

THINK CAREFULLY

By Rabbi Rob Miller

Talking about the Calendar Calculation, **that is a problem only because of the Karaite invasion**. I've been in this walk a long time and it has never been a problem. I have included information concerning the calculation:

The Hebrew calendar has a solar-lunar structure. The year consists of twelve lunar months. The Feast Days, on the other hand, follow the solar year, since the Pilgrimage Feasts (Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot) must take place in certain seasons, and the seasons are determined by the earth annual revolution around the sun.

The seasons are changes in weather that last for a certain period of time the Earth has four seasons moving in a cycle in the order of spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Since the lunar year is roughly 354.3 days in length, while the solar year is roughly 365.25 (roughly eleven days longer), the festival would eventually fall in the wrong seasons if their occurrence followed the cycle of lunar months.

Passover must take place in the month of Aviv, and the month of Aviv must be in the Spring so that Shavuot can occur at the time of the early harvest. Setting into motion that Sukkot will appropriately follow in the Autumn harvest.

To prevent the Commonwealth of Israel from violating Torah, the Hebrew lunar calendar is regularly adjusted to keep it in conformity with the solar year. This is done through the periodic additional, thirteenth month, known as Adar Sheni.

Since the discrepancy between the solar and lunar years amounts to 207 days every 19 years, the "leap month" of Adar Sheni is added to the third, sixth, eighth, eleventh, fourteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth year of every nineteen year period, that is, seven times in a 19-year lunar cycle.

This year, however, with certain teachers in the movement getting involved with the anti-Rabbi, anti-YahShua Karaites, there is controversy. "...Rejecting the fixed calendar as a heretic innovation, the Karaites held that by law of Scripture the beginning of the months must be determined by the appearance of the new crescent and no other means, and that this had been the practice of ancient Israel at all times. **Rabbanite refutation of this extreme assertion found its most outspoken exponent in Saadia Gaon, who went to the opposite extreme in 'demonstrating' that the fixed calendar, computation of molad and tekufah (seasons), has the force of a Mosaic-Sinaitic law that had been followed at all ages of the past, while observation of the new crescent was merely a passing episode in the history of the Jews, introduced at the time of the Sadducees... (The Code of Maimonides, book II, treatise 8)**"

The Karaites reckon their Aviv by looking for the green ears of the barley. When they spy any amount of barley they then declare that nearest Crescent Moon the month of Aviv. This is an erroneous calculation. If we follow that kind of reasoning, the calendar would be 18 days off after just 1 year, or after 7 years 126 days off, that's 4.2 months; meaning Passover would fall in about November by the year 2012.

We know that prophecy tells us that in the last days, just before the return of King Messiah YahShua, the Mashiach Neger (Antichrist) will come. He will pose as anointed and deceive millions into accepting his claims. One thing he does is "...he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws (Daniel 7:25)" And we also know that "every spirit that does not acknowledge YahShua is not from Elohim. This is the spirit of the Mashiach Neger, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. (1 John 4:3)"

The month of Aviv is called that because it is the month when the barley harvest is shooting out little green ears. Not just some unusually early group of barley ears but the nation's majority.

The elders of the Great Sanhedrin Bet Din calculated our Hebrew calendar that we use in exile. No other body of self appointed people whether Jewish, or Ephraimite, and especially not the rebellious Karaites have a right to change the times and seasons.

"In the fourth century, however, when oppression and persecution threatened the continued existence of the Sanhedrin, the patriarch Hillel II took an extraordinary step to preserve the unity of Israel. In order to prevent the Jews scattered all over the surface of the earth from celebrating their New Moons, festivals and holidays at different times, he made public the system of calendar calculation which up to then had been a closely guarded secret. It had been used in the past only to check the observations and testimonies of witnesses, and to determine the beginnings of the spring season." (Arthur Spier, The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.2)"

"Nowadays the day, hour and parts of each Molad are announced before the Proclamation of the New Moon in the Sabbath morning service preceding the week of the New Moon. This custom keeps alive the memory of the time when the Sanhedrin sanctified the months on the basis of observation. It calls our attention to the fact that today we determine our new moons and holidays according to the decision of Hillel's Beth Din." (Arthur Spier, The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.13)

"The day begins and ends at sunset, or more precisely, after dusk when the first three stars of medium size appear. This rule applies to the theoretical beginning and ending of Sabbaths, festivals, fast days and the hours for the daily

prayers. However for calendar calculations, especially for the computation of the Moladot (the times of the new moon) and the Tekufot (beginnings of the seasons), the day begins and ends at 6 o'clock in the evening, Jerusalem time. -- The beginning and duration of the months depend on the Moladot and the time, which elapses from one Molad to the next one (lunation). The average figure given by tradition for this interval is 29 days and 12 hrs and 793 parts" (Arthur Spier, The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.13)

"The moment that the moon passes between the Earth and the sun is called the Molad - the birth of the moon. It is the theoretical beginning of the new month" (Understanding the Jewish Calendar, Rabbi Nathan Bushwick, pp.39-40)

"And Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years (Genesis 1:14)."

"Praise be to the name of Elohim for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He causes the times and seasons; He sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with Him. (Daniel 2:20-22)"

As I have often said, just because they're Jewish doesn't make them right and the Karaites are wrong on this matter.

"Yahweh 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 Kohen a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before Yahweh so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. (Leviticus 23:9-11)."

In fact, until the Temple is rebuilt, the Tabernacle is found or the Karaites accept Messiah YahShua as their Kohen HaGadol acknowledging the ministry of the Heavenly Tabernacle the barley harvest is irrelevant to the Karaites and those non-Neztarim who factor the Aviv barley while in their exile.

As Arthur Spier said "In the fourth century, however, when oppression and persecution threatened the continued existence of the Sanhedrin, the patriarch Hillel II took an extraordinary step to preserve the unity of Israel. In order to prevent the Jews scattered all over the surface of the earth from celebrating their New Moons, festivals and holidays at different times, **he made public the system of calendar calculation which up to then had been a closely guarded secret.** It had been used in the past only to check the observations and testimonies of witnesses, and to determine the beginnings of the spring season." (The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.2)"

The Rabbis wished to ensure that synchronization of the lunar and solar calendars would be in line with the agricultural features of the major holidays. (Exodus 23:16-17) In the previous sections the Talmud considered the effect on Pesach, which must occur in "The month of Aviv (ripening grain)", of intercalating a second Adar before it. Here is some of those secrets discussed from the Talmud:

The Rabbis taught in a b'raitā: We intercalate the year [i.e., extend the year by adding a month] because of Aviv, the fruits of the trees, and the season.

The Torah {Ex 13:4 and Deut 16:1} specifies that Pesach must be in the Aviv. In modern Hebrew, this means Spring, but the etymology of the word is the ripening of the grain. Thus, Pesach must coincide with the time of year in which the grain ripens.]

As I have stated, the Karaites reckon their Aviv by looking for the green ears of the barley. When they spy any amount of barley they then declare that nearest Crescent Moon the month of Aviv. This is an erroneous calculation. The month of Aviv is called that because it is the month when the barley harvest is shooting out little green ears. Not just some unusually early group of barley ears but the nation's majority.

The Rabbis taught in a b'raitā: We intercalate the year for [crop ripening] in three areas [of Israel]: Judea, Trans-Jordan, and the Galilee. [Ed. note-meaning all Yisrael not just WILD uncultivated barley in 1 area]

We intercalate for (any) two of them, but not for only one of them. (In other words most of the harvest) And when Judea was one of them, everyone was happy, because the Omer is brought only from Judea.

[The Omer offering was brought on the second day of Pesach. Ideally, the barley used for the Omer offering should be fresh and newly-ripened. If the year was extended because of late crops in Trans-Jordan or the Galilee, the Omer from Judea would no longer be as fresh, and the people would be disappointed. But if a leap year was declared because the Judean barley was late in ripening, the people would be happy; their Omer offering would be fresh and newly-ripened.]

The Rabbis taught in a b'raitā: We do not intercalate the year except in Judea. But if it was intercalated in the Galilee, it is intercalated. Hananiah of Ono testified: If it was intercalated in the Galilee, it was not intercalated. R. Yehudah b. R. Shimon b. Pazi said: What is the reason for Hananiah of Ono's ruling? The Torah says (Deut 12:5): "Even unto His habitation ye shall seek and thither shalt thou come" -- any "seeking" can only be in the place of Yahweh's Dwelling [i.e., Judea].

The Rabbis taught in a b'raitā: We do not intercalate the year except during the day, and if they intercalated at night, it is not intercalated. And we do not intercalate the month except during the day, and if they intercalated at night, it is not intercalated.

R. Abba said: From what verse (can this be derived)? From [Ps. 81:4] "Blow the horn at the New Moon, at the full moon of our feast day". On which feast day is the moon hidden? [The word used for New Moon is "keseh", which is etymologically related to "kaseh" - to hide.] It must be Rosh haShanah. [All the other holidays fall near the middle of the month, when the moon is visible; only Rosh haShanah falls at the beginning of the month, when the moon is not visible.] Is this Rosh haShanah Aviv? I believe it is not Yom Teruah. The month Aviv, meaning (sprouting, budding, green ears) is to be the first month of the Biblical Year (Ex 12: 2; 13:4). The first mention of the timing of a new moon in the Scriptures demonstrates that it was predicted at Molad, and that *crescent sighting has never been required*. 1Sam 20:5 "David said to Jonathan, "Behold, to morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the evening of the third day" [i.e., of the month]

And it is written [in the following verse] "For it is a statute for Israel, and ordinance ["mishpat"] for the Elohim of Jacob." Just as "mishpat" [judgment] must be rendered during the day, so must sanctification of the New Moon be done by day.

So the equinox is used unless, and this is unusual, it conflicts with the harvest. Both are guidelines. But the nearest New Moon cannot be more than 15 days before or after the Equinox, as the maximum number of days in a month is 30. The first of Aviv, the beginning of the year, is the day of the New Moon nearest to the Vernal Equinox. It can be before or after the Equinox and the timing is from Jerusalem. There is no biblical evidence to postpone the start of the Scriptural year by a month so as to force the observance of Passover after the Equinox.

Again I have stated, the Hebrew calendar has a solar-lunar structure. The year consists of twelve lunar months. The Feast Days, on the other hand, follow the solar year, since the Pilgrimage Feasts (Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot) must take place in certain seasons, and the seasons are determined by the earth annual revolution around the sun.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: We do not intercalate [add a month to create a leap year] unless the (summer) season would be incomplete until most of the month had passed. [The end of the summer is marked by the autumnal equinox. The court would meet in Adar to determine when during Tishrei the equinox would occur. Sukkot must fall in the autumn, i.e. after the equinox, so if the equinox is scheduled to occur before the middle of Tishrei -- Sukkot -- the court would declare a leap year.]

R. Yosei says we calculate: (If winter would extend into Aviv) sixteen days before Pesach, we intercalate [because then the second day of Pesach, on which the Omer offering is made, would not be "in the month of Aviv"]. But if (summer would extend) sixteen days into Sukkot, we do not intercalate. R. Shimon says: We also intercalate (if summer would extend into Tishrei) sixteen days before Sukkot. Others [a euphemism for R. Meir, who having offended Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, is often referred to in this way rather than by name {Horayot 13b}] say: Even [if it extended] for a smaller part of the month. And how much is a smaller part? Fourteen days. (Gives a whole new appreciation for Mr. Groundhog doesn't it...haha!)

[The interval between the vernal and autumnal equinoxes is taken to be 182 days (half a solar year to the nearest integer) but six lunar months are 177 (3x30 + 3x29) days. Therefore, if the vernal equinox falls on the 16th of Aviv, the autumnal equinox will fall on the 21st of Tishrei, which is the last day of Hol haMoed, so, according to R. Yosei we don't have to intercalate. However, if it falls on the 17th of Aviv, autumn would have begun on the 22nd of Tishrei, Shemini Atzeret, on which no "gathering" can be done, so we must intercalate.]

[If the (autumnal) equinox is the start of the new season, and falls on the sixteenth day, which is the first day of Hol haMoed, all of Hol haMoed would be in the fall, and intercalation would be unnecessary. But if the equinox were part of the summer season, then the first day of Hol haMoed would be part of the summer season, and intercalation would be required.]

Others [a euphemism for R. Meir] say: Even [if the previous season extended before the equinox] for a smaller part of the month. And how much is a smaller part? Fourteen days. What do they ("others") hold? If they hold that the day of the (autumnal) equinox ends (the summer) and we require the entire holiday (to be in the autumn), didn't Rav Shmuel b. Rav Yitzhak say: "The `others' are referring to the _vernal_ equinox, for it was said (Deut 16:1) `Observe the month of Aviv'. Observe the season of Aviv (spring), that it fall in the month of Aviv, and intercalate Adar [the preceding month]'.

[Rashi: The vernal equinox is the beginning of spring by the solar calendar; Aviv is the first month of spring by the lunar calendar. According to this interpretation, "others" wanted to ensure that less than half - i.e., at most 14 days - of Aviv had elapsed before the equinox in order for most of the month to be in the spring.]

Rav Aha b. Yaakov [also referring to Aviv] says: "The tanna (of `others', i.e. R. Meir) was counting downwards, and this is what he said: '_until_ fourteen days [exclusive]'; [If the vernal equinox is on the 14th, we do _not_ intercalate, because then Pesach {15 Aviv} would be in the spring.]

[The gemara asks:] The first holiday?! It is; written (Ex. 24:16) "the feast of in-gathering". [Since no in-gathering can be performed on the holiday, why can't it fall in the summer, as autumn doesn't begin until the following day.] [The gemara replies:] The holiday that comes at the time of in-gathering (must fall in the autumn).

Referring again to Rabbi Moshe Yoseph Koniuchowsky, he says, "During the 40 years in the wilderness Pesach was still celebrated without barley (as it was for the 70 years in Babylon) as they, like us, remain in the wilderness" of our preparation.

As is stated on the Temple Institute site, "A new Sanhedrin sits today in Jerusalem. May [Yahweh] grant them the authority to accept testimony and proclaim the new month throughout the land. For the real battle in Israel is the battle over the calendar: for he who controls the calendar, controls the spiritual seasons of all living souls." Well, I feel the same way about our learned men in the leadership of the Union.