First harvest (barley). Barley is waved.  Israel may eat only unleavened food. | | | | | | |
| Tekufah of Tishri (Autumn Equinox) **Tishri – The Seventh Month** Ripening of grapes and olives | | | | | | | | | | |
| **1-2**  Festival Sabbath  **Yom Teruah**.  New Year for counting years.  Judgment day.  Messiah, our Temple, comes! | **10**  Festival Sabbath Yom HaKippurim Sacrifice is (two goats) selected.  We return to the state we enjoyed in Eden.  Adam was circumcised when created.  Total Jubilee freedom begins.  Neilah – judgment complete.  On The Sabbath before Yom HaKippurim Shabbat Shuvah ("Sabbath of Repentance") | **15**  Festival Sabbath  **Succoth**  HaShem’s people enter protective abode.  Read Zechariah 14:1-21  Messiah is born.  Israel must live in Succah | **16**  Leviticus 22:26 - 23:44  Psalms 66  (diaspora) | **17** | **18**  Read *Kohelet* *Shemot 33:12 – 34:26*  Ezekiel 38:18 – 39:16  on the Sabbath during Succoth. | **19** | **20** | **21**  **Hoshana Rabbah** – The final judgement. | Heshvan 18 The first full day of Noach’s flood.  (Rainbow is coming) | **22**  Festival Sabbath  **Shemini Atzeret**  Deuteronomy 14:22 - 16:17  (Sabbath)  Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17  Simchat Torah  Reading of Torah is concluded and started again.  Torah scrolls are waved.  No distinctive practice. |
| **Succoth**  HaShem’s people live in Succoth for seven days at rest.  It is a mitzvah to feast in the Succah.  Pilgrimage festival.  Final harvest. Lulav and etrog are waved.  The world is judged for water  Israel must eat all of their meals in the Succah. | | | | | | |

The Talmud provides some insights on the connection between Pesach and Succoth:

*Succah 27a "... It is stated here (in the Parasha of succah) 'chamisha asar' (the fifteenth day of the month) and it is stated 'chamisha asar' in [the Parasha of] Pesach. Just as there [on Pesach], the first night is obligatory and the rest are non-obligatory, so too here [on Succoth], the first night is obligatory and the rest are non-obligatory."*

The Ran[[7]](#footnote-7) summarizes two prevalent views found among the Rishonim as to the exact obligation derived from Pesach:

1. to eat a minimum measure of bread in the succah on the first night;
2. to do so even in the event of rain.

The Sages derive that one must eat in the Succah on the first night through a gezerahshavvah, a textual comparison between the first night of Pesach, which occurs on the fifteenth of Nissan and upon which one is obligated to eat matza, and the first night of Succoth, which is celebrated on the fifteenth of Tishrei.

What do we learn from this comparison to the first night of Pesach? We might suggest that just as one *must* fulfill the mitzva of matza – that is, eating matza, on the first night of the seven days of Pesach, one similarly *must* fulfill the mitzva of Succah, dwelling in a Succah, on the first night of the seven days of Succoth. Alternatively, the *gemara* may be deriving something much more specific: Just as one must fulfill a mitzva of “eating”on the first night of Pesach, so too one must fulfill a mitzva of “eating” on the first night of Succoth. This second possibility is most intriguing. On the one hand, this obligation to eat may redefine the parameters of one’s obligation to dwell in the Succah on the first night, and, on the other hand, may even dictate that some of the laws that pertain to eating matza on the first night of Pesach must be observed on Succoth as well. The distinction between these readings of the gemarahas a number of halakhic ramifications.

For example, the Ran[[8]](#footnote-8) questions how much bread one must eat in the *Succah* on the first night of *Succoth*. He writes:

And regarding the first day of the festival of *Succoth*, we also learn that one is obligated to eat an amount that obligates eating in the *Succah*. For based on the law of Yom Tov, it would suffice to eat the quantity of an egg in a haphazard manner (*arai*) outside the *Succah*. And we learn also from the festival of *Pesach* that one is obligated to eat an amount that obligates eating in the *Succah.* It seems, therefore, that one is obligated to eat more than the amount of an egg.

Generally, as we shall learn, only one who eats an amount slightly more than a *ke-beitza* (the volume of an egg) must eat in the *Succah*. The Ran suggests that the *gezerah shavva* teaches that one must fulfill the mitzva of *Succah* on the first evening. Therefore, one must eat an amount which obligates him to eat in the *Succah,* more than a *ke-beitza*. The Ran then writes:

But there are those who say as follows: Since we learn from the festival of *Pesach*, we learn entirely from it. Just as in that case the size of an olive [is all that is necessary for fulfilling the mitzva], so too here the size of an olive [is all that is required]. And even though on the other days of the festival [of *Succoth*] the size of an olive is regarded as haphazard [eating], and it may be eaten outside a *Succah*, nevertheless on the first night, since Scripture established it as an obligation to eat in the *Succah*, it is regarded as a regular meal.

The Ran cites those who believe that one must only eat an amount equivalent to the size of a *kezayit*, an olive, in the Succahon the first night, similar to the amount of matza that one must eat on Pesach. He implies, however, that this gezerah shavva may also redefine the parameters of dwelling in the Succah on the first night.

Indeed, the Tur[[9]](#footnote-9) explains that just as one must only eat a *kezayit* of bread in the Succah on the first night, one may not eat a *kezayit* of bread outside of the Succah.

Once he eats in [the Succah] grain in the amount of an olive, he has fulfilled his obligation, even though the measure regarding [the prohibition] of eating outside a Succah is the amount of an egg. The first night is different, because the obligation is greater, so that even if he wishes to eat only the amount of an olive, he is forbidden to do so outside the Succah. Therefore, he fulfills there with also the obligation of Succah.

The Tur understands that not only is the mitzva the first night, fundamentally, a mitzva of “*akhila*” (eating), but that this itself defines eating a *kezayit* of bread as an *akhilat keva*, which must not be done outside of the Succah.

Interestingly, the Ritva,[[10]](#footnote-10) after citing the view obligating one to eat a *kezayit* of bread in the Succah on the first night, records the following:

However, I heard in the name of one of the great scholars of the generation in France, who would obligate one to sleep in the Succah on the first night of Succoth, even in the rain… as on the first night, the Scripture established that it is obligatory, from the gezerahshavvah equated the fifteenth [of Nissan to the] fifteenth, from Chag Ha-Matzot.

Clearly, this stringency implies that the Torah mandated “dwelling” in one’s Succah on the first night, and that the exemption of “falling rain” does not apply.

In addition, the Yerushalmi[[11]](#footnote-11) questions whether, just as one should refrain from eating on the day before Pesach in order to fulfill the mitzva of matza when one is hungry, one should similarly not eat on the day before Succoth so that one enter the festival while he is hungry. Tosafot[[12]](#footnote-12) and the Rosh[[13]](#footnote-13) cite this Yerushalmi, and the Or Zarua[[14]](#footnote-14) writes that one should act accordingly. The Maharil adds that one should not eat from the sixth hour onwards on ErevSuccoth, similar to ErevPesach. The Leket Yosher relates that his teacher, the Terumat Ha-Deshen, would not even sleep in the Succah on ErevSuccoth in order to ensure that he still desired sleeping in the Succah that evening!

R. Moshe Isserlis, in his commentary to the Tur, the Darkhei Moshe, cites the Maharil, and writes, “This seems to me to be a stringency without reason.” In his comments to the Shluchan Arukh,[[15]](#footnote-15) however, he writes that one should not eat during the day before Succoth from noon onwards. Some Acharonim[[16]](#footnote-16) rule that one need only refrain from eating bread from the tenth hour onwards. The Mishnah Berurah[[17]](#footnote-17) writes that the Acharonim concur that one need only refrain from eating from the tenth hour onwards, as we learn regarding *hilkhot Pesach*.[[18]](#footnote-18)

\* \* \*

Passover and Succoth parallel each other in several ways. For example, they are exactly six months apart, they always occur on the 15th of their respective months, and both commemorate the exodus from Egypt and its aftermath. In fact, they are the *only two* festivals to which the Torah refers to as "chag",[[19]](#footnote-19) or festival.

As we explore the connections between Pesach and Succoth, we come to an interesting pasuk:

***Shemot (Exodus) 13:20****And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.*

On the very first day of Pesach, at the end of Nisan 15, the Bne Israel camped at a place called Succoth. In this place they slept with their animals in their succoth. While in their succah, the people ate matza:

***Shemot (Exodus) 12:39****And they baked unleavened cakes (matzot) of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.*

Thus we understand that the command to celebrate the holyday of Succoth involves dwelling in a succah. Now this dwelling is explicitly commanded in the Torah:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:42-43****Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths;* ***43****that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am HaShem your God.*

Well, that is odd! On the first Passover, on Nisan 15, we slept in succoth and this forms the reason for dwelling in succoth – six months later on Succoth, on Tishri 15! This again shows the bimodality of the the calendar and is reflected in the juxtoposition of Pesach, where we dwelt in succoth, and Succoth where we ate or matzot in our succoth at a place called Succoth.

\* \* \*

While the Shulchan Aruch notes that 30 days before Pesach we inquire and expound about the festival, the building of the Succah is actually the last law recorded of the laws of Yom Kippur. Only after Yom Kippur is over do we begin building our Succah, four days before Succoth. Thus we understand that we begin building the succah immediately after Yom Kippur – on the tenth of Tishri, before we break the fast. Similarly, we select the Pesach lamb on the tenth day of Nisan, four days before Pesach.

\* \* \*

With Pesach rooted in our *past*, the Torah commands us to “remember” Pesach; but regarding Succoth, our future generations must “know” the holiday. It is knowledge that gives us the power and ability to mold our *future*.

\* \* \*

Another, interesting concept for further exploration, given the bipolarity of the Torah, is the relationship between Shabbat HaGadol ("The Great Sabbath") in Nisan as immediately preceding Pesach, and Shabbat Shuvah ("Sabbath of Repentance") in Tishri as immediately preceding Yom HaKippurim. It looks to me that there are a number of commonalities as well as basic distinctions between these two particular Shabbats. However, it appears that the major themes presented on these two Shabbats are intertwined. Chiefly, this Shabbat appears in the midst of physical cleansing of our homes, whilst Shabbat Shuvah appears in the midst of spiritual cleansing in our lives. However, the topic of "cleansing" and "preparation" for the festival permeates both Shabbats.

Rosh Chodesh (the new moon – the first day of) Elul, begins a forty day period of Teshuva, repentance. On Purim, Adar 14/15, we begin a time a repentance. The word “Yom HaKippurim” can be separated as: Yom Ha Ki Purim, which means “a day like Purim”. Even as the Jews began fasting, and repenting just before Passover, so do we repent in preparation for Passover in a manner similar to the repentance before Tishri.

In the Talmud, Shemini Atzeret is called *Atzeret shel Hag*, the Atzeret of Succoth, as opposed to Shavuot which is called Atzeret without a qualifier (Menachoth 65a). In fact, the Midrash (Shir HaShirim 7:2) takes the effort to explain why Shemini Atzeret isn't 50 days after Succoth, why it differs from Shavuot:

***Midrash Rabbah - Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) VII:4*** *Another explanation: HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THY FOOTSTEPS IN SANDALS (NE ‘ALIM): in two closings (ne'alim).[[20]](#footnote-20) R. Hana b. Hanina said: It is as if two traders went into a town together, and one of them said to the other: ' If we both offer our wares together in the town, we will bring down the price. So do you offer yours one week, and I will offer mine the next.’ R. Hananiah the son of R. Ibi said: It is written here, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THY FOOTSTEPS not in the sandal, but IN SANDALS. There are two closings: the closing of Passover and the closing of Tabernacles. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Israel: ‘You close before Me at Tabernacles, and I close before you at Passover. You close your work before Me at Tabernacles,[[21]](#footnote-21) and I open the heavens and cause winds to blow and bring up clouds and make rain fall and cause the sun to shine and make plants grow and ripen produce, and provide each one of you with a table set out with his needs, and each body according to its requirements. And I close [the heavens] before you at Passover,[[22]](#footnote-22) and you go out and reap and thresh and winnow and do all that is required in the field and find it rich in blessing.’ R. Yahoshua (Joshua) b. Levi said: By rights, the Eighth Day of Assembly should have followed Tabernacles after an interval of fifty days, as Pentecost follows Passover. But since at the Eighth Day of Assembly summer passes into autumn, the time is not suitable for traveling. [God was like] a king who had several married daughters, some living near by, while others were a long way away. One day they all came to visit their father the king. Said the king: 'Those who are living near by are able to travel at any time. But those who live at a distance are not able to travel at any time. So while they are all here with me, let us make one feast for all of them and rejoice with them.’ So with regard to Pentecost, which comes when winter is passing into summer, God says, ‘The season is fit for traveling.’ But the Eighth day of Assembly comes when summer is passing into autumn, and the roads are dusty and hard for walking; hence it is not separated by an interval of fifty days. Said the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘These are not days for traveling; so while they are here, let us make of all of them one festival and rejoice.’ Therefore Moses admonishes Israel, saying to them, On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly (Num. XXIX, 35). Thus we may say, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THY FOOTSTEPS IN NE’ ALIM.*

**Passover and Succoth both have a *second chance* to be celebrated.**

Iyar 15 is known as Pesach Sheni, the second Passover. This celebration is for those who were unclean, or on a trip, during Passover.

Succoth’s “second chance” is called Chanukah. The Israelites were too busy fighting the Syrians to stop for Succoth. They missed the celebration so much, that they celebrated it when they were through fighting: Kislev 25 – Tevet 2 or Tevet 3.

Ashkenazim read: Melachim alef (I Kings) 7:51 - 8:21, on the 2nd day of Succoth in the diaspora and on the first Shabbat of Chanukah for Yemenite Jews. This connects Succoth with the second chance to celebrate during Chanukah.

The sacrifices on Succoth are double the offerings of Pesach, except for the bulls and the goats:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| **Passover** | **2** bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **2** bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **2** bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **2** bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **2** bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **2** bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **2** bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| **Succoth** | **13** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **12** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **11** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **10** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **9** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **8** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. | **7** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. |

The Talmud records that there are four new years. Tishri is the new year for counting years and Nisan is the new year for kings.

***Rosh HaShana 2a*** *MISHNAH. THERE ARE FOUR NEW YEARS.[[23]](#footnote-23) ON THE FIRST OF NISAN[[24]](#footnote-24) IS NEW YEAR FOR KINGS[[25]](#footnote-25) AND FOR FESTIVALS.[[26]](#footnote-26) ON THE FIRST OF ELUL[[27]](#footnote-27) IS NEW YEAR FOR THE TITHE OF CATTLE.[[28]](#footnote-28) R. ELEAZAR AND R. SIMEON, HOWEVER, PLACE THIS ON THE FIRST OF TISHRI.[[29]](#footnote-29) ON THE FIRST OF TISHRI[[30]](#footnote-30) IS NEW YEAR FOR YEARS, FOR RELEASE AND JUBILEE YEARS,[[31]](#footnote-31) FOR PLANTATION[[32]](#footnote-32) AND FOR [TITHE OF] VEGETABLES.[[33]](#footnote-33) ON THE FIRST OF SHEVAT[[34]](#footnote-34) IS NEW YEAR FOR TREES,[[35]](#footnote-35) ACCORDING TO THE RULING OF BETH SHAMMAI; BETH HILLEL, HOWEVER, PLACE IT ON THE FIFTEENTH OF THAT MONTH*

## Lag B’Omer

Coming between Pesach and Shavuot (also called Atzeret), Lag B’Omer has a bimodal aspect when compared with Succoth and Shemini Atzeret.

To understand this aspect we need to understand how the symbols of Lag B’Omer are incorporated into the symbols of Succoth and Shemini Atzeret. Why did we choose these two festivals? Since Lag B’Omer occurs after Pesach, but before Shavuot, which is also called Atzeret, then we need to compare this to a comparable time period. This comparable time period is between Succoth (the only other seven day feast) and it’s Atzeret, Shemini Atzeret.

Now that we have the correct time period we need to review the Lag B’Omer symbols so that we will recognize their counterparts in Succoth and Shemini Atzeret. There are several customs that are a part of Lag B’Omer: Bows and arrows for the children, bonfires, burning clothes, and joy.

The bow (keshet) is a symbol of the rainbow after the mabul (flood).

The bonfires are a symbol of the Torah and of the refining of the earth at the end of days. This corresponds with the waters of the flood which are also likened to Torah.

The burning of clothes is a symbol of the conversion of our bodies to a higher level.

These Lag B’Omer customs are also the symbols of the feast of Succoth. During the festivities of Succoth, water is poured out on the altar in great joy as part of the Simchat Bait Hashoevah. Another part of Simchat Bait Hashoevah is the lighting of “the light of the world”. At the close of the first festival day they went down to the Court of the Women, and made great preparations there. There were golden candlesticks there with four golden bowls on the top of them. The candlesticks were fifty cubits high. Four ladders led up to each candlestick, and four youths, from the priestly families, went up holding in their hands jars of oil, twenty-four logs in capacity, which they poured into the bowls. They made wicks out of the worn-out garments of the priests, and with them they set the candlesticks alight, and there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light of the *beit hashoevah*.[[36]](#footnote-36) This is the only place other than Lag B’Omer, that I am aware of, where clothes are burned by Jews. These are the symbols of Lag B’Omer and Succoth.

Now we need to compare the symbols of Shemini Atzeret and Lag B’Omer. On Shemini Atzeret we rejoice with the written Torah. We make circuits around the bima and we sing and dance with the Torah scrolls.

Lag B’Omer is a time when we rejoice because of the oral Torah (Torah shebaal peh). It is interesting to note that the Talmud describes the impact of the plague that killed Hakham Akiba’s talmidim as "the world was desolate".[[37]](#footnote-37) Only when Hakham Akiba managed to locate and teach five outstanding Sages, in the south of Eretz Israel, was the oral Torah restored to the Jewish People. There is an important lesson in this account. Without oral Torah study the world is desolate. Once the oral Torah was taught to these five Sages, on Lag B’Omer, joy returned to the world on this day. Thus on Simchat Torah we rejoice with the written Torah and on Lag B’Omer we rejoice with the oral Torah.

It is also worth noting that Lag B’Omer always falls on the same day of the week as the first day of Succoth of the following year. Another interesting connection.

The last and greatest day of Succoth is called Hoshana Rabbah. This is the final day of judgment. All verdicts are final on this day. This bimodal aspect accords nicely with what the Talmud tells us about Rashbi.

***Succah 45b*** *Rashbi said, ‘I can discharge the whole world from judgment.’*

Now we know that the judgment of the mabul began on Lag B’Omer. (The entire sefira period is a period of judgment.[[38]](#footnote-38)) Thus we see that Lag B’Omer also carries with it an aspect of judgment. Further, the spiritual influences of Yom HaKippurim, and its judgment, are revealed on Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

The opening verses of Ephesians also shows an aspect of judgment.

***Ephesians 2:1-3*** *And you, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

This suggests that Lag B’Omer incorporates the symbols and the joy in the Temple during Succoth and the joy of Torah as found on Sinchat Torah. Thus we see that Lag B’Omer also has a bimodal aspect which helps us to understand its symbols and how these symbols are found in sefer Ephesians.

The water and the light we also see repeatedly in sefer Ephesians, which is an allusion to the bimodal aspect of the flood on Heshvan 18.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Spring** | **Fall** |
| Iyar 18  Lag B’Omer  Manna began to fall.[[39]](#footnote-39) | Heshvan 18  First full day of  The Flood (mabul)[[40]](#footnote-40) |
| The Ark was a pyramid | On Lag B’Omer we play with bows and arrows.How to Draw a Bow and Arrow - Really Easy Drawing Tutorial |

## Fast Days

From the observations we made In the study titled: BIMODAL, we found that the fast of the fourth month (Tammuz 17) lined up with the fast of the tenth month (Tevet 10).

\* \* \*

The following chart is intended to illustrate the times of preparation prior to the spring and the winter festivals. It is incomplete, but I hope to fill it in soon:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Adar | | | | | | |
| **1** |  | **7** |  | **14** | **15** |  |
| Begin to increase your joy. |  | Moses dies on his birthday.  The pious fast and repent on this day. |  | Purim Read the book of *Esther* | Shushan Purim Read the book of *Esther* | Some check their mezzuzot on Adar Sheni. |
| **Elul** | | | | | | |
| **1** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Begin forty day period of teshuva, repentance. |  | The pious visit their neighbors and seek forgiveness as they repent. |  |  | Sephardim begin selichot on the first or the 15th of Elul. | Some check their mezzuzot during Elul. |

# IV. The Aaroninc Benediction at the Kotel

Twice a year it happens: The Aaronic Benediction (priestly blessing).

It occurs on the two major holidays during Pesach (Passover) each spring and Succoth (The Feast of Tabernacles) in the fall.

Priests (who can trace their lineage back to the first high priest, Aaron) gather at the Wall, along with thousands who have traveled from all over the world to receive this special blessing.

It's called the Aaronic Blessing, because it dates back to the days of Moses and Aaron.

God spoke to Moses.....

"Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

'The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.'

So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”[[41]](#footnote-41)

# V. Talmudic Allusions

***Berachoth 35b*** *Our Rabbis taught: And thou shalt gather in thy corn.[[42]](#footnote-42) What is to be learnt from these words? Since it says, This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth,[[43]](#footnote-43) I might think that this injunction is to be taken literally. Therefore it says, ‘And thou shalt gather in thy corn’, which implies that you are to combine the study of them[[44]](#footnote-44) with a worldly occupation. This is the view of R. Ishmael. R. Simeon b. Yohai says: Is that possible? If a man ploughs in the ploughing season, and sows in the sowing season, and reaps in the reaping season, and threshes in the threshing season, and winnows in the season of wind, what is to become of the Torah? No; but when Israel perform the will of the Omnipresent, their work is performed by others, as it says. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks. etc.,[[45]](#footnote-45) and when Israel do not perform the will of the Omnipresent their work is carried out by themselves, as it says, And thou shalt gather in thy corn.[[46]](#footnote-46) Nor is this all, but the work of others also is done by them, as it says. And thou shalt serve thine enemy etc.[[47]](#footnote-47) Said Abaye: Many have followed the advice of Ishmael, and it has worked well; others have followed R. Simeon b. Yohai and it has not been successful. Raba said to the Rabbis: I would ask you not to appear before me during Nisan and Tishri[[48]](#footnote-48) so that you may not be anxious about your food supply during the rest of the year.*

***Shabbath 43b*** *R. Ashi said:[[49]](#footnote-49) Is it then taught, ‘in summer’ and ‘in winter’? Surely, it is stated, ‘in the sun because of the sun and in the rain because of the rain.’ [That means,] in the days of Nisan and Tishri,[[50]](#footnote-50) when there is sun, rain, and honey.*

***Rosh HaShana 19b*** *They sent [from Palestine] to Mar ‘Ukba to say: The Adar which precedes Nisan is always defective. R. Nahman raised an objection [from the following]: ‘For the fixing of two New Moons the Sabbath may be profaned,[[51]](#footnote-51) for those of Nisan and of Tishri’. Now if you say that [the Adar before Nisan] is sometimes full and sometimes defective, I can understand how occasions arise for profaning the Sabbath. But if it is always defective, why should they profane it?[[52]](#footnote-52) — Because it is a religious duty to sanctify [the New Moon] on the strength of actual observation.[[53]](#footnote-53) According to another version, R. Nahman said: We also have learnt: ‘For the fixing of two New Moons the Sabbath may be profaned, for those of Nisan and of Tishri’. Now if you say that the Adar which precedes Nisan is always defective, there is no difficulty; the reason why Sabbath may be profaned is because it is a religious duty to sanctify [the New Moon] on the strength of actual observation. But if you say that it is sometimes full and sometimes defective, why should [the Sabbath] be profaned? Let us prolong [the month] today and sanctify [the New Moon] to-morrow?[[54]](#footnote-54) — If the thirtieth day happens to be on Sabbath, that is actually what we do. Here, however, we are dealing with the case where the thirty-first day happens to fall on Sabbath [and we allow the Sabbath to be profaned because] it is a religious duty to sanctify on the strength of actual observation.[[55]](#footnote-55)*

***Rosh HaShana 21b*** *MISHNAH. FOR THE SAKE OF TWO MONTHS SABBATH MAY BE PROFANED,[[56]](#footnote-56) NAMELY, NISAN AND TISHRI, SINCE IN THEM MESSENGERS GO FORTH TO SYRIA AND IN THEM THE DATES OF THE FESTIVALS ARE FIXED.[[57]](#footnote-57) WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS STANDING THEY USED TO PROFANE SABBATH FOR ALL THE MONTHS, IN ORDER THAT THE SACRIFICE [OF NEW MOON] MIGHT BE OFFERED ON THE RIGHT DAY.[[58]](#footnote-58)*

**Avodah Zarah 10a** Said Rabina: Our Mishnah also proves this, for we learn,*[[59]](#footnote-59)* ‘The *first* of *Nisan* is *New* Year for reckoning [the reign of] kings*[[60]](#footnote-60)* and of *Festivals*,’ and to the question ‘The reign of kings’, what is the practical object of this *law*? R. Hisda replied: [It affects] the dating of documents.*[[61]](#footnote-61)* Now, the same Mishnah says. ‘The *first* of *Tishri* is *New* Year for [counting] years and *sabbatical* *cycles*’*[[62]](#footnote-62)* and when it was asked: ‘What practical significance has this ruling?’ R. Hisda [again] replied: [It affects the dating of] documents.*[[63]](#footnote-63)* [The question was then raised:] Is not this rule of dating documents self-contradictory?*[[64]](#footnote-64)* And the answer given was: ‘The *one* refers to *Jewish* kings, the other to kings of *Gentile* *nations* — the year of *Gentile* kings being counted from *Tishri*, and of *Jewish* kings from *Nisan*.’ Now, in the present *time* we count the years from *Tishri*; were we then to say that our Era is connected with the Shemot (*Exodus*) it is surely from *Nisan* that we ought to count.*[[65]](#footnote-65)* Does this not prove that our reckoning is based on the reign of the Greek kings [and not on the Shemot (*Exodus*)]? That indeed proves it.

# VI. Midrashic Allusions

***Midrash* Rabbah - Bereshit (Genesis) XXII:4** AND AT THE *END OF DAYS* IT CAME TO PASS (IV, 3). R. Eliezer and R. Yahoshua (Joshua) disagree. R. Eliezer said: The *world* was created in *Tishri*; R. Yahoshua (Joshua) said: In *Nisan*. He who says in *Tishri* holds that Abel lived from the *Festival[[66]](#footnote-66)* until *Chanukah*.*[[67]](#footnote-67)* He who says in *Nisan* holds that Abel lived from *Passover* until *Pentecost*. In either case, all agree that Abel was not in the *world* more than fifty days.*[[68]](#footnote-68)*

# VII. Bimodal Connections

This section was written by Menachem Leibtag. I have taken the liberty of editing and translating to bring out the bimodal aspects.

Parashat Emor is famous for its lengthy presentation of the feasts (the Jewish holidays). These same holidays are also described in the other books of Torah:

\* In Shemot (Exodus): Parashat Mishpatim & Parashat Ki-Tissa;

\* In Bamidbar (Numbers): Parashat Pinchas;

\* In Devarim (Deuteronomy): Parashat Re'ay.

Would it not have been more logical for the Torah to present all of the laws concerning the feasts together in one parsha?

BACKGROUND / A DOUBLE CALENDAR

Before we begin, a quick note regarding the Biblical calendar. The holidays in Torah are described in terms of both a solar and lunar calendar. The solar calendar is based on the 365 day cycle of the sun, and contains the four seasons of the agricultural year: the spring and fall equinox; the winter and summer solstice. The lunar calendar is based on the monthly cycle of the moon (roughly 29.5 days). However the precise day on which each month begins is determined by the Sanhedrin. These two calendars are correlated by the periodic addition of an extra month. Torah employs both the lunar and solar calendars in its description of the feasts. In Torah, we find two sets of feasts:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PILGRIMAGE FEAST**  Shemot (Exodus) 23:14-19  Shemot (Exodus) 34:18-26  Devarim (Deuteronomy)  16:1-17 | **DAYS OF JUDGEMENT** |
|  |  |
| **Hag HaMatza**  Feast of Unleavened Bread | **Rosh HaShana**  Feast of Trumpets |
| **Hag Shavuot**  Feast of Weeks | **Yom Kippur**  Day of Atonement |
| **Hag HaSuccoth**  Feast of Tabernacles | **Shemini Atzeret**  Eighth Assembly |

The pilgrimage festivals as a unit, are presented twice in Shemot (Exodus) and once in Devarim (Deuteronomy):

(1) In Parashat Mishpatim, ***Shemot (Exodus) 23:14-19***, before Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive the first tablets;

(2) In Parashat Ki-Tisa, ***Shemot (Exodus) 34:18-26***, when Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive the second tablets;

(3) In Parashat Re'ay, ***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1-17***, while describing the special laws of the site where the Mikdash is to be built.

In each of these three instances, the dates on which these pilgrimage festivals fall are described only by the agricultural time of year in which they are celebrated, i.e. the solar calendar:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PILGRIMAGE FEAST** | **TIME** |
|  |  |
| **Hag HaMatza**  Feast of Unleavened Bread | Spring |
| **Hag Shavuot**  Feast of Weeks | Summer |
| **Hag HaSuccoth**  Feast of Tabernacles | Fall |

In addition to their description by their agricultural date, each of these three portions focuses on the mitzva of making a pilgrimage to the central location where the Temple is located, on each of these holidays:

***Shemot (Exodus) 23:16-17*** *"Celebrate the Feast of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field. "Celebrate the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field. "Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign HaShem.*

***Shemot (Exodus) 34:22-23*** *"Celebrate the Feast of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign HaShem, the God of Israel.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1*** *Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover of HaShem your God, because in the month of Abib he brought you out of Egypt by night…*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16*** *Three times a year all your men must appear before HaShem your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before HaShem empty-handed:*

In contrast to these three portions, the description of the feasts in Vayikra (Leviticus) 23 and Bamidbar (Numbers) 28 and 29, is different in several ways:

1) They include both: The pilgrimage festivals and The Feasts of Tishri.

2) There is no mention of the mitzva of going up to the King.

3) The holidays in these two portions are presented according to the calendar, i.e. by the specific month and day when each holiday is to be celebrated.

At first glance, the details of the feasts in Emor and Pinchas appears to be quite different:

**Parashat Pinchas** (Bamidbar (Numbers) 25:10 - 30:1) focuses on one basic topic - the details of the additional sacrifices which are offered on each holiday.

**Parashat Emor, *Vayikra (Leviticus) 21:1 - 24:23***, focuses on different details, such as the prohibition of doing work and more specific laws such as the Omer sacrifice, the two giant loaves of bread, and the four species etc. However, as closer examination shows, these two portions actually complement each other.

In this portion, the description of each holiday includes the very general statement of: "*and you shall bring an offering to God*", Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:8,25,27,36, without specifying precisely what that offering is supposed to be.

**Parashat Pinchas** simply fills in that detail, for it explains exactly what that Musaf is, the special additional sacrifices of each holiday:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| FEAST | **MUSSAF**  Parashat Pinchas ***Bamidbar (Numbers) 25:10 - 30:1*** |
|  |  |
| **Hag HaMatza**  Feast of Unleavened Bread  15th day of the 1st month | 2 bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| **Hag Shavuot**  Feast of Weeks  50 days after Hag HaMatza | 2 bulls,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| **Rosh HaShana**  Feast of Trumpets  1st day of the 7th month | 1 bull,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| **Yom Kippur**  Day of Atonement  10th day of the 7th month | 1 bull,1 ram.  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| **Hag HaSuccoth**  Feast of Tabernacles  15th day of the 7th month  Day 1 | **13** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| Day 2 | **12** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| Day 3 | **11** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| Day 4 | **10** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| Day 5 | **9** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| Day 6 | **8** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| Day 7 | **7** bulls, 2 rams,  14 male lambs,  1 male goat. |
| **Shemini Atzeret**  Eighth Assembly  On the Eighth day | 1 bull, 1 ram,  7 male lambs,  1 male goat. |

[Parashat Pinchas should actually be titled - "Daily and Additional Festival Offerings" - as it details the daily offering and the additional festival offerings brought throughout the course of the entire year, including Sabbath and Rosh Chodesh, the New Moon! We read from this portion on every feast, and we quote from it in our Mussaf prayers.]

Unlike all the other portions, only Parashat Emor describes the unique mitzvah of each holiday:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FEAST** | **MITZVOT**  Emor:  *Vayikra (Leviticus) 21:1 - 24:23* |
|  |  |
| **Hag HaMatza**  Feast of Unleavened Bread | The special Omer offering of barely |
| **Hag Shavuot**  Feast of Weeks | The special offering of leavened loaves of wheat bread |
| **Rosh HaShana**  Feast of Trumpets | Blowing the shofar |
| **Yom Kippur**  Day of Atonement | Afflict your souls |
| **Hag HaSuccoth**  Feast of Tabernacles | Sitting in the Succah. and the four species (Lulav and etrog etc. |

Based on this analysis, we can summarize as follows:

Sifre Shemot (Exodus) and Devarim (Deuteronomy) present the pilgrimage festivals in relation to their common purpose as a time for going up to the King during the critical times of the agricultural (solar) year.

Parashat **Pinchas** (***Bamidbar (Numbers) 25:10 - 30:1***) details the specific korban Mussaf of each feast, according to the lunar date of the holidays.

Parashat **Emor** (***Shemot (Exodus) 21:1 - 24:23***) describes the unique mitzva of each feast (using both lunar and solar).

DOUBLE DATING

Parashat Emor, like Pinchas, presents the feasts in order of their lunar dates (month/day). Nevertheless, Emor is different! As the following table shows, when introducing the special mitzva to be performed in the Mikdash on each of the pilgrimage festivals, the agricultural season (i.e. the solar date) is mentioned as well!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FEAST** | **MITZVOT**  Emor:  *Vayikra (Leviticus) 21:1 - 24:23* | **SEASON** |
|  |  |  |
| **Hag HaMatza**  Feast of Unleavened Bread | The special Omer offering of barely | ***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:10*** *"When you enter the Land... and harvest the grain* |
| **Hag Shavuot**  Feast of Weeks | The special leavened, wheat, loaves of bread. | ***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:16*** *"... count seven weeks, then... you shall bring a new flour offering..."* |
| **Rosh HaShana**  Feast of Trumpets | Blowing the shofar |  |
| **Yom Kippur**  Day of Atonement | Afflict your souls |  |
| **Hag HaSuccoth**  Feast of Tabernacles | Waving the four species: Lulav and etrog. | ***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:39-40*** *"… when you gather the produce of the land... and you shall take on the first day a goodly fruit...".* |

In fact, a careful examination of the division of portion in Parashat Emor shows that the agricultural aspect of each of the pilgrimage festivals is presented in a manner entirely independent from the presentation of the feast according to its lunar date! For example, the mitzva to bring the omer offering and the two loaves of bread are presented in a separate 'dibur' which makes no mention at all of the lunar date!:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:9-22*** *HaShem said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before HaShem so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to HaShem a lamb a year old without defect, Together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil--an offering made to HaShem by fire, a pleasing aroma--and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. "'From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to HaShem. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to HaShem. Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to HaShem, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings--an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to HaShem. Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. The priest is to wave the two lambs before HaShem as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to HaShem for the priest. On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. "'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am HaShem your God.'"*

Similarly, the mitzva of the four species, *Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:39-41*, is presented independent of the mitzva to sit in the Succah, *Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:33-38****:***

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:33-38*** *HaShem said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month HaShem's Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present offerings made to HaShem by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to HaShem by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work. "'These are HaShem's appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to HaShem by fire--the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. These offerings are in addition to those for HaShem's Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to HaShem.*

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:39-41*** *"'So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to HaShem for seven days; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before HaShem your God for seven days. Celebrate this as a festival to HaShem for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month.*

[Compare these two portions carefully!]

Why is the structure of Emor so complicated? Shouldn't the Torah employ one standard set of dates and explain all the mitzvot of each feast together?

A DOUBLE 'HEADER'

The introductory pasukim of this parsha may allude to a possible answer to these questions. Note how the opening two pasukim seem to contradict each other:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:1-3*** *HaShem said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of HaShem, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. "'There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to HaShem.*

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:4-6*** *"'These are HaShem's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: HaShem's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month HaShem's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.*

Should Sabbath be considered one of the appointed times? If yes, then why does pasuk four repeat the header *"These are 'HaShem's appointed times"*? If not, why is it mentioned at all in the first three pasukim? Furthermore, there appears to be two types of solemn assemblies in Parashat Emor.

(1) Appointed times - those that Bnei Yisrael declare as solemn assemblies:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:2*** *"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of HaShem, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.*

(2) Sabbath - which God has set aside to be a solemn assemblies. Read 23:3 carefully!:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:3*** *"'There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to HaShem.*

Note the repetition of the header:"These are HaShem's appointed times" in:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:4*** *"'These are HaShem's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times:*

This distinction, and the repetition of the header indicates that the first three pasukim can be considered a 'double' header: appointed times and Sabbaths. This 'double header' reflects the double nature of this entire parsha. Note the pattern which repeats itself. Each holiday is:

1) Introduced by its lunar date;

2) Followed by a statement that this appointed time is a solemn rehearsal assembly;

3) The prohibition to do work;

4) The mitzva to offer a sacrifice to HaShem.

The following chart summarizes this pattern, noting the pasukim in which these details are described:

**The Appointed Times - Solemn Assemblies**

**Opening pasuk:**

*"These are 'HaShem's appointed times*..." (23:4):

**The Feast of Unleavened Bread**:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:6-8*** *On the fifteenth day of that month HaShem's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days present an offering made to HaShem by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.'"*

**The Feast of Weeks**: (note that this holiday lacks a lunar date and the phrase "an offering made by fire...")

**The Feast of Trumpets**:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:25*** *Do no regular work, but present an offering made to HaShem by fire.'"*

**The Day of Atonement**:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:27-28*** *"The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to HaShem by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before HaShem your God.*

**The Feast of Tabernacles** and **Shemini Atzeret**:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:33-36*** *HaShem said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month HaShem's Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present offerings made to HaShem by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to HaShem by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work.*

**Closing pasuk:**

"These are the feasts of HaShem which you shall proclaim..." ***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:37***

Intertwined in this parsha, we find an additional aspect of each feast which relates to the concept of a High Sabbath (the second header mentioned above). In relation to the pilgrimage festivals, the High Sabbath aspect relates to the special agricultural mitzva of each holiday! [the omer, the two loaves of bread, and the four species] Furthermore, these mitzvot always conclude with the phrase:

*"This is a law for all time in all your settlements, throughout the ages".* [See 23:14,21,31,41]

The following list summarizes this second pattern in which the word Sabbath or High Sabbath (Shabbaton) is mentioned in relation to each holiday:

**The Feast of Unleavened Bread:**

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:11*** *He is to wave the sheaf before HaShem so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath.*

**The Feast of Weeks:**

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:16*** *Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to HaShem.*

**The Feast of Trumpets:**

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:24*** *"Say to the Israelites: 'On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a High Sabbath* (Shabbaton)*, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts.*

**The Day of Atonement:**

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:32*** *It is a Sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your Sabbath."*

**The Feast of Tabernacles:**

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:39*** *"'So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to HaShem for seven days; the first day is a High Sabbath* (Shabbaton)*, and the eighth day also is a High Sabbath* (Shabbaton)*.*

**Shemini Atzeret:**

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:39*** *"'So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to HaShem for seven days; the first day is a High Sabbath* (Shabbaton)*, and the eighth day also is a High Sabbath* (Shabbaton)*.*

Note also that within this parsha, the Sabbath and agricultural aspect is introduced by its own "dibur":

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:9-14*** *HaShem said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before HaShem so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to HaShem a lamb a year old without defect, Together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil--an offering made to HaShem by fire, a pleasing aroma--and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.*

This analysis could explain the Sages' understanding that here, Sabbath refers to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as opposed to the Sadducees who argued that it actually refers to first Sabbath after Passover. The Sages' interpretation may reflect a deeper understanding of the entire parsha based on the above analysis.

The most explicit example of this 'double pattern' is found in the pasukim that describe Succoth. Note how the Torah first introduces this holiday as a *solemn assembly* by its lunar date:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:35-36*** *"On the fifteenth day of the seventh month Feast Succoth seven days: on the first day there shall be a solemn assembly... and on the eighth day a solemn assembly..."*

As this is the last appointed time (Feast), the next pasuk summarizes all of the feasts:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:37-38*** *"'These are HaShem's appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to HaShem by fire--the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. These offerings are in addition to those for HaShem's Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to HaShem.*

Then, in a very abrupt fashion, after summarizing the appointed times, the Torah returns to Succoth again, but now calls it a Shabbaton, a high Sabbath:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:39*** *"'So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to HaShem for seven days; the first day is a High Sabbath* (Shabbaton)*, and the eighth day also is a High Sabbath* (Shabbaton)*.*

We have shown that the entire parsha exhibits a double nature, as reflected in its 'double header' and its use of both the solar and lunar calendars to describe the feasts. What is the meaning of this double structure?

THE AGRICULTURAL ASPECT

As mentioned above, Parashat Emor, *Vayikra (Leviticus) 21:1 - 24:23,* details a special agriculturally related mitzva for each of the pilgrimage festivals:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PILGRIMAGE FEAST** | **AGRICULTURAL**  **EVENT** |
|  |  |
| **Hag HaMatza**  Feast of Unleavened Bread | The Omer offering: from the first BARLEY harvest |
| **Hag Shavuot**  Feast of Weeks | The two leavened loaves from the first WHEAT harvest |
| **Hag HaSuccoth**  Feast of Tabernacles | Taking the four species: the palm, etrog, willow and myrtle |

These mitzvot relate directly to the agricultural seasons in Eretz Yisrael in which these holidays fall. In the spring, barley is the first grain crop to become ripe. During the next seven weeks, the wheat crop ripens and is harvested. As this is the only time of the year when wheat grows in Eretz Israel, these seven weeks are indeed a critical time, for the grain which will be consumed during the entire year is harvested during this very short time period.

Similarly, the four species, which are brought to the Temple on Succoth, also relate to the agricultural importance of the fruit harvest at this time of the year, and the need for water in the forthcoming rainy season.

Specifically, when the Torah relates to these agricultural mitzvot, these holidays are referred to as Shabbaton, High Sabbaths. The reason is quite simple. Shabbat relates to the *days* of the week, and thus, to a natural cycle caused by the sun. So too, the agricultural seasons of the year. They also relate to the natural cycle of the sun, the 365 day cycle of the earth revolving around the sun that causes the seasons.

As these holidays are celebrated during the most critical times of the agricultural year, the Torah commands us to gather at this time of the year in the Beit HaMikdash and offer special offerings from our harvest. Instead of relating these phenomena of nature to a pantheon of gods, as the Canaanite people did, we must recognize that it is HaShem's hand behind nature and therefore, we must thank Him for our harvest.

This challenge, to find HaShem while working and living within the framework of nature, is reflected in the blessing we make over bread: "*Who brings forth bread from the earth*". Even though we perform 99% of work in the process of making read (e.g. sowing, reaping, winnowing, grinding, kneading, baking etc.), we thank HaShem as though He had given us bread directly from the ground!

THE HISTORICAL HOLIDAYS

Even though the agricultural calendar alone provides sufficient reason to celebrate these holidays, the Torah finds historical significance in these seasonal holidays as well. The spring commemorates our redemption from Egypt. The grain harvest coincides with the time of the giving of the Torah. During the fruit harvest we recall our supernatural existence in the desert under the "the clouds of HaShem's glory" in the desert. Just as the Torah employs to the **solar** date of the feasts in relation to the agricultural mitzvot, the Torah employs the **lunar** date of these feasts in relation to their historical significance. For example, when describing the Feast of Unleavened Bread which commemorates the historical event of the exodus from Egypt, the lunar date of the fifteenth day of the first month is used (23:6).

Similarly, when the Torah refers to Succoth as a solemn assembly, it employs solely the lunar date and emphasizes the mitzva of sitting in the Succah, in commemoration of our dwelling in Succoth during our journey through the desert (see 23:34-35,43). One could suggest that specifically the lunar calendar is used in relation to the historical aspect, for we count the **months** in commemoration of our Shemot (Exodus) from Egypt, the most momentous event in our national history:

"HaChodesh hazeh lachem Rosh Chodesh..." This month (in which you are leaving Egypt) will be for you the FIRST month... see Shemot (Exodus) 12:1-3.

REDEMPTION IN THE SPRING

From the repeated emphasis in Torah that we celebrate our redemption from Egypt in the early spring (*Shemot (Exodus) 13:2-4* and *Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1-2*), it would appear that it was not incidental that the Exodus took place at that time. Rather, HaShem desired that our national birth take place at the same time of year when the growth cycle of nature recommences. [For a similar reason, it would appear that HaShem desired that Bnei Yisrael enter the Promised Land in the first month of the spring.[[69]](#footnote-69)

One could suggest that the celebration of our national redemption specifically in the spring emphasizes its proper meaning. Despite its importance, our freedom attained at the exodus from Egypt should be understood as only the initial stage of our national spiritual 'growth', just as the spring marks only the initial stage in the growth process of nature! Just as the blossoming of nature in the spring leads to the grain harvest in the early summer and fruit harvest in the late summer, so to our national freedom must lead to the achievement of higher goals in our national history.

Thus, counting seven weeks from the Feast of Unleavened Bread until the Feast of Weeks (counting the omer) emphasizes that the Feast of Weeks (commemorating the giving of the Torah) should be considered the culmination of the process that began at the exodus from Egypt, just as the grain harvest is the culmination of its growth process that began in the spring.

[One would expect that this historical aspect of Shavuot, i.e. the giving of the Torah, should also be mentioned in Parashat Emor. For some reason, it is not.]

By combining the two calendars, the Torah teaches us that during the critical times of the agricultural year we must not only thank HaShem for His providence over nature but we must also thank Him for His providence over our history. In a polytheistic society, these various attributes were divided among many gods. In an atheistic society, man fails to see HaShem in either. The double nature of the feasts emphasizes this tenet that HaShem is not only the Force behind nature, but He also guides the history of nations.

Man must recognize HaShem’s providence in all realms of his daily life; by recognizing His hand in the unfolding of our national history, and through perceiving His greatness in the creation of nature as well.

Why do we have a New Year in Nisan and a New Year in Tishri? How Can Nisan be "the beginning of months" and Tishri be the beginning of the year, in the seventh month? Having two new years is not accidental; rather it grows out of a notion which underlies the Biblical calendar, the notion of two kinds of time: historical and cyclic. Man creates historical time; cyclic time is created by HaShem’s recurring patterns.

Nisan marks the beginning of the festival season and the beginning of months. It occurs in the spring, the beginning of the physical renewal of nature. Here we begin our physical renewal with our liberation from the bondage of Egypt, and here we begin the pilgrimage festival cycle with Pesach.

Tishri marks the beginning of our spiritual renewal. Here we pray for inclusion in the book of life and we celebrate the beginning of HaShem’s Kingship and the remembrance of the righteous for resurrection. This spiritual rebirth occurs at the twilight of the agricultural season, and the twilight of our physical freedom, which began at Pesach.

The Biblical calendar follows the cyclic time of the moon, but is regularly intercalated by man to keep the festivals in their seasons.

These two types of time are both used in the Torah: Physical time, which marks agricultural progress, and cyclic time, which is marked by recurring patterns. Cyclic time is centered in the High Holiday festival cycle. Physical, agricultural, time is found in the three pilgrimage festivals. Succoth, the Feast of Tabernacles, is the end of the pilgrimage cycle, and yet, by its placement in the year, also brings to a close the High Holiday cycle. Seemingly, then Succoth comes at the end of both kinds of time. Shemini Atzeret concludes Succoth and, therefore, concludes both cycles.

\* \* \*

In Pesach we look at a new beginning a new age so to speak from the age of slavery and bondage to the age of nobility and kingship.

(When we sit for Pesach do we not put cushions on the chairs and eat in the manner of Kings? And if we eat Pesach with Mashiach at the wedding feast, will we not be as consorts of the King?)

Now in Rosh HaShanah we look at also a new age, from chaos to an age of order and kingship and sovereignty which Adam had in Gan Eden.

Marqos starts his Mishnah with an incredible statement: the "Resheet" of the "gospel" of Yeshua the Mashiach the Chief Hakham and King (Son of G-d).[[70]](#footnote-70)

Well let me see, we know from etymology that gospel comes from the Old English G-d's spell - or the story of the acts of HaShem and thus this idea that a gospel is a biography of Mashiach, which a great error. We know from Hakham Shaul that G-d is going to the judge the world by the "Gospel" so out goes through the window this idea of a "biography" and yes it remains no other solution but Torah. Having said this what kind of Torah?

If we take this Gospel as chronicling Tishri with the Yamim Ha-Noraim as the time when Yochanan preached repentance as well as the month of Elul, then Tishri is very much a festival of Oral Torah, whilst Pesach, and specially, Shavuot is of Written Torah. Why? Well to start up with the emblem of Rosh HaShanah or Yom Teruah is the shofar or horn. The Written Torah tells us to blow the horn but it does not tell us how to do it or what sounds to make.

The blowing of the horn with different notes alludes then to the Oral Torah being blown through the horn specially when we blow - Ye-Shu-ach. Yeshua = Salvation I just hyphenated it because it uses three notes with the middle one prolonged a bit more than the beginning note and the last note.

So, Yeshua is blown though the shofar a symbol of the Akeida. In fact the Akeida has much more significance in the Oral Torah than in the written one. In the Oral Torah we have the sacrifice of Yitzchak, and the horn which symbolizes the sacrifice of Yitzchak also sings of the sacrifice of Yeshua. And it is these two sacrifices which in my opinion constitute the foundation of the Oral Torah. Therefore a Gospel is the Oral Torah.

***Marqos (Mark) 1:1*** *Ha-Reshit of the Torah Shebe Al Peh (or Masorah) of Yeshua Ha-Mashiach the Rosh le Yisrael.*

Do you see a gap between Marqos (Mark) 1:1 and Marqos (Mark) 1:2?

***Marqos (Mark) 1:1*** *The beginning of the gospel of Yeshua Mashiach, the Son of God;*

***Marqos (Mark) 1:2*** *As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

The gap in Marqos (Mark) is very similar to the gap we see between Bereshit (Genesis) 1:1 and Bereshit (Genesis) 1:2

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:1*** *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:2*** *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

Like there was a world created or universe created which must have been good, but all of a sudden turns into chaos.

If we return now to Marqos 1:1 we find a Reshit of the Gospel but it is not explained like suddenly everything is descended into a chaos no?

The missing link between vv. 1 & 2 of Marqos is given to us in Pirqe Avot 1:1

There was an oral tradition received from Har Sinai from Moshe until the times of the Bet Din Gadol, but the Scribes and Pharisees ended up controlling the Bet Din Gadol and creating a split with many of the apostate Kohanim which held to a different Halachah that of SOLA SCRIPTURA (scripture only) or Sadducees, and then we had the true Kohanim in the Araba with also some strange puritanical Halachah - so Mashiach comes to an age where the Halachah is being sorted out.

And so we are at with Marqos (Mark) v.2 and this ordering of the universe of the Halachah, very much like in Bereshit (Genesis) we have an ordering in the seven days of Creation. O.K. so, like in Bereshit, we have here in Marqos a creation, a catastrophe, and a reordering and shaping of this Halachah. And these three verses in Marqos are like the Index or introduction of the Book. But back to Yom Teruah the notes of the Shofar also are in a way a restructuring of the world through sound representing the restructuring and reordering of the world and of the Halachah.

This is why I said that Yom Teruah is a festival celebrating the Halachah as we have it ordered to day. there will be further reordering of the Halachah in the Messianic Age, but basically it is in this age that the Halachah is being sorted out. In fact over the last two centuries there has been a tremendous publishing and joining and codifying of Halachah which is being culminated with the publication of thousands of Responsas and ancient documents in CD ROM by the Jewish University of Bar Ilan.

\* \* \*

The following chart illustrates the connections between Tu B’Shevat, in the winter, and Tu B’Av in the summer.

# VIII. Tu B’Av

The Jewish months are twelve in number but in Torah reality they are viewed as a structure of six pairs that are back to back with each other.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Physical - Female** | **Spiritual – Male** |
| Nisan | Tishre |
| Iyar | Heshvan |
| Sivan | Kislev |
| Tammuz | Tevet |
| Av | Shevat |
| Elul | Adar |

From the above table we can see that Av and Shevat are paired. Thus the minor festivals that occur on the full moon of the fifteenth of Av (Tu B’Av) and on the full moon of the fifteenth of Shevat (Tu B’Shevat) have a natural alignment. The following table details the festivals as contained within the lower sefirot:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Lower Seven Sefirot of “Festival Man” | | |
| Gevurah (Power)  left arm/hand  **Rosh HaShanah, Yom HaKippurim, Succoth** |  | Chesed (Lovingkindness)  right arm/hand  **Passover** |
|  | Tiferet (Harmony)  Torso  **Shavuot** |  |
| Hod (Splendor)  left kidney/gonad/leg  **Chanukah** |  | Netzach (Eternity)  right kidney/gonad/leg  **Purim** |
|  | Yesod (Foundation-Channel)  reproductive organs  **Tu B'Av** / **Tu B’Shevat** |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | Malchut (Kingdom)  Mouth of reproductive channel,  Microcosm revealing the sum total of the sefirot from above.  **To be revealed in the Messianic Era.** |  |

Notice that Tu B'Av and Tu B’Shevat correspond to the reproductive center of the “Festival Man” keeping in mind that the”festival” structure of time is both male and female as that is the original divine form (see our study on Adam).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Soul mate is chosen by Heaven.**  The Talmud[[71]](#footnote-71) states: Forty days before the formation of the embryo the heavens declare that this soul will be wed to this soul.  Forty days before the 25th of Elul is Tu B'Ab. [That is, since the 1st of Tishri is the day of the creation of Humanity / Adam, by counting backward we find that 25th of Elul is the day of creation of the universe.][[72]](#footnote-72) | **40 days** | Embryo is formed |
|  |  |  |
| Ab 15  Tu B’Ab  **Women choose husbands.**  The day of creation according to Rebbe Eliezer.  It was on the Tu B'Av before creation that Israel became a thought in the divine Mind and Israel was first destined to receive the Torah (the Second Tablets) on Yom HaKippurim.\* This is the reason that the tribes were permitted to intermarry on that day and the day was designated for marital union. | **40 days** | Elul 25  (Creation of the heavens and earth.  First opinion) |
|  |  |  |
| Shebat 15  Tu B’Shebat  **New Year for Trees[[73]](#footnote-73)**  The day of creation according to Rebbe Yehoshua.  We already know that ***man*** is likened to a tree.[[74]](#footnote-74)  Therefore, even though we don't hold that Nisan is the month of creation, we designate Tu B’Shevat as the New Year for the Trees in that the first blossom is the embryonic stage of what will blossom into fruit and flower and fill the world with beauty. | **40 days** | Adar 25  (Creation of the heavens and earth.  Second opinion) |
| \* Rabbi Arthur Waskow's comment: Although I see that Reb Zvi Elimelekh wishes to connect the two wedding days and thus connect the "pre-creation creation" with the Torah of Israel, it seems to me that the connection between Tu B'Av and 25th of Elul (creation of the universe) makes it more apt to the text and the dating to say that forty days before the Creation, HaShem decreed the joining of HaShem’s Own Self to the Universe. Thus TU B’Av, which is really Y"H B'Av, celebrated the very first covenant of all, and that is why we celebrate covenantings on that day.  Now -- WHY does the spark of the Creation began on that day?  BECAUSE THAT IS "WHEN" Y"H (the real way of spelling fifteen) ENTERS (the month of) AV -- "ALEPH-BET."  THAT IS, THE ENTIRE CREATIVE PROCESS BEGINS, THE GREAT TZIMTZUM HAPPENS, WHEN YAH ENTERS THE ALEPH-BET. THAT'S WHY CREATION BEGINS WITH A "BET", BERESHIT: BECAUSE YAH GOES FAR ENOUGH INTO THE ALEPH-BET TO GET TO "BET," (WHICH UNLIKE Aleph HAS A SOUND, AND ALSO AS THE 2nd IN THE SERIES IS NECESSARY TO MAKE IT A SERIES; BOTH ARE CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF THE EMERGENCE OF A UNIVERSE), AND THAT'S WHEN THE SPARK IS STRUCK. | | |

Tu B'Shevat is mystically parallel to Tu B'Av, the fifteenth day of the Summer month of Av. Tu B'Av is forty days before the twenty-fifth of Elul, the date of the beginning of the creation of the world (which is five days prior to Rosh HaShanah). The Talmud, at the end of tractate Taanit, suggests that Tu B’Av represents the 'subconscious' glimmer of love that led to the act of creation. The Baalei HaTosefot, in tractate Rosh HaShanah 27b, say that on Rosh HaShanah, the 'thought' of creating humanity entered the Creator's consciousness. The actual Creation of humanity took place six months later, on the first of the month of Nisan.

Tu B’Shevat is forty days before the twenty-fifth of Adar. According to the Baalei HaTosefot, the twenty-fifth of Adar would be the first day of creation of the world, as it is five days before the first of Nisan. Tu B'Shevat would thus be the first glimmer of love before the act of creation. According to Jewish law, it is the day that new sap begins to stir and flow within the fruit trees of the land of Israel. It is the first glimmer of the new fruits that will blossom in Nisan. It is the first glimmer of the chesed that will nourish us in the coming year.

# IX. Selected Essays

Issue #6: The Mysterious Golden Calf

by Rabbi Pinchas Winston.

Version Date: July 20, 2000

The episode of the golden calf is difficult for a few basic reasons. First of all, how could the Jewish people participate in so grave a sin so close in time to the giving of the Torah. Secondly, how could they commit such a transgression at the foot of Har Sinai? Even, according to the Midrash (and Kabbalah) which states that most Jews did not participate in the actual sin itself, how could they remain idle and allow the Erev Rav to profane the holy name of HaShem without reacting in some way?

Equally disquieting is Rashi’s “pshat” explanation of the events leading up to the catastrophe, which must be quoted in entirety:

The people saw that Moshe delayed to return from the mountain, the people (ha-umm always denotes Erev Rav) gathered against Aharon and said to him, “Get up and make us a god to go before us, because we don’t know what happened to this man Moshe who took us up from Egypt!” (Shemot 32:1)

When Moshe went up the mountain he told them that he would return forty days later during the first six hours of the day. They assumed that the day he ascended (7th of Sivan) was to be included in this number (making his return the 16th of Tammuz before noon). In fact, he had said, “after forty days” -- forty days together with its night (that precedes it). Regarding the day he went up, its night was not part of it, since he ascended the morning of the seventh of Sivan. Therefore, the fortieth day fell on the seventeenth of Tammuz. On the sixteenth day of Tammuz, Satan came and threw the world into confusion giving it the appearance of darkness, gloom, and disorder so people should say, “Certainly Moshe is dead, and that is why confusion has come into the world!” He said, “Yes! Moshe is dead, for six hours has already come and he has not returned!” (Rashi)

First of all, says Rashi, it was a simple miscalculation that led to such catastrophic results! What got the Erev Rav up and running was the fact that the people had misunderstood Moshe’s expected time of arrival and seemingly panicked. Second of all, maybe the whole miscalculation was the result of another reason, that reason being the confusion and darkness created by the Satan the day before! There is only one question: WHICH Satan, and WHAT confusion?

This is pshat?

To answer these questions meaningfully, it is important to understand the following information, which will take some time to explain.

There is a very famous disagreement in the Talmud that defies understanding. The argument is between Rebi Yehoshua and Rebi Eliezer, and the point of disagreement is the actual month of creation[[75]](#footnote-75). According to the Rebi Yehoshua, creation (actually the sixth day of creation, the day on which man was created occurred in the month of Nisan; according to Rebi Eliezer, the month of Tishre (the twenty-fifth day of Elul would be the actual first day of creation).

First of all, how could such an important point be forgotten, and so soon in history? Second of all, one can assume that Rosh Hashanah has been in Tishre for an long time; Moshe came down on the first Yom Kippur on the tenth day of Tishre, so how could Rebi Yehoshua think as he does, and stand so strongly behind his opinion. In the realm of *Pshat*, it is a question without an answer.

However, in the realm of Kabbalah, the answer is very elegant, and, the starting point is knowing that both opinions can be considered right, when you consider who is doing the arguing – Rebi Eliezer, a student from the School of Shammai, and Rebi Yehoshua, a student of the School of Hillel. As is well known, the School of Shammai tended to be strict in law, and therefore represents a more “*Gevurot*” approach, and, the School of Hillel tended to be more lenient – a more *Chesed*-oriented approach. This knowledge will play an important role in understanding how such a disagreement can exist in the first place.

Having said this, we can now approach the problem on a deeper level. Even though the Torah recounts the beginning of creation as being from the moment “*Bereshit*” was first uttered, the truth is, that only refers to *physical* creation as know it. Yes, creation came about as “something-from-nothing” (*yaish m’ayin*), but, there were many stages of creating along the way from the Original Will to create, and, the physical world within which we presently find ourselves.

In fact, even though time began with the word *Bereshit*, that too is a relative explanation. Compared to what came before the first day of creation, time as we are used to it began only then. However, there was a sense of time before this moment as well, and, the Kabbalists speak about the year that preceded Year One of our history, just like we can speak of roots hidden away in the ground from the entire tree has grown.

The dates are all there, fifteenth day of Nisan (Pesach), sixth day of Sivan (Shavuot), ninth day of Av (Tisha B’Av), etc., just the events have changed. They are pre-creation events, the spiritual roots of all that will happen throughout the six millennia of history. They are events that must be understood if one is to make sense of history, and such Rashi’s as the one quoted above. First, though, another introduction.

Concepts such as gravity can be expressed in words, that is, conceptually, or, as a mathematical formulae. The difference might be that, as words, all that can be deduced is the effect of this natural force. However, as a formula, not only can the effect of gravity be predicted and calculated, but, the “how” of gravity can also be understood. It works the same way, *l’havdil*, with G-d’s names as well, specifically the Tetragrammaton Name: *yud-heh-vav-heh*.

As a Name, the *Shem Havayah* (as it is called) has but one spelling, and alludes to the revelation of G-d that comes about a result of supernatural occurrences, and Divine acts of mercy. However, when Kabbalah wishes to expand an idea, and reveal its inner essence, it does this with the concept of “*milui*,” which literally means, “filling.” When this is done with the *Shem Hovayah*, “then there are four spellings of the Divine Name, and each one indicates a different level of light capable of different functions. The four derivations are as follows – from most sublime to least sublime (the numerical value of a group of letters follows in brackets):

yud-vav-dalet (20) -- heh-yud (15) – vav-yud-vav (22) – heh-yud (15) = 72

yud-vav-dalet (20) -- heh-heh (10) – vav-aleph-vav (13) – heh-heh (10) = 63

yud-vav-dalet (20) -- heh-aleph (6) – vav-aleph-vav (13) – heh-aleph (6) = 45

yud-vav-dalet (20) -- heh-yud (15) – vav-yud-vav (22) – heh-yud (15) = 52

\*This name only has nine letters to symbolize its incompleteness until Mashiach comes.

In Sha'arei HaK'domos (Book of Introductions), the Arizal goes to great length to show how these names, their derivations, and mutations are Kabbalistic representations tracing the path of G-d's holy and sublime light as it made its way down from total spirituality to the creation of physical creation. In the Zohar, the first verses of the Creation Story are also an expression of the very same idea, and not just a "story."

One of the most unfathomable ideas is that one light can be filtered (constricted) and "adjusted" in countless ways to produce every last detail of the physical world, with all of its innumerable facets and details. The "general" system of emanation-and-constriction is the Four Names above. And, the totals of each of the Names (72, 63, 45, and 52) can be viewed as gematriot, or, as a measure of time during which the light "emanated," or, "withdrew" (constricted).

This is the information necessary to resolve the question of the disagreement regarding the beginning of creation, and, eventually, the questions surrounding the account of the golden calf.

For example, the First Emanation of light is said to have lasted 72 "days" (bearing in mind that the quality of time before physical creation was different than it has been since physical creation began). If one counts from the 25th day of Adar (the day on which "creation" began according to Rebi Yehoshua) 72 "days," the result is the sixth day of Sivan -- the day on which G-d spoke to the Jewish people and gave the Ten Commandments 2,449 years later (2448/1313 BCE).

Hence, the very day that Moshe ascended the mountain to receive the rest of the Torah, the seventh day of Sivan, so, too, was it a day before creation of the pulling up of the light of G-d. For, on that day began the period of 63 "days," which, according to Kabbalistic tradition, represented the withdrawing of the light.

The actual withdrawal took place in three stages: forty days, fourteen days, and nine days. Again, counting forty days from the seventh of Sivan, one arrives at the seventeen day of Tammuz, the day on which the golden calf was built. Now, recall Rashi's previously confounding words:

"On the sixteenth day of Tammuz, Satan came and threw the world into confusion giving it the appearance of darkness, gloom, and disorder ' -- perfectly coinciding with the end of the first stage of the withdrawal of G-d's light! However one wants to phrase it, the concept is the same: pre-creation darkness gave rise to post-creation darkness! And not just then, but in EVERY generation. This is why the Tablets were broken that day, and why Shivah Esrai b'Tammuz is a day of infamy in the Jewish calendar, a fast day for the generations until Mashiach's arrival, and the beginning of the famous "Three Weeks" Jews observe with trepidation every summer.

Fourteen days forward one arrives at what would have been Rosh Chodesh Av, pre-creation, the day on which, post-creation, the "Three Weeks" begin and Jews minimize physical pleasures and risks (such as legal cases). It is during this period, Kabbalah tells us, that the "keilim" -- the pre-Sefirot Sefirot -- "broke" on the way to making a physical creation that could support the concept of a free-will.

Nine days further into the pre-creation year, and it is Tisha B'Av, the day on which the spies came back and spoke their evil report on Eretz Yisrael (2449/1312 BCE), condemning the Jewish nation to thirty-nine extra years of exile in the Sinai Desert. It was also the day on which both Temples were later destroyed, first by the Babylonians (3338/423 BCE), and later, by the Romans (3830/70 CE). The exile from Spain is said to have begun on Tisha B'Av in the year 1492, and the previously unimaginable Holocaust of the twentieth century as well.

Who knows how many other terrible disasters have befallen the Jewish people on the ninth day of Av, hitherto unknown to historians -- because of the darkness that descended on pre-creation creation? The spies left on their journey to view the Holy Land during a period of inherent spiritual darkness, virtually dooming their mission before they even left!

How many other "missions" have failed because of the intrinsic spiritual danger of this 63-day period of spiritual withdrawal?

However, once the sixty-three days ended, the Divine Will determined that it was time for tikkun, and the rectification that is always associated with the light of "Forty-Five" begun. This corresponds in the post-creation year to the period of spiritual re-building that spills over into the month of "Elul," which, the rabbis say, is an acronym for "Ani L'dodi v'dodi lee" (aleph-lamed-vav-lamed): "I am for my Beloved, and my Beloved is for Me".[[76]](#footnote-76) It is the time of year that G-d descends toward us to make teshuva easier.

The day at which the light of "Forty-Five" leaves us is the twenty-fifth day of Elul -- the day on which Rebi Eliezer said physical creation began, exactly 180 days (72+63+45) since the twenty-fifth day of Adar, the day that Rebi Yehoshua said was the first day of creation.

Hence, though, according to pshat only one opinion can be considered correct, according to Kabbalah, BOTH opinions are right. On the 25th day of pre-creation Adar, the holy light of Ain Sof first emanated along its way to eventually make physical creation, on the 25th day of Elul. And, the Kabbalists point out, the numerical value of the word "chesed" ("kindness") is also equal to 72, which is why the first light of "72" is also called "Ohr HaChesed" -- the "Light of Chesed."

As the Talmud points, the trait of Hillel and his students was the trait of Chesed, loving-kindness. The trait of Shammai and his students was Gevurah -- Strength -- the "light" that is associated with tzimtzum -- "constriction," one of the key elements in making physical creation possible.

The argument between Rebi Yehoshua and Rebi Eliezer was not about the first day of physical creation, but, about what is called the "first day" of creation. For Rebi Yehoshua, a student of Hillel and Chesed viewed the first emanation of light -- the Ohr HaChesed -- the original act of kindness willed to create a world that could eventually give rise to the creation of man, free-will, and the right to the World-to-Come, as the first day of creation. Rebi Eliezer, on the other hand, a man whose heart and mind better related to tzimtzum says not so: creation is what results after the light has been filtered and constricted to form this elaborate and awesome physical universe.

Thus, through the lens of Kabbalah, the previously misunderstood disagreement of Rebi Yehoshua and Rebi Eliezer is resolved. And, along the way, we have come to understand a very difficult Rashi, a problematic historical event, and, the spiritual challenges facing each and every generation.

Elegant, was it not?

**CHOL HAMOED PESSACH: "THESE BONES WILL LIVE!"**

By Rabbi Ari Kahn

The Talmud in Megillah teaches:

"Rav Huna said in the name of Rav Shesheth: On the Sabbath of Chol HaMoed, on both Pesach and Succoth we read from scripture "V’ata R’ay" (Shemot 33). The Haftorah on Pesach, "The Dry Bones" (Yechezkel 37) and on Succoth "The day of the arrival of Gog" (Yechezkel 38)" (Megillah 31a)

The passage in the Talmud discusses the appropriate readings for the various Festivals. Generally the text which is read has an intrinsic connection with the day, but in this case no connection is apparent. Over a thousand years ago, this question was asked of Rav Hai Gaon, the leading scholar of his generation. He responded that he was not aware of any intrinsic connection between the scripture read in the Haftorah and these holidays, but continued:

"I have a tradition from the Sages that Resurrection will take place in Nisan, and victory over Gog and Magog, will take place in Tishri; therefore in Nissan we read of the dry bones (which will live) in the Haftorah, and in Tishri we read of the battle of Gog" (Tur Oruch Haim section 490, see Otzar Hagaonim Meggilah pg 64)

This tradition, that resurrection is to take place in Nisan, is the key to a number of passages in the Talmud.

It has been taught: R. Eliezer says: In Tishri the world was created; in Tishri the Patriarchs were born; in Tishri the Patriarchs died; on Passover Isaac was born; on New Year Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were visited; on New Year, Joseph went forth from prison (Talmud - Rosh HaShana 11a) on New Year the bondage of our ancestors in Egypt ceased; in Nisan they were redeemed and in Nisan they will be redeemed in the time to come. R. Yahoshua (Joshua) says: In Nisan the world was created; in Nisan the Patriarchs were born; in Nisan the Patriarchs died; on Passover Isaac was born; on New Year Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were visited; on New Year Joseph went forth from prison; on New Year the bondage of our ancestors ceased in Egypt; and in Nisan they will be redeemed in time to come. (Rosh Hashanah 10b-11a)

In this passage we find that two of the great Tannaim, Rabbis Eliezer and Yehoshua, argue not only about biblical chronology but also about eschatology. At the root of this disagreement is the intricate relationship of history and destiny in the view of these great sages. Days have a personality or a charisma of their own, just as people do; therefore the understanding of the past allows us to better understand the future. Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua have a fundamental argument regarding when the world came into being, and their differences are interrelated with the question of how the End of Days will shape up.

Tishri is a month of judgment, while Nisan is a month of miracles, as is indicated by its very name ("Nissan", perhaps from the root "nes", miracle). In this context, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua differ over the very nature of existence: Is our life defined primarily by justice or mercy? Tosefot, in their comments to the passage in Tractate Rosh Hashanah, point out that actually both aspects are accurate representations of our existence: Rabbi Eliezer focuses on the thought of creation which came into existence in Tishri, while Rabbi Yehoshua focuses on the actual Creation which took place in Nisan. It is interesting to note that Jewish law reflects the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, as is evidenced by a relatively obscure law: Birchat Hachama, a blessing on the sun which may be made every twenty-eight years when the sun is in the exact alignment it was at the moment of creation, is pronounced in Nisan[[77]](#footnote-77).

If creation indeed took place in Nisan, thereby establishing the law in accordance with Rabbi Yehoshua, then we may conclude that Redemption will also take place in Nisan, as per Rabbi Yehoshua. This is interesting in and of itself, but does not seem connected with our original question regarding Resurrection. The connection is only brought out by an additional passage:

This matter is disputed by Tannaim: R. Eliezer said: if Israel repent, they will be redeemed; if not, they will not be redeemed. R. Yahoshua (Joshua) said to him, if they do not repent, will they not be redeemed! But the Holy One, blessed be He, will set up a king over them, whose decrees shall be as cruel as Haman's, whereby Israel shall engage in repentance, and he will thus bring them back to the right path. Another [Baraitha] taught: R. Eliezer said: if Israel repent, they will be redeemed, as it is written, Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. R. Yahoshua (Joshua) said to him, But is it not written, ye have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money? Ye have sold yourselves for naught, for idolatry; and ye shall be redeemed without money — without repentance and good deeds. R. Eliezer retorted to R. Yahoshua (Joshua), But is it not written, Return unto me, and I will return unto you? R. Yahoshua (Joshua) rejoined — But is it not written, For I am master over you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion? R. Eliezer replied, But it is written, in returning and rest shall ye be saved. R. Yahoshua (Joshua) replied, But is it not written, Thus saith the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despises, to him whom the nations abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, (Talmud - Sanhedrin 98a) Melachim (Kings) shall see and arise, princes also shall worship? R. Eliezer countered, But is it not written, if thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me? R. Yahoshua (Joshua) answered, But it is elsewhere written, And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times and a half’ and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. At this R. Eliezer remained silent. (Sanhedrin 97b-98a)

Again, Rabbi Eliezer’s view of the world is based on merit, on judgment and justice. Redemption is possible only if the Jews deserve it, if they repent. In its conclusion, the Talmud teaches that according to Rabbi Yehoshua, Redemption is unconditional; his statement that G-d would bring a wicked tyrant to persecute us was Rabbi Yehoshua’s understanding of Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion (The Jerusalem Talmud Ta’anith 1:1, reports that it was Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion, and not Rabbi Yehoshua’s, that G-d would bring a wicked tyrant on the Jews if they do not repent on their own). In the end of the passage Rabbi Eliezer is silenced by the arguments of Rabbi Yehoshua. Apparently both agree that Redemption will come sooner or later, but Redemption will inevitably come (the Ramban clearly states that in conclusion Rabbi Eliezer concedes to Rabbi Yehoshua, as is indicated by his "silence". See "Sefer HaGeulah" Kitvei Ramban Volume 1 page 277).

Juxtaposing these two Talmudic teachings allows us to draw conclusions regarding the sages’ debate: In Tractate Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua argue as to when Creation took place and when the final Redemption will come. If these two arguments are connected, the passage in Tractate Sanhedrin is highly instructive. The argument regarding Redemption, ends with the acquiescence of Rabbi Eliezer, which is consistent with our understanding of the passage in Rosh Hashanah, where the law is also established in accordance with the view of Rabbi Yehoshua. Tosafot’s teaching, which reconciles the two positions by identifying each with a "different" Creation, may be applied to both passages equally: There is no fundamental argument, rather, one passage refers to the idea of Creation while the other refers to the actual Creation.

In other words, do we consider the beginning of the process, or are we concerned with the end result? Rabbi Eliezer focused on the beginning of the process of Creation; therefore he speaks of Tishri, which is the time of Creation in thought, long before anything existed in reality. Similarly, Rabbi Eliezer, when considering Redemption, spoke of the upheaval which will lead to spiritual renaissance. This is the beginning of the process of Redemption. On the other hand, Rabbi Yehoshua focused on the end of the process, the actual Creation. The tradition referred to by Rav Hai Gaon, that resurrection will take place in Nisan, refers to the end of the process of redemption, resurrection.

Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion finds its own expression in the Talmud: The Talmud only uses the phrase "Atchalta d’Geula -"Beginning of the redemption" in one place-

"War is also considered the beginning of the redemption".[[78]](#footnote-78)

Rabbi Eliezer, who looked at the beginning of the process of Creation, considered the beginning of the redemptive process as well: The Haftorah for Chol HaMoed Succoth describes the apocalyptic battle between Gog and Magog ("Armageddon" in English), the beginning of the process of redemption. This epic battle, which Israel is destined to be swept into if they do not repent in due course, is to take place in Tishri, the month in which Succoth is celebrated. Here, then, is the link with the Haftorah which we sought. It is the link between Tishri and the Atchalta d’Geula which Rabbi Eliezer illuminated.

The association of resurrection with Nisan has a number of expressions and implications. One of the teachings which both Rabbis agreed on was the birth of Yitzchak on Pesach. Yitzchak is the first biblical figure who is linked with resurrection. One Midrash describes the connection in the following terms: When Yitzchak was tied down to the altar at the Akeida,

The angels began to cry and their tears fell on the blade, the knife rose up to the neck of Yitzchak, for he (Avraham) could not control it. His (Yitzchak’s) soul departed him. G-d called Michael (the angel) and said "Why are you standing there? Do not allow him to slaughter him" Immediately Michael called out "Avraham, Avraham" …he let go (of the knife) and his soul returned, he (Yitzchak) stood on his feet and pronounced the blessing "Blessed is he who restores life to the dead" (Baruch michayei maytim) (Otzar Midrashim page 146)

According to this Midrash, the first one to utter the blessing on restoration of life was Yitzchak, when his own life was restored. This idea is also consistent with a second teaching. We are taught that the first three blessings of the Amidah are called "Avot". While the other elements of the Amidah vary depending on the day, these three blessings are constants. The first of these blessings, which speaks of G-d’s chesed, is "Magen Avraham", associated with Avraham and the spiritual realm so inseparably associated with him. The second blessing is "Michayei HaMaytim," and is similarly related to Yitzchak. The second blessing starts with "Ata gibor," gevurah being the spiritual attribute associated with Yitzchak and the one which is preserved and expressed three times a day by Jews for millennia. The second blessing of the Amidah is instructive in other ways:

"You are eternally mighty my Lord, the resuscitator of the dead are you; abundantly able to save …"

In the winter the phrase which follows is:

"He makes the wind blow and the rain descend, He sustains the living with kindness"

In Israel, in the summer months the subsequent phrase reads :

"Bring down the dew! He sustains the living with kindness"

The difference between these two phrases seems obvious, the distinction being in the object of our prayer, either rain or dew. There is, however, a more subtle difference. The prayer said in the winter is "He makes the wind blow and the rain (geshem) descend, He sustains the living with kindness". There are some who have a custom of saying Gashem (kamatz, instead of segol). The significance of the punctuation goes way beyond the grammatical: "Geshem" is the form of the word which would appear in the middle of a sentence, whereas "Gashem" indicates the end of the sentence. The alternative readings would indicate whether the second half of the blessing modifies the first, or stands alone. Geshem , rather than Gashem, would indicate that the kindness which is bestowed is the rain itself. The phrase used in the summer is "Moreed hatal," the word tal (dew) punctuated with a kamatz. "Dew" is the end of the sentence, as opposed to a later appearance in the weekday Amidah where the word tal, with a patach, is used in the middle of the sentence.

If the term "Bring down the dew!" is the end of the sentence, then it must modify what immediately preceded it; "You are eternally mighty my Lord, the resuscitator of the dead are you; abundantly able to save: Bring down the dew!" Dew is directly connected with resurrection. But what is the nature of this connection? In numerous places in Talmud, Midrash, and Zohar, we see that dew is the catalyst which brings about the Resurrection!

"Dew - tal will be used in the future by the Holy One Blessed be He to bring about Resurrection" (Chagigah 12b)

"After each of the ten Commandments (the people died when G-d spoke) so (G-d) brought dew on them which will be used in the future to resurrect man, and they came back to life" (Shabbat 88b)

"How do we know that Resurrection will only take place via dew?…(Yerushalmi Berachot 5:2)

"The dead (bones) which Yechezkel brought back to life-- dew from heaven descended upon them." (Pirke d Rebbi Eliezer chapter33)

"Dew is a symbol of resurrection" (Tanchuma Toldot section 19)

By means of that dew all will rise from the dust, as it says, "for thy dew is as the dew of lights" (Is. XXVI, 19), these being the supernal lights through which the Almighty will in future pour forth life upon the world. (Zohar, Bereshit, 130b)

Said R. Hiya: ‘And what is more, from the words, "Thy dead ones will live" (Isa. XXVI, 19), it is evident that not only will there be a new creation, but that the very bodies which were dead will rise, for one bone in the body remains intact, not decaying in the earth, and on the Resurrection Day the Holy One will soften it and make it like leaven in dough, and it will rise and expand on all sides, and the whole body and all its members will be formed from it, and then the Holy One will put spirit into it.’ Said R. Eleazar: ‘Assuredly so. And the bone will be softened by the dew, as it says: "Thy dead ones shall live... for thy dew is the dew of plants" (Ibid.).’ (Zohar, Shemot, 28b)

We would expect that the second blessing of the Amidah, the one connected with Yitzchak, the blessing which concludes "Blessed is G-d who brings the dead to life", would naturally make reference to the final Resurrection. If so, when we say "Bring the dew!" our intention should be "Bring the resurrection!"

The prayer for rain is said only in the winter. On Pesach, we begin to ask for tal. At the time of our redemption from Egypt, the time of the birth of Yitzchak, we say this blessing with anticipation of the complete Redemption, the end of the Redemption: Resurrection. This is the full circle of the second blessing of the Amidah and the link between the month of Nissan, the birth of Yitzchak, the Shemot (Exodus) and the result of the Redemption which Rabbi Yehoshua sought to draw in the passage in Tractate Rosh HaShanah.

We started out by noting that different days have different personalities. We are taught that we place an egg on the Seder plate in mourning for the Temple’s destruction. (Mishna Brura 473:23) The Rama states that the reason for eating eggs at the Seder is that the first day of Pesach always falls on the same day of the week as the Ninth of Av (476:2, see Michaber 428:3). This teaching is not merely informing us about a quirk in the calendar; it describes an intrinsic relationship which may seem strange at first glance. How is the day of redemption related to the day of destruction? Both days possess the same charisma or personality. In one, the potential was realized, hence we have Pesach. In the other, the potential was not realized, hence the Ninth of Av. In a similar vein, we are taught that on the day the Temple was destroyed the Messiah will be born (Aggadot Bereshit, Buber edition section 68, see the disputation of the Ramban). In other words, the day of the destruction is also the day of hope for future redemption. For this reason the Prophet Zechariah said:

Thus says the Lord of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall become times of joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts to the house of Judah; ... (Zechariah 8:19)

The fast of the 5th month is what we refer to as the Ninth of Av, Av being the 5th month. This day will become a time of celebration with the coming of the Messiah. Rav Tzadok haKohen of Lublin made a very brief but important comment on this idea, explaining that when the Messiah comes the Ninth of Av will indeed become a holiday like Pesach and Succoth-- a seven-day festival ending on the Fifteenth of Av (Pri Zaddik, Devarim 20b).

This idea needs to be explained. We are taught in the Mishna that the happiest times of the year were the Fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur:

R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: there never were in Israel greater days of joy than the fifteenth of Av and the day of atonement. On these days the daughters of Jerusalem used to walk out in white garments which they borrowed in order not to put to shame any one who had none... The daughters of Jerusalem came out and danced in the vineyards exclaiming at the same time, young man, lift up thine eyes and see what thou chooses for thyself. Do not set thine eyes on beauty but set thine eyes on [good] family. Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that fears the lord, she shall be praised. (Mishna Ta’anith 4:8).

Yom Kippur is a solemn day; why was it considered joyful? On this day, during the time of the Beit HaMikdash, the people saw the Kohen Gadol exit the Holy of Holies safely. They witnessed an absolute indication of their total exoneration before G-d. Their joy was therefore understandable. But what is the significance of the Fifteenth of Av? Tosafot in Ta’anith 30b cites a bizarre Midrash:

R. Levi said: On every eve of the ninth of Av Moses used to send a herald throughout the camp and announce, ‘Go out to dig graves’; and they used to go out and dig graves in which they slept. On the morrow he sent out a herald to announce, ‘Arise and separate the dead from the living.’ They would then stand up and find themselves in round figures 15,000 short of 600,000. In the last of the forty years, they acted similarly and found themselves in undiminished numerical strength. They said, ‘It appears that we erred in our calculation’; so they acted similarly on the nights of the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th. When the moon was full they said, ‘It seems that the Holy One, blessed be He, has annulled that decree from us all’; so they proceeded to make [the fifteenth] a holiday. (Midrash Rabbah - Eicha (Lamentations) Prologue XXXIII)

In the desert, as a result of the sin of the spies which took place on the 9th of Av, the entire generation was to die. Each year for the next forty years the people would dig graves and lie in them on the Ninth of Av. In the morning the town crier would say "The living are to separate (get up)", leaving the dead behind. In the 40th year no one died. The people assumed that they had erred in the counting, and the following day must be the Ninth, so they entered the graves again. The following morning again no one had died. They repeated this procedure until the 15th of the month, at which point, seeing the full moon, they realized that the decree was over.

My understanding of the Midrash, and the teaching of Rav Tzadok, is as follows: The Ninth of Av has the same potential as Pesach. Instead of realizing its potential it became a symbol of destruction and failure of the Jewish people. The Ninth of Av will one day become a holiday commemorating the coming of the Messiah who is born on that day. The last day of this holiday will be the Fifteenth of Av, the day when the Jews arise from the grave, confident of life, realizing that the decree of death is over, forever.

If the first day of Pesach is parallel to Tisha B’Av, perhaps the Fifteenth of Av may be paralleled with the Seventh Day of Pesach. On the Seventh Day of Pesach, the Jews stood between the Sea and an army of Egyptians. They thought there was no hope; they thought they were dead. But G-d performed a miracle and turned the water into dry land, thereby saving them from certain death. On the Fifteenth of Av, the Jews left their graves, and witnessed G-d’s mercy.

When the Jews left Egypt they had three goals: 1. To leave Egypt, 2. To receive the Torah 3. To build the Temple. In the Ramban’s Introduction to the Book of Shemot he explains that Shemot is the book of redemption, but the book can not end after leaving Egypt nor after the receiving of the Torah. The book does not end until the Mishkan-Temple is built. Pesach marks the celebration of leaving Egypt, but it can not be seen in a vacuum. On Pesach we immediately begin counting the days until the Torah is given at Sinai. But receiving the Torah is not an end in and of itself. Receiving the Torah means living the Torah, following its statutes, taking the ideals described in the Torah and turning them into a wonderful reality. The reality of living the Torah necessarily leads to the Messianic Age, and culminates in the end of this Age - Resurrection. For this reason, on the Shabbat of Chol HaMoed we read the description of how dry bones shall live, for the bones coming to life are the culmination of the Redemption begun on Pesach.

"You are eternally mighty my Lord, the resuscitator of the dead are you; abundantly able to save: Bring down the dew!"

© Copyright Rabbi Ari Kahn

# X. Bi-polarity of Torah[[79]](#footnote-79)

From the days of Moses until several hundred years after the destruction of the second Temple, the Torah was read through in three and a half years. This three and half year period, a triennial cycle, was repeated for a second time to complete a seven year Shmita or septennial cycle. The first three and a half year cycle started in Tishri and completed in Nisan. The second cycle started in Nisan and completed in Tishri. Thus we see that the original Torah reading cycle was bimodal and reflected the bimodality of the year.

In addition to reflecting a bimodal aspect, this Torah reading cycle also puts the Torah in chronological order such that the weekly portion speaks prophetically to the events of the week in which the portion is read. Without the bimodal aspect, the Torah could never apply a specific portion to two different times in the year. For example, Vayikra chapter 23 lists the festivals in order. We read it once in the end of the year and then we read it a second time in the beginning of the year. Thus we can relate the same Torah portion to the spring festivals and we can also relate the fall festivals to the same Torah portion.

In addition to the prophecies of the Torah, we also have the Haftorah, the Psalms, and the Nazarean Codicil which are also read in two, three and a half year cycles. These additional portions help to explain the prophecies of the Torah.

Finally, the septennial Torah cycle also vindicates the dispute, at the beginning of this paper, between the R. Meir and R.Eleazer vs. R.Elazar. Since we read about the the story of creation in Tishri, during the first triennial cycle, and we read the creation story, a second time, in Nisan during the second triennial cycle. Thus the Torah also teaches us that in some way the world was created both in Tishri and in Nisan.

For further insights into this topic, please see: Shmita.

Sheep drop two litters a year with a 5 month gestation time; they mate once in Nisan, and give birth in Av, the second time occurs in Tishri, with the young being born in Adar. Therefore, in one year, we have two breeding cycles.

**\* \* \***

This study was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

(Greg Killian).

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: gkilli@aol.com

Web page: http://www.betemunah.org/

(360) 918-2905

Return to The WATCHMAN home page

Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: gkilli@aol.com

1. **Rashi’s Commentary on Joel 2:16-24, 27** says Although the early rain is the first rain, which falls on the seeds, and that is in Cheshvan, that year they sowed in Nisan, as is explained in Tractate Taanith 5a that the grain grew in eleven days. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The first [five](five.html) books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rosh HaShana 10-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Deut. XI, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Yes, I know that the point of cleaning the outside is to demonstrate the work that must be exerted to clean the inside. And yes, I know that internal soul searching must be manifested in good deeds on the outside. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Shemush Pesukim [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Alfas 12b [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 12b, s.v. *matnitin* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 639 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 27a [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Succah* 2:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 27a, s.v. *teshvu* [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 3:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 301 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Rema [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Magen Avraham 12; Gra; see also Shulchan Arukh Ha-Rav 20 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 539:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 471 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Pesach: Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:6 – Succoth Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. As explained infra. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Or, you complete your pi1grimages then, Tabernacles being the third and last pilgrimage festival of the year (M.K.). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Rain ceases then (Radal). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. I.e., the year is reckoned to commence at different dates for different purposes, as the Mishna goes on to specify. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The first month of the Jewish calendar (in Biblical times known as `the month of Abib', or the springing corn), commencing in the latter half of March or the earlier part of April. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. If a document is dated with a certain year in a king's reign, the year is reckoned to have commenced in Nisan, no matter in what month the king came to the throne. The [Gemara](orallaw.html) discusses what kinds of kings are meant \_ whether Israelitish or other. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The meaning of this is discussed infra in the Gemara. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The sixth month of the [Jewish calendar](calendar.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. For purposes of tithe it was necessary to specify the year in which cattle were born, because cattle born in one year could not be given as tithe for cattle born in another, v. Lev. XXVII, 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. So that according to these authorities there were only three New Years. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The seventh month. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. I.e., from the first of Tishri in these years ploughing and similar operations were forbidden. V. Lev. XXV, 4, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. For reckoning the years of `uncircumcision'. V. Lev. XIX, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. I.e., those gathered after this date could not be used as tithe for those gathered before. Cf. n. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The eleventh month. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. For tithing the fruit. V. notes 6 and 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Succah 5:2-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Yevamoth 62b [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Rav Yichiel Michel Epstein, Aruch HaShulchan 493:1. He also sites the Chok Ya'akov (493:3) and mentions the opinion of Rav Yochanan ben Nuri, that the maximum hell to which a soul may be sentenced is the length of the period between Pesach and Shavuot, (Mishna Edyot 2:9) which further points to the *judgment* aspect of this period. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Chatam Sofer [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Rashi [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Bamidbar (Numbers) 6:24-27 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Deut. XI,14. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Joshua I, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Sc. the words of the Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Isa. LXI, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Tosaf. point out that this homily conflicts with that given above on the same verse by R. Hanina b. Papa. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Deut. XXVIII, 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Nisan being the time of the ripening of the corn and Tishri of the vintage and olive pressing. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. In reply to the objection from the last cited Baraitha. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The first and seventh months of the Jewish year, corresponding roughly to mid-March-April and mid-September-October. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. By the watchers for the new moon, who are allowed to exceed the two thousand cubit limit in order to report their observation to the Beth din in [Jerusalem](city.html). V. infra 23b. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Since the New Moon can be fixed without actual observation. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Even though the observation is not necessary for the purpose. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. I.e., in all such cases we can make Adar thirty days, and if the watchers have seen the new moon on Sabbath, they need not report till the next day. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Hence we do not make New Moon on the thirtieth day, the new moon not yet having been observed, and it is not permitted to make it on the thirty-second. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. By witnesses who have seen the new moon, in order that they may give information in [Jerusalem](city.html) at the earliest possible moment. V. supra. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. It is difficult to see what reason this furnishes for allowing the witnesses to break the Sabbath. Rashi explains that if the witnesses are not allowed to bring the news on Sabbath, the New Moon will not be sanctified till Sunday, and so the messengers instead of setting out as soon as Sabbath is over will not set out till several hours later, and this might make them late in some places in giving notice of the date of [Passover](passover.html). V. Rashi and Tosaf. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Lit., ‘for the proper adjustment of the sacrifice’. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. R. H. 2a. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. The reign of a Jewish King was always reckoned from Nisan, so that even if it began in the preceding month, it would be in its second year in Nisan. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. The year given in dating legal documents was that of the reign of the present king. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. V. above note. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. For the purpose of dating documents Tishri is to be regarded as the beginning of the year. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. According to the early part of the [Mishnah](orallaw.html) the year should begin with Nisan, while in the latter part it is said to begin with Tishri. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Since the Exodus occurred in Nisan. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Tabernacles, which commences on the 15th of Tishri. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. The feast of lights, commencing on the 25th of Kislev. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. The passage is difficult. Both assume that AT THE END OF DAYS means at the end of one of the seasons of the year; and that Abel was murdered on the very day of the sacrifice. R. Eliezer applies it to autumn, R. Joshua to spring, so that AT THE [END OF DAYS](edom.html) will mean about mid-winter (about 21st December) or midsummer (about 21st June), after which the seasons begin to change, and Hanukkah and Pentecost fall about these dates respectively. But ‘Passover’ and ‘Tabernacles’ are employed here loosely, the beginning of Nisan or Tishri being actually meant, and similarly [Pentecost](shavuot.html) and [Chanukah](chanukah.html), a date about a fortnight before being meant--otherwise the period is above 60 days. If on the other hand these are exact, then 50 days is only stated approximately. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. see *Yahoshua (Joshua) 4:19 & 5:10* [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Mark 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Sotah 2a, Sanhedrin 22a [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. According to Bnei Yesakhar, a Hassidic teaching by R. Zvi Elimelekh Shapira of Dinov, p. 112d, translated by Ivan Ickovits [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. [Mishna](orallaw.html): Seder Moed: Tractate Rosh HaShanah: 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Devarim 20:19, Yeshayahu 65:22, and Yeremyahu 17:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. *Rosh Hashanah* 10b [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Shir HaShirim 6:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Shulchan Aruch 229:2 Mishna Brura 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Megillah 17b [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. As taught to me by His Eminence, Hakham Dr. Yoseph ben Haggai. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)