INTRODUCTION

Naturally, Jews have their own time (generally fifteen minutes later). This affects the time units of years, months, weeks, and days. Jews follow a lunar-solar calendar which uses the moon for its basic calculations, but makes adjustments according to the solar seasons. The United States, on the other hand, uses a strictly solar calendar.

THE MOON

The moon waxes and wanes and so reflects the fluctuating fate of Israel. Yet, like Israel, the moon is always renewed. As such, it was seen as a sign of Israel’s redemption, and so was a comfort during periods of persecution. Much of the Blessing of the New Moon ceremony (see below) speaks of the hope for redemption and the restoration of the Davidic kingdom.

R. Simeon b. Pazi pointed out a contradiction [between verses]. One verse says, And God made the two great lights [Genesis 1:16], and immediately the verse continues, The greater light . . . and the lesser light. The moon said unto the Holy One, blessed be He, “Sovereign of the Universe! Is it possible for two kings to wear one crown?” He answered, “Go then and make thyself smaller.” “Sovereign of the Universe” cried the moon, “Because I have suggested that which is proper must I then make myself smaller?” He replied, “Go and thou wilt rule by day and by night.” “But what is the value of this?” cried the moon; “Of what use is a lamp in broad daylight?” He replied, “Go. Israel shall reckon by thee the days and the years.” “But it is impossible,” said the moon, “to do without the sun for the reckoning of the seasons, as it is written, And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years [Genesis 1:14].” “Go. The righteous shall be named after thee as we find, Jacob the Small [cf. Amos 7:2], Samuel the Small, David the Small (cf. 1 Samuel 17:14).” On seeing that it would not be consoled the Holy One, blessed be He, said, “Bring an atonement for Me for making the moon smaller.”

—Talmud Babli, Hullin 60b
During the Blessing of the Moon, we ask for the restoration of the moon to its pristine brightness. In that time, Israel, too, will achieve its final redemption.

Traditionally the moon is also seen as symbolic of the feminine: it receives its light from the sun—receptiveness; and, more important, it has a monthly rhythm. Kabbalistically the moon is seen as representative of the feminine aspect of the divine—the Shekhinah.

**Moon-watching**

The difference between calculated and observed time is immeasurable. Calculated time is a mathematical product of the mind alone; observed time is the fruit of eye-and-mind involvement with the moon. Calculated time is homogeneous and repetitious; each day is twenty-four hours. Observed time is different each night: the moon manifests birth and growth, fullness and fading, death and rebirth.

Judaism, blessings upon it and us, did not abandon observed time despite the development of the calculated calendar. The importance of ancient moon-watching, reflected in the quite exciting material of Mishnah Rosh ha-Shanah, chapters 1 and 2, persists in the ceremony of Kiddush ha-Levanah or Birkhat ha-Levanah.

*How to find and follow her* To our eyes the moon, like all heavenly bodies, appears to move from east to west, but she travels more slowly than the sun. One might say that she lags behind the sun about 48 minutes per day. Around Rosh Hodesh—the beginning of the lunar month—she sets in the west shortly after sunset, and each day she sets some 45-50 minutes later. By full moon she is rising in the east at about the time the sun is setting in the west. (Hence Pesah, Sukkot, Tu b'Shevat, and Purim are fine times to see an almost simultaneous sunset-moonrise in the evening and moonset-sunrise in the morning.)

Lagging further and further behind the sun, near the end of the lunar month she is rising in the east nearer and nearer to sunrise. Finally, for three days she rises and sets so close to the sun that she is quite invisible (see Blessing of the Moon, below). Following which she is a new moon once more, and eyes again turn westward just after sunset. Moon-watch a few months and feel what you see, then see what you feel and let thinking follow!

The lunar year generally has twelve months. At one time these did not have names but instead had numbers; the first month, the second month, etc. Later, names were given to the months: Nisan, Iyyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Av, Elul, Tishri, Heshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, Adar. Nisan is the first month of the year, yet Rosh ha-Shanah—the New Year—occurs in Tishri, the seventh month. Rosh ha-Shanah marks the creation of the world—a different celebration from the first month of the year.

The determination of a month is dependent on the phases of the moon, which completes its cycle every 29½ days (approximately). Since this is uneven, one month may have 29 days (this is called רותא, lacking) and the next may have thirty days (called מלא, full).

**Rosh Hodesh**

Rosh Hodesh celebrates the new moon, and, therefore, the new month. For thirty-day months there are two days of Rosh Hodesh: one on the 30th day of the old month and one on the first day of the new month. Since the months are actually only 29½ days, part of the 30th day is, in reality, a new month and is

And on your joyous occasions, your fixed festivals and new moon days, you shall sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being. They shall be a reminder of you before the Lord your God" (Numbers 10:10).
celebrated as such. On the other hand, a month having only 29 days will be followed by a one-day Rosh Hodesh for the new month. Nisan, Sivan, Av, Tishri, Shevat, and in leap years (see below) Adar I are 30-day months. Iyyar, Tammuz, Elul, Tevet, and Adar (Adar II in leap years) are 29-day months. Heshvan and Kislev vary.

Rosh Hodesh is commemorated by a special Musaf, the saying of הובא י這個 in the Amidah, part of Hallel, and a Torah reading of Numbers 28:1–15. In the Bible it was a day of festive meals, visiting prophets, and not doing business. The Shabbat before Rosh Hodesh is called Shabbat Mevarekhim. The exact time of the new moon in the coming week is announced and certain prayers are said. Some people have the custom of singing some part of the order of prayers to a melody associated with the month, e.g., “Maoz Tzur” for Kislev—the month when Hanukkah occurs.

Some people used to light candles both at the synagogue and at home, and prepared a festive meal to celebrate Rosh Hodesh. These are nice ways to sharpen one’s appreciation for Rosh Hodesh and the moon’s rebirth.

For kabbalists, the day before each Rosh Hodesh was a day of atonement and was called Yom Kippur katan—a minor Day of Atonement.

Those women who feel that it is important to be able to express womanliness in Jewish ways should take note of an interesting custom associated with Rosh Hodesh. Traditionally women did not work on Rosh Hodesh. This was seen as a reward, because after the exodus from Egypt the women refused to volunteer their jewelry for the making of the golden calf. This, once again, reinforces the feminine imagery so apparent in the moon and Rosh Hodesh and can help make this day a real celebration of the feminine.

_Blessing the New Moon: Birkha ha-Levanah_

1. It is a custom to bless the new moon. This is in remembrance of the way the new moon was publicly announced. In ancient times, any two witnesses would see the new moon and report it to the Sanhedrin—the ancient supreme court of the Jews—which would then proclaim the new month. Today, however, the whole procedure is done by calculation.

2. The Blessing of the New Moon should be done, however, between the third and fourteenth days of the new month, at which time the moon begins to diminish. The blessing is delayed until the third day because one should be able to see a significant portion of the new moon’s light before blessing it.

3. The Blessing of the New Moon is usually done after Havdalah on Saturday night (see Candles and Candle-making). It is recommended that it be recited at that time because one is still in a festive mood and well dressed. However, it can be said any night during this period, even by oneself (i.e., without a minyan, quorum). The ceremony is found in the Siddur after the Shabbat Maariv—the Evening Service that ends the Shabbat.

4. The ceremony should be said (a) in the open air; (b) in a standing position; (c) with the moon visible.

5. It is customary to say “Shalom Aleichem” to three different people who answer back “Aleichem Shalom.”

6. Since it was customary to dance at the announcement of the new moon, we rise on our tiptoes three times when we say, “Just as I dance before you and cannot touch you. . . .” Some actually do dance.

7. Everett Gendler suggests the following additions to the traditional ceremony:

   a. The reading of ha-Maariv Aravim either in Hebrew or in this translation:
You abound in blessings, Lord our God, Source of all Creations:
shading evenings with intent, brightening morning by design,
causing time to pass and seasons to alternate,
setting stars in their courses in rhythmic sway.
You are the Source of day and night
rolling light before darkness and dark before light,
passing on day and bringing on night,
yet always distinguishing day from night.
Lord-of-Heavenly-Hosts is His Name!
O God of Life, living eternally,
sway us too through time without end.
You abound in blessings, Lord,
shading skies as evenings descend.

—translated by E. Gendler

b. Among the traditional readings might be included the singing of:
   "Kol Dodi"
   "Dodi Li"
   "Ha-Le-Lu-Hu B'tzil-tz'le Sha-ma" (Psalm 150)
   "David Meleh Yisrael"
   "Esa Enai" (Shlomo Carlebach’s version)

c. The following free rendering of “M’Ha-desh Ho-da-shim” might be read:

Praise to You, Lord our God,
King of the endless universe.
You chanted a word,
and that word became—heaven!
You smiled and breathed forth suns and stars!
Seasons and cycles You gave to them;
they ever waltz
in their rhythmic courses.
They sing and rejoice
as they dance their Lover’s will:
“God is our architect,
His plan is good!”

To the moon He called:
“Polish yourself bright and new!
Be a crown
for My lovely people!
One day
they’ll polish themselves
and be bright as you.
I’ll be their King.
They’ll be My crown!”
Be praised then, Lord,
for renewing the months of moons.

—translated by Burt Jacobson

d. In addition, waving lighted sticks of incense yields a very nice effect as the lighted tips trace vivid patterns against the darkened sky.
FROM THE SUN . . .

The sun, too, has a blessing which is so special that it only occurs once every twenty-eight years. This service is hard to find since it is not in most prayer books, so we'll give you a brief résumé.

In this service, the sun is blessed in thanksgiving for its creation and its being set into motion in the firmament on the fourth day of creation. The service is said after Shaharit on the first Wednesday of tekufat Nisan, when the sun is almost 90° above the eastern horizon. The date is based on the calculations of Abbaye, a talmudic sage, according to whom the vernal equinox cycle begins at this time. This method of calculation is now known to be inaccurate but is still used. The service consists of the following:

Psalms 84:12, 72:5; 75:2
Malachi 3:20
Psalms 97:6
Psalm 148

These are followed by the benediction "Praised be the Maker of creation . . ." (see Berakhot). Then follow Psalms 19 and 121, "El Adon," and the section by Abbaye from Berakhot 59b. The service ends with a short thanksgiving prayer which expresses our gratitude for sustaining us until this day and our hope that we may live to see the Messianic Age when "and the light of the sun shall become sevenfold, like the light of the seven days" (Isaiah 30:26).

The next occurrence of this celebration is April 8, 1981. Don't miss it!

RAMIFICATIONS OF THE LUNAR YEAR; OR, PASSOVER IN OCTOBER?

1. The lunar year has only 354 days, while the solar year has 365 days.
2. If we were to use a wholly lunar calendar for each solar year, the Jewish holidays would fall approximately eleven days earlier each year. Eventually, Passover would end up in the middle of winter and Sukkot would occur in July, despite the fact that Passover is called the festival of spring. For that matter, Shavuot, Sukkot, and Passover all are connected with the planting-harvest cycle.
3. To keep the holidays in their appropriate seasons, therefore, an extra month is periodically added to the lunar calendar.
4. This "leap month"—called Adar II, is added seven times in a nineteen-year cycle and serves to keep the discrepancy between the lunar and solar calendars at a minimum. It is added in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years of the cycle.
5. Because of the slight discrepancy, Jewish holidays do change according to the non-Jewish calendar. Rosh ha-Shanah can, for example, occur anywhere from the first to the last week in September.

LENGTH OF THE DAY; OR, WHEN IS AN HOUR NOT AN HOUR?

There is concern in determining the actual length of the daylight hours.

1. The hours referred to above are not 60-minute hours. To calculate a Jewish "hour," take the total time from sunrise to sunset and divide by 12. The 12 equal units of daylight are called hours. Note that Jewish hours vary greatly in length from long summer days to short winter ones.
2. For example, if the sun were to rise at 5:30 A.M. and set at 8:30 P.M., the day would consist of 900 minutes, which, divided by 12 would yield 75 minutes per "hour."
3. This determination primarily affects the proper time for prayers. For example, the Talmud says that the morning Shema can be said only until the end of the third hour after sunrise; according to our example this would be
15 A.M.: Shacharit can be said only until the fourth hour after sunrise (10:30 M.); Musaf may be said all day; Minchah can be started anytime after the sixth hour (1:38 P.M.) and can be said until sunset, although the preferred time is 2½ hours before sunset (5:22 P.M.). Maariv can be said all night starting at sunset (some however do not begin Maariv until 42 minutes after sunset (see "Period of Twilight").

4. This method of hour calculation is also used with regard to the laws about hametz—leavened bread—on the day before Passover. One can eat hametz until the end of the third hour after sunrise, and hametz may be in your possession until the end of the fourth hour (see Festivals). However, this method of calculation is not used for other issues; for example, the time one waits to eat dairy after eating meat (see Kashrut). These hours refer to 60-minute hours.

Period of twilight

1. A question emerges concerning the period of twilight. Exactly what is it—day? night? or both? Although the question may seem hypothetical at first, it takes on significance if one realizes that such problems as the proper time to begin and end Shabbat and holidays all rest on this issue.

2. There are two opinions about the duration of twilight: (a) 13½ to 18 minutes before sunset through sunset; or (b) from sunset to 42 to 50 minutes after sunset, i.e., until the time that three stars are visible.

3. Because of twilight’s ambiguity, and concern for the observance of Shabbat, both opinions are observed. Since the 18 minutes before sunset could be night, Shabbat candles are lit Friday afternoon 18 minutes before sunset. Since 42 minutes after sunset could still be day, Havdalah is made at least 42 minutes after sunset on Saturday night.

4. Some people believe that twilight continues not 42 but 72 minutes after sunset, and so they wait 72 minutes before making Havdalah on Saturday night.

5. It is, however, not only a concern for twilight’s ambiguous status that is involved in this issue. There is also a desire to lengthen the Shabbat and the holidays to make them last as long as possible before beginning the mundane week.

As time flies . . .

One can get a Jewish wall calendar (i.e., one with the Hebrew months, holidays, etc.) from many places, especially from kosher butchers. Many Jewish organizations put out a combination pocket calendar and appointment book. Ask around. If you cannot find one anywhere for free (try Jewish businesses—Morrison and Schiff sometimes gives them away), go to a Jewish bookstore (see Bibliography). Remember, these calendars run from September to September, not from January 1, so get your new one at the appropriate time.

There are also 100-year calendars which are good for those who like to plan ahead or for those who want to find out what their Hebrew birthdays were in 1953 or 1922, etc. Interesting trivia. One of the 100-year calendars around is The Comprehensive Calendar, 1900–2000, by Arthur Spier (published in 1952 by Behman House).

Another 1920–2020 calendar can be found in the first volume of the Encyclopaedia Judaica.

A shul luah—synagogue calendar—gives much information, including changes in the liturgy because of holidays, exact times of the new month, etc. This comes either in booklet form or as a large wall hanging. Either can be obtained inexpensively from a Jewish bookstore (see Bibliography) or from: Zionalis Manufacturing Company, Inc.

48 Eldridge St.
THE HOLIDAYS OF THE VISION

The process of realization of the possession of the entire people and because they are perfect, the holidays make the dream and the dream the holidays. They dry the losses learned from the way. The holidays are a reassessment of the location where the holidays were conducted, that the holidays in fact, in the end, are more than the holidays. The holidays supply both the process to keep you going over the long haul of history. In Judaism, there is no place for what we call chronicling the way of the holidays. The holidays are a reassessment of our legacy. The holidays are a reassessment of our legacy. The holidays are a reassessment of our legacy. The holidays are a reassessment of our legacy. The holidays are a reassessment of our legacy. The holidays are a reassessment of our legacy.
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THE HOLIDAYS ON THE WAY

The Jewish people set out on their journey through history, veiled, scarred, equipped with their beliefs and traditions, on their way to Days of Awe—presenting a constant model of Judaism's resilience, growth, and transformation.

The first holidays—Pesah, Shavuot, Sukkot, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur—laid the foundation for the Jewish experience, teaching generations about the importance of family, community, and tradition.

The emancipation is often referred to as history, but it's a journey full of experiences, struggles, and triumphs. Through these holidays, we reflect on the past and look towards the future, connecting with our heritage and creating new memories with our families and communities.

The holidays serve as a reminder of our journey, a way to honor the past while embracing the present and looking towards the future. They are a time to come together, to share stories, and to celebrate our collective history.

In the end, the holiday of Sukkot is a special one, symbolizing the important lesson that we are all connected to one another, and that we must work together to build a better world.
THE HOLIDAYS AS THE JEWISH WAY
The 113th Psalm reveals the deep spiritual meaning of the Sabbath and its profound impact on the individual and the community. It emphasizes the importance of the Sabbath as a time of rest, renewal, and connection with God. The psalm highlights the idea that the Sabbath is a day set apart for worship and service, a time for the people of Israel to come together in a spirit of unity and devotion.

The Sabbath is not just a day of rest, but a day of renewal and spiritual growth. It is a time for reflection, prayer, and study of the Word of God. The Sabbath is a reminder of God's covenant with his people, a time to remember the redemption accomplished at the cross and the promise of a new creation.

The Sabbath is a day to be celebrated with joy and enthusiasm, a day to remember the mercies of God and the Hope he has promised. It is a day to be shared with family and friends, a time to be in community and to remember the community that God has blessed with his presence.

The Sabbath is a day to be remembered and observed with reverence and awe. It is a day to be celebrated with gratitude and thanksgiving for the provision and care of our Father in Heaven. The Sabbath is a day to be shared with others, a time to be in community and to remember the community that God has blessed with his presence.

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