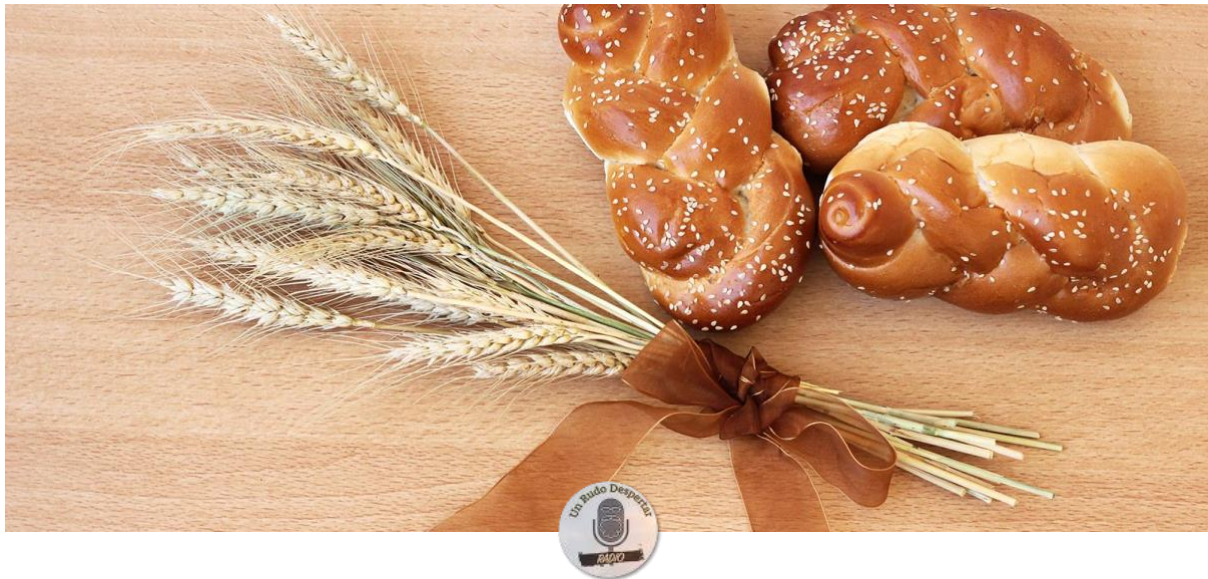


# A ROOD AWAKENING!®

INTERNATIONAL



*When do we celebrate the Passover? What is the importance of the renewed moon, the ripe barley (aviv), and the Biblical reference to determine the first month of the Hebrew Calendar? Does the equinox have any relevance with regard to the Biblical Calendar? We will be addressing these and other questions in this special edition.*

To begin to understand a little more about this topic, we must ask ourselves a few questions, like: ***What is the month of the aviv? Why is it so important? What does it mean? What happens in this biblical month known as the month of the aviv?***

Before we start answering all these questions, it is important to highlight that some people who have been in the environment of the Hebrew roots or the messianic movement for a few years, have likely had the chance to see how discussions arise every year about the calendar, in such topics as the beginning of the month and in what moment it is determined, depending on the renewed moon.

The most important thing that we need to take into account is that we must be in **unity**, even when we disagree about a specific topic, so that we don't get to think in the following way: *"I stay at home when you celebrate your Pesach, because for me that is not the day; then you stay at home when I celebrate my Pesach."* The main thing that we have to know and understand is that we are brothers and we must put this to use, because even if we do it or not in the correct date, as brothers we are confronted by the topic. We have not understood the purpose of the Torah, and this is fundamental.

We will be studying based in understanding the experience and the knowledge obtained by abandoning beliefs and receiving a new understanding. Just as it is logical to assume that we don't know it all, in the future we must keep obtaining more knowledge so we can grow even more, without remaining in this dilemma, in which many express: *I already know it all, I'll just stay this far!* Let's remember that every year is an opportunity to keep learning new things.

The Creator's Calendar has always been a very polemical topic among believers, mainly between the brothers who follow or study the Hebrew roots (the movement that observes the Torah), study the prophets, and have the testimony of Yeshua through the gospels. And as we have said, the most important thing here is to be able to maintain the love, the unity and the respect between brothers that we are, in the body of the Messiah.

There are different positions and schools of thought regarding the calculation of the biblical Hebrew calendar, as it is essential to verify when the calendar begins. Some people favor only the aspect of the moon sighting. In the case of our brothers of the house of Judah, they have had a calendar established or predetermined since very ancient times, specifically in times of Babylon where a very famous character known by the name of Hillel II made a mathematical calculation to obtain an approximation of the sighting of the renewed moon, thus achieving in this manner the imperative for the exiled Jewish people to obey the commandment of the festivities established by YeHoVaH. Hillel II was a blessing for the people in those days.

People usually get apprehensive because they claim that it is a rabbinic orthodox calendar reflecting the rules of men, but we must think for a moment: ***If we were outside of the land of Israel, in the dispersion, in slavery and expelled from the land, how would we be able to fulfill the commandment to celebrate the feasts of the Lord?*** The most likely answer is that we wouldn't know what to do.

*"The history of the Jewish calendar may be divided into three periods—the Biblical, the Talmudic, and the post-Talmudic. The first rested purely on the observation of the sun and the moon, the second on observation and reckoning, the third entirely on reckoning.*

*The study of astronomy was largely due to the need of fixing the dates of the festivals. The command (Deut. xvi. 1), "Keep the month of Abib," made it necessary to be acquainted with the position of the sun; and the command, "Also observe the moon and sanctify it," made it necessary to study the phases of the moon."* Joseph Jacobs, Cyrus Adler - Jewish Encyclopedia

***"Originally, the Renewed Moon was not fixed by astronomical calculations, but it was just proclaimed after the witnesses had declared the reappearing of the crescent of the moon..."*** Jewish Encyclopedia

*"I am truly amazed over a character who rejects clear evidence, claiming that the religion of Israel (Judaism) is based, not on the observation of the new moon, but on calculation alone - and yet (Saadia) asserts the authority of all these Talmudic passages..."* The Code of Maimonides, book II, treatise 8

*"There was no fixed calendar until the 4th century CE and the new moon was declared by real observation. The witnesses were carefully examined on the 30th of each month (especially the months of Nisan, Av, Elul, Tishri, Chislev and Adar), and if the testimony of the witnesses is accepted, that day was declared "sanctified" by decree of the Sanhedrin."* The Hasting's Bible Dictionary

*"Originally, there was no fixed calendar. There was no way to determine in advance the exact day of a feast to come... because there was no way to determine in advance when the month would begin... In the 4th century, the sage Hillel II foresaw the dissolution of the Sanhedrin, and understood that we would not be able to follow a calendar based on the Sanhedrin. Thus Hillel and his rabbinical court established the perpetual calendar that is followed today. When Hillel established the perpetual calendar, he sanctified each Rosh Hodesh until Mashiach (Messiah) comes and reestablishes the Sanhedrin."* Chabad.org

*"A special court has been established to accept evidence regarding the sighting of the new moon, as required by Jewish (Torah) law. This court is made up of several judges who come together to hear evidence as opportunity allows. The purpose of the court is to increase knowledge, develop skills, and resolve halachic issues that arise when determining the Jewish Calendar based on the testimony of witnesses. It should be noted that the Hillel II mathematical calendar has been in use since 4119 (359 CE), and has functioned for approximately 1600*

*years without difficulty. However, in recent years, a situation has been created where more and more frequently, the appearance of spring (Mar-Jun) does not coincide with the calendar currently in use. This means that the calendar begins to deviate noticeably."* **Sanhedrin.org**

Certainly Hillel was used by YeHoVaH to be able to establish that calendar, for the people to have an approximate date of the days, and in this way to be able to celebrate his feasts; this calendar is the one used by the Jewish people to this day, especially by most members of the orthodox branch.

It was Hillel II who established this calendar that carries his same name, in the IVth century BC in the year 358 after Yeshua, because the Jewish people were scattered after the destruction of the temple in the year 70 and the Sanhedrin (the assembly or council of elders and rabbis) were forced to move from Jerusalem to the north, specifically to the



Galilee. Hillel could feel that the end of the Sanhedrin was a foregone conclusion, and for this reason he established the calendar to promote unity among the Jewish people in the diaspora, in all Europe, in the North of Africa and the Middle East.

*"Until Hillel II instituted a permanent calendar based on calculations (360 CE), the fixation of the new moon was determined by observation and witness evidence."* **Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion**, p. 78; Massada-P.E.C. Press Ltd 1965

*"The Hillel II calendar was based on fixed calculations, not on the sighting of the visible new moon as the Jews had previously done when determining the beginning of the month."* **Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period**, Jacob Neusner

The calendar was calculated according to the conjunction of the moon and not the sighting: The conjunction is the moment when the moon is no longer visible, which happens between one to two days before the moon becomes visible to the naked eye. Hillel II could thus calculate the conjunction and the beginning of the year without having to sight the moon.

We will learn more about identifying the *aviv* and the *aviv* barley, but generally speaking, without observance of the barley in the land of Israel, Hillel's calendar mandated that seven leap-years would be added after every 19-year cycle, and every two or three years a thirteenth month is added.

***Why is it important to add a 13<sup>th</sup> month?*** Because the Gregorian calendar that we use nowadays has 12 months of 30 to 31 days, but it is synchronized with the solar cycle of 365 days and a fourth, which is established every four years and the 29th of February is added to 365 days. In the case of the cycle of the moon, it is 354 days equivalent to 12 months, making the calculation 22 days less in comparison to the solar cycle. This means that in three years, we will have an entire month of 33 days exactly out of synchrony with the solar cycle.

***What meaning does this have?*** It would turn out that in 10 years, we would celebrate the Pesach (Passover) in December. Because of this it is necessary to synchronize and add every certain year a 13<sup>th</sup> month and we must wait until spring in the Land of Israel, because Pesach must be celebrated during the spring season.

The month of the *aviv* is the first month of the biblical calendar, and the biblical reference can be found in the book of Exodus:



*"And YeHoVaH spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."*

**Exodus 12:1**

*"Many people are disoriented by the inaccurate use in modern languages of the term 'New Moon.' Modern astronomers adopted this unusual term, which had always been associated with the first visible 'nail,' and used it to refer to the conjunction (when the Moon passes between the Earth and the Sun, at which point it is not visible.) Astronomers soon understood the inaccurate use of 'New Moon' to refer to the conjunction that would lead to confusion; therefore scientists, to be more exact, now distinguish between 'Astronomical New Moon' and 'Crescent New Moon.' The '**astronomical**' New Moon means New Moon as the term is used by astronomers; that is, conjunction. In contrast, 'Crescent New Moon' uses the term with the original meaning of the first visible fingernail." Crescent New Moon versus Astronomical New moon, Nehemiah Gordon.*

It's here where we find for the first time the reference to the beginning of the biblical year. Many of us who come from a Christian background, believed in our ignorance that everything in the Bible should be interpreted according to the calendar that is used in our current time (the Gregorian). Hence, everything had to adjust to our own style of thinking. Therefore, when we read about the passage of Exodus 12 and the month that was the *beginning of the immediate months*, it was related to the month of January.

The Hebrew term for **"month"** implies that the month begins with the renewed moon, because the Hebrew word **Hodesh – חֹדֶשׁ** – means **renewed moon, month, monthly, first day of month**. This word appears approximately 276 times in the Scriptures of the Old Testament or Tanach; in around 254 it is translated as **"month,"** 20 as **"new (renewed) moon,"** and once as **"monthly."**

**1 Kings 6:1** *And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the **month** (hodesh) Zif, which is the second **month** (hodesh), that he began to build the house of YeHoVaH.*

**1 Samuel 20:5** *And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, tomorrow is the **new moon** (hodesh), and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even.*

The root of the word "Hodesh" is the word "Hadash." In the **Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon (p.294)** we are told: *"New moon as the day, the hour of the new moon as a religious holiday. Month as the beginning with the New Moon." "Etymologists have well observed that its primary meaning is to cut or polish... (Hadash) being signified of novelty, it seems to come from a splendid polished sharp sword."*

At this point, we probably didn't know that the Father has his own calendar, his own calculation of the days, the months and the years. But as we study the Scriptures, we realize that this month of the *aviv* has no correlation with January, but that it is related to the time of the months of March and April depending on the adjustment that we saw above, and that it is the beginning of the Biblical Calendar of the Creator.



When we analyze this conformation of the Biblical Calendar we can observe that it makes more sense that the year begins in the spring, which is the season in which all nature and all creation is being born and growing again, instead of in the middle of the winter as it is on January the 1<sup>st</sup>, which we now realize has no relation to the rebirth of the year.

Before the current Gregorian Calendar, there existed one called the Julian Calendar, which had ten months broken down as follows.

The sum of days of the Julian calendar did not match with the astronomical cycle, so the solution to this inconvenience was to adapt it to the Egyptian model which consisted of years of twelve months that added up to 365 days, and leap-years with 366. EAFIT University (website)

In the 16th century, Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian Calendar, which included the months of **January** and **February: IANVARIVS**, in honor of the god of the beginning and end, Janus; and **February** or **FEBRVUARIVS**, named after the februa in the Lupercalia, the festival of purification in Ancient Rome. January 1 was thus established as the beginning of the new year in Catholic countries. BBC news (website)



Unlike many countries in the world that don't have such marked seasons or that only have dry season or summer and rainy season or winter, in Israel it is possible to see the characteristics of spring and winter. Besides we can see these differences in the north and south hemispheres: for example when it is spring in the United States, or in Israel right now, in Argentina the fall is beginning. At this point the winter and summer are opposed, just as the spring and the fall are also

inverted as equidistant points, which we will see in reference to the equinoxes. Something that we have to understand is that the biblical perspective is united to the north hemisphere – for this reason the spring occurs in the precise moment where it has to happen.

YeHoVaH knows perfectly what he does and it is for this reason that an order exists in his calendar, because when the spring begins, the biblical calendar begins. In the same way, the land also starts producing its fruits, which eventually will be presented as it is indicated according to the commandment:

*And the feast of harvest, **the firstfruits of thy labours**, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. 19 **The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of YeHoVaH thy God.** Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.* **Exodus 23:16,19**

*Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, **then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:** 11 And he shall wave the sheaf before YeHoVaH, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath (Shabbat) the priest shall wave it. 12 And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf and the lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto YeHoVaH.* **Leviticus 23:10-12**

The first month of the biblical calendar is determined according to the sighting of the moon, which is possible nowadays thanks to the collaboration of some brothers who live in the land of Israel and whose experience can give testimony of the sighting of the moon. But when Israel had been exiled, there was no way to be able to see the moon from the land of Israel itself. Therefore, it was not possible to establish the beginning of the month, let alone to determine the ripening of the barley.

To be able to understand the concepts of the observance of the moon and how it is related to the barley in the *aviv* stage, we must go deeper into the Scriptures because it is a very important commandment:

*“Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover (Pesach) unto YeHoVaH thy God: for in the month of Abib YeHoVaH thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.”*

**Deuteronomy 16:1**

The first thing that we have to determine is ***How do we know when is the time of aviv?*** And besides ***What is the aviv?*** The word *aviv* appears with a capital initial in certain biblical translations; but since *aviv* is not a name, the first month doesn't have a name. In Hebrew it doesn't state ***“the month of Aviv,”*** because if we see the text in the book of Exodus we are told:

*“This day came ye out in the month of the Abib.”*  
Exodus 13:4

הַיּוֹם אֲתֵם יֹצְאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאֲבִיב:

***What is aviv exactly?*** There is a very wide distinction between ***“the month of aviv”*** and ***“the month in which the aviv occurs.”*** To be able to understand what the word *aviv* means we must find the first time that this word appears in the Scriptures, which is very hard to determine in English, because another word is used. This first instance occurs during the time when the plagues occurred in Egypt, specifically the plague of hail, which caused much harm to the crops of the Egyptians:

**Exodus 9:31-32** *And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled. 32 But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they were not grown up.*



The main point that we can observe is that the flax and the barley had grown sufficiently and it is because of this that they had been destroyed by the hail, so where we find that the English translation says ***“the barley was in the ear,”*** in Hebrew it says that the barley was ***אֲבִיב – aviv***. The key term in ***“the flax was bolled”*** is another word used in Hebrew and it is an agricultural term to define the flax in the stage of ripening. But ***“aviv”*** is related to the barley, and it is from this event that the barley became a testimony for the people of Israel. And when they would enter into the promised land and observe the barley in that state of ***ripening***, it was the month of the ***“aviv,”*** the first month of the calendar.

***Why was the barley necessary?***

The barley had to be presented as a firstfruits offering on the day after the weekly Shabbat during the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, as we are told in Leviticus 23:

*“And the priest shall wave the sheaf before YeHoVaH, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.”*  
**Leviticus 23:11**

Therefore, this presumes that there has to be barley in a firm stage to be able to offer it. If the barley was still green, it meant that it was too early and that it was not that first month yet, and therefore it was necessary to wait another month. It is in this manner that the calendar was

utilized in ancient Israel. This observation helps us to understand the reason why we must wait until the barley is ripe.

With this reference that we have through the Scriptures, we know today that we must wait until the barley is ripe or *aviv*. But there are groups of believers who are oriented toward the **equinox**, a word that comes from the Latin ***aequinoctium* (*aequus nocte*) – "equal night"** – which occurs approximately in the month of March, and is a reference to the sun. These people attempt to calculate what would be the biblical first month and what would also be the celebration of the Pesach, discarding the ripening of the barley.

The equinox will always be on March 21<sup>st</sup>, because it is something that always happens in the same exact month, in a mathematical way; hence, rabbi Hillel could calculate the beginning of the year, because the equinox is the point at which the sun is passing over the equator (or what is known as the line of the equator) according to the imaginary lines in the Earth that are the latitudes. We have also the Tropic of Cancer below and the Tropic of Capricorn above.

In this "movement," the sun travels from summer to winter; that's why when it's winter in the southern hemisphere, it is summer in the northern hemisphere because the sun is closer there; and when it is moving in the inverse direction, it is winter "up north" and it is summer in the south, because the sun is "down there." Therefore, when the sun is returning and it crosses the line of the equator, that's what is called the **equinox**, a very well-defined mathematical point.

***What depends on the ripening of the barley? Can the barley ripen in winter when the sun is seen below the horizon?***

The further north a person goes, further south he/she will see the sun. An example of this is the north pole, where during the day the sun is visible only in the horizon and then it sets and never rises; but when the sun returns, it is then going to be summer. Knowing this, ***What is necessary for the barley to grow?*** The answer is in the very sunlight, the heat that it emanates and the energy that it transmits to the plants for them to be able to make adequate growth. They have the earth, and they have the water because it's a stage of winter, but it takes the sun for the plants to start growing.



In the Talmud, the rabbinical commentary from the church fathers, this point of equinox has always been recognized, acknowledging that Pesach can never occur before the equinox.

*The Sunday of Easter will be the following Sunday after the full moon that occurs after the equinox of March.* **First Council de Nicaea in the year 325.**

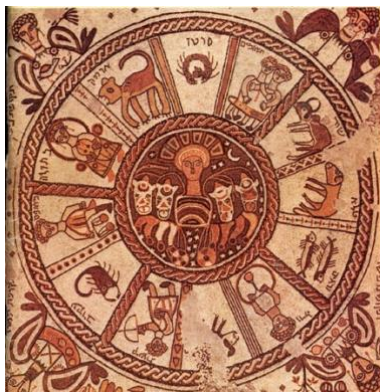
*"In the month of the aviv (Nissan in the Jewish calendar) the term aviv means the season of the harvest of the barley; a stem of the barley is called aviv, which comes from the root Av which means father, because it gives birth to the individual grains. All the holidays in the Torah are associated with the seasons of the agricultural year; Pesach falls at the beginning of the harvest of the barley, Shavuot in the moment of the wheat harvest and Sukkot at the moment when the product is recollected from the field. For this reason in all the holiday prayers, the elders instructed the redaction that sanctifies Israel and the zmanim (the seasons) instead of using the terminology of the Scriptures, the moadim (appointed times); the month of Nissan was also called aviv because it is the father, meaning the first of the twelve months of the year."*  
**Rabbi Bahya Ben Asher, middle age 1280, Spain.**



In the previous text we see what a rabbi says, who has the knowledge of when the first month occurs, because many people think that Judaism asserts that Rosh Hashana is the first month of the year (which we know as Tishri), being the seventh month. The rabbis know which is the first month, and they see two beginnings, and we will see why. The astrological sign of this first month is the lamb, which is the father or firstborn of the twelve signs of the zodiac.

People in general have not studied this topic within the movement of the Hebrew roots, but it acquires a great relation regarding the biblical symbolism and the traditional understanding of the zodiac, as it is the case of the Lion of the House of Judah, the Virgin and the Lamb that Rabbi Bahya Ben Asher was talking about.

*“Following the instruction of Daniel, the astronomers looked at the stars for more than 500 years, waiting for the Great Signal in the Skies that finally occurred on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Tishri (first month) at the end of the fourth millennium (Revelation 12:1-5). The constellation Betulah (Hebrew), the Virgin (Virgo in Latin) was dressed with the sunset at the time when the first sliver of the renewed moon appeared below her feet. In the twelve stars above her head, the planet Ha Tzedek – The Just (Jupiter pagan) – came into conjunction with the star Ha Melek, the star of the king (Regulus in Latin) which is between the feet of the constellation of Ariele (Hebrew, Leo in Latin) the Lion of Judah.”* The Pagan-Christian Connection Exposed, Michael Rood



In this image we see a byzantine mosaic of the Beit Alfa Synagogue, VI century.

*The composition incorporates the twelve motives of the zodiac for coinciding with the twelve months of the Hebrew calendar. The presence of the central motive of the sun has here a justification of astronomical order (and not religious). The four figures of the corners represent the four milestones of the year, solstices and equinoxes, named in Hebrew according to the month in which each of them occurs: Tishri, [Tevet], Nissan and Tamuz.*

Kibbutz *Beit Alfa*, Israel.

In Christianity, the topic of the zodiac has always been associated with mysticism, with occultism, or even with the horoscope itself along with other prohibited elements, but in most cases, it is not explained that the figures of the zodiac have a relation to the calendar with regard to the times and the seasons. Hence, they are not necessarily related to the topic of witchcraft or occultism nor do they necessarily represent an affinity with the satanic.

It may even be shameful to know that some people may think or express such sentiments as: *“If you get into the study of the zodiac you’re going to hell or we are going to kill you,”* which was a very common practice of the Catholic church for hundreds of years. Nowadays we see the case frequently in Latin America, because it is rooted in their DNA, in their genes, and they repeatedly express: *“No, that cannot be done, it is dangerous to study the zodiac.”* This is the very same ignorance that is reflected among certain practitioners of Judaism, who want to follow what is said by the rabbi, no matter what the Torah says, to such an extent that if the rabbi says yes or no, the follower puts his/her trust only in this person.



In the case of the Catholic church it was much more excessive than what is known in Judaism, because Catholicism fomented the so-called “Witch hunt.” During this period the Catholic church was not killing those who would commit acts of iniquity, but it was responsible for the Inquisition, under the pretext of the suppression of heresy.

*Flight of the witches of Vaud (Switzerland).* Miniature in a manuscript of Martin Le France, *Le champion des dames*, 1451. It is the first documented mention about the belief that witches fly on brooms.



*“It has come to our ears that a great number of people of both sexes don’t avoid to fornicate with demons, incubus and succubus; and that through their witchcrafts, spells and incantations, they suffocate, extinguish and cause to perish the fertility of women, the propagation of the animals, the harvest of the earth.”* In 1484, Inocencio VIII, *La Bula Summis desideratis affectibus*

Josephus, Jewish historian of the first century, relates the laws of celebration specified in the book of Leviticus and the sacrifice of the Passover in the 14<sup>th</sup> date of the first month of the year (Nissan); he says: *“When the sun is in Aries, then that is the sign of the time of the equinox of the spring.”*

The barley is the testimony of the land so that the farmer, like the astronomer, can see and know, but it can be predicted when it is going to happen as Hillel demonstrated, because it always matches, and only on very rare occasions does Hillel’s calendar not match in the beginning of the year, as shown by the Karaite observations of the barley in Israel. The Karaites are a line of Jews who don’t observe the rabbinic calendar, but they are oriented to the sighting of the moon from the land of Israel itself, and toward the ripening of the barley to be able to determine the first biblical month.

The Talmud is a historical source that commentates certain references to what was happening in the time of Yeshua, in the culture where he was raised and during the times in which he celebrated the Feasts. To be able to know which calendar Yeshua utilized in his time, it is very important to study these historical references, especially if one is a follower of other calendars that have no historical basis or that argue that the people of Israel followed the calendar of Hillel (which never happened at any point), because it is only a conjecture.

*“Rabbi Yosei says: The year must be intercalated only if twenty-one days of Tishri will pass before the fall equinox. The Gemara explains: And both exposed the same verse to get to their respective opinions: And the Feast of the Harvest in the change of year (Exodus 34:11). Both interpret the verse in the sense that the Feast of the Harvest, that refers to the middle days of Sukkot, must take place during the season of Tishri, meaning, in the fall. An elder, rabbi Yehuda, holds that we demand every Feast to take place in the new season, after the equinox.*



*And an elder, rabbi Yosei, holds that we only require that part of the Feast, even one day, takes place in the new season, therefore the year must be intercalated only if the equinox occurs in the twenty second day of Tishri or later.”* Treaty Sanhedrin 13a:1

*“The Gemara analyzes the baraita: the Master said that rabbi Yehuda says: The year must be intercalated if the season of Tammuz is not completed during two parts of the month of Tishri, which is twenty days. Rabbi Yosei says: The court calculates the seasons, and if the season of Tevet (tenth month), which is before the Passover, is not completed during*

*sixteen days in the month of Nissan, the court intercalates the year. The challenges of the Gemara: that is the same as the opinion of rabbi Yehuda, because a calculation that shows that the winter season of a given year is not completed during sixteen days of the month of Nissan will also show that the summer season of that year will lack its finalization during twenty days of Tishri.” Treaty Sanhedrin 13a:6*

In this section of the treaty, we are told that the year must be intercalated when performing a calculation; in this sense intercalated means that a 13<sup>th</sup> month must be added to make the year longer; and besides, they make a connection that depends on the fall equinox itself, which will occur with more than 21 days of difference with regards to Sukkot. Rabbis make a connection between Pesach and Sukkot, so the question arises, **Why Pesach and Sukkot?** These two Feasts are exactly in opposite extremes of the calendar, one in the first month, the other in the seventh. In the first month the lamb is brought on the tenth day to the house, before Pesach, and on the tenth day of the seventh month in Yom Kippur, when there are other happenings as well.

Pesach is the time when we clean the yeast from our homes, just as we also symbolically clean that from our hearts. If we forget what’s inside of us, cleaning the house is useless. Consequently, as we clean the yeast from our interior and in the days before Yom Kippur, we do something similar – an introspection. Therefore, we see that there is a connection between Pesach and Sukkot.

This is the concept of how the year is structured, in an astronomical way, because as it is known the Earth is in space and is part of a solar system. And that is the perspective that The Creator wants us to be able to see. Both in the Talmud and in the Tanach we find certain references about all the Feasts, but we are specifically told about three that must be celebrated in Jerusalem:

*And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. Exodus 34:22*

We have the Feast of Pesach for seven days, then the Feast of the Firstfruits, which is Shavuot, and then the Feast of the Harvest at the exit of the year, which is the feast of Sukkot, the moment when the last fruits of the agricultural year are brought. When we see the context, we are told about offering the firstfruits with the barley, which the priest needed to be ripe to be offered in the Temple as the firstfruits of that year, and during Sukkot the last fruits of the year are given, because after that the winter will start and it is a time when the land rests and therefore it is not being planted.



In this agricultural cycle, planting begins but the fruit is not seen yet. The time of the fruit is between spring and fall, meaning between the spring equinox and the fall equinox; that is the agricultural year. **What is the point of connection?** *The feast of the harvest at the exit of the year – What does the exit of the year refer to?* At this moment it’s not the final time of the year or the twelfth month, but rather the seventh month.

In Hebrew there is an interesting word, **t’kufa – תקופה**, that can be understood as **course (of the sun), lapse (of time), the turn (of the year), fulfill (the time), course, cycle**. It doesn’t literally mean **exit**, despite other sections of the Tanach in which the word **exit** appears, but the word **“t’kufa”** is related to the fall equinox.

Another example of the word **“t’kufa”** is found in the book of Chronicles. Let’s see its use in different translations:

**2 Chronicles 24:23** *At the **turn** of the year the army of Syria went up against him; And they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the chiefs of it among the people, and sent all the spoil to the king at Damascus.*

**Leningrad Codex:** **ויהי | לתקופת השנה עלה**

**New American Standard:** **Now it happened at the **change** of the year...**

**KJV:** **And it happened at the **end** of the year...**

**INT:** **The **change** of year happened...**

**CEV:** **In the **spring**,...**

The interesting thing about the Talmudic reference of the Treaty of Sanhedrin, is that it expresses that the Sukkot Festival has to happen during or after the equinox; it cannot be the opposite. Therefore, the start of the year would be what we know as autumn, which marked the autumnal equinox, and the return of the year; It is what is known as spring, which was marked by the vernal equinox. The testimonies of Philo of Alexandria and many other historians refer to these two points being crucial in the solar year.

*"In the first season named after the spring and its equinox, it ordered that what is called the feast of unleavened bread be kept for seven days, all of which it declared would be honored equally in the ritual assigned to them [b]ecause it ordered ten sacrifices to be offered each day as on the new moons, whole burnt offerings that numbered seventy in all, apart from sin offerings. It considered, that is, that the seven days of the feast had the same relation to the equinox that falls in the seventh month as the new moon does in the month."* Philo, Special Laws I (181-182) [Colson's Translation]

**Philo, here, says that the autumnal equinox occurs in the seventh month, as the Scriptures indicate - Ex. 34:22.**

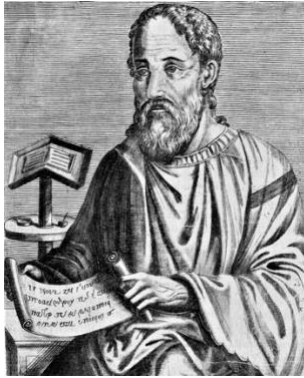
*"To the seven of the feasts for many days, two feasts, that is, for the two equinoxes, each of seven days, the first in the spring to celebrate the maturity of the crops sown, the second in the fall to collect all the fruits of the tree..."* Philo, The Decalogue (161) [Colson's Translation]



*"As said, the four seasons in the Jewish year are called tekufot (plural of tekufah). More exactly, it is the beginning of each of the four seasons, according to common opinion, the middle beginning, which is called t'kufa (literally 'circuit'), from **קיף** related with **נקף**, 'turn around,' the tekufah Nisan denotes the mean sun at the vernal equinoctial point, Tammuz denotes it at the summer solstitial point, Tishri at the autumnal equinoctial point, and Tevet at the winter solstitial point."* Encyclopaedia Judaica, "Calendar" article, p.356

*"In the month of Xanthicus, which we call Nisan, and it is the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, when the sun is in Aries, (because in this month we were freed from slavery under the Egyptians), the law ordered that every year we should kill that sacrifice that I told you before that we killed when we left Egypt, and which was called Passover..."* Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book III, Chapter 10, paragraph 5





*"And this is not my own opinion; but it was known to the Jews of antiquity, even before Christ, and was carefully observed by them. This can be learned from what Philo, **Josephus** and Museo say; and not only by them, but also by those still older, the two Agathobuli, surnamed 'Masters,' and the famous Aristobulus, who was chosen among the seventy interpreters of the Sacred and Divine Hebrew Scriptures by Ptolemy Philadelphus and his father, and who also dedicated his exegetical books on the law of Moses to the kings themselves. These writers, explaining questions about the Exodus, say that everyone should sacrifice the **Passover offerings after the spring equinox, in the middle of the first month.** But this occurs*

*while the sun is passing through the first segment of solar energy, or as some of them have designed it, the zodiacal circle. Aristobulus adds that it is necessary for the feast of Easter, that **not only the sun passes through the segment equinoctial, but also the moon.** As there are two equinoctial segments, the vernal and the autumnal, directly opposite each other, **and since the day of Easter was designated the fourteenth of the month, beginning with the night, the moon will maintain a position diametrically opposite to the sun, as can be seen on full moons; and the sun will be in the segment of the vernal equinox, and necessarily the moon in that of the autumnal equinox.**" Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book 7, Chapter 32*

We understand that all these things are not coincidences, nor something that comes out of nowhere, nor something that was invented by the human being, but that they are cycles already pre-established by The Creator, verifiable at an agricultural level, as well as at a level of observation of the sun and the moon. As we were told from the beginning of time:

*"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth."*

**Genesis 1:14-17**

In this passage we had been told that, in the days of creation, the sun, the moon and the stars were created to be signs or indicators for us, which is defined in Hebrew as "The Moedim" or the appointed times of the father. The word "**seasons**" in Hebrew is **Moedim** which comes from the word **Moed מועד**, which means **appointment, designation, fixed time or season; specifically festival** (because it meets with a definite purpose); **season, holiday, festival, party, time, occasion, gathering, solemnity:**

*"He appointed the moon for seasons (moed): the sun knoweth his going down."*

**Psalms 104:19**

These expressions are not something new, but they are concepts that have always been present and we must understand them and their definitions, and why it is that we carry out the celebration in the first biblical month, as well as why it is determined by the first month sighting the moon, under the observance of the agricultural part, such as the ripening of barley.

In the Catholic environment, the book of Ecclesiasticus and the apocryphal book of Enoch say the following:

**Ecclesiasticus 43:6-8** *He also makes the moon rise at various times, and it, as an eternal sign, directs the periods. 7 Through her we know the festivals and other appointed dates; as it orbits it, the brightness of it is less. 8 However, it is renewed every month; What a wonderful way to change! Sign for the armies of heaven, which illuminates the celestial vault with its brilliance.*



**Enoch 78:12-14** *The first day is called the new moon, because from that day its light grows. 13 It becomes a full moon exactly at the moment when the sun sets in the west and it rises from the east at night and the moon shines throughout the night, until the sun rises in front of it and the moon is observed in front to the sun 14 On the side because the moonlight arrives, there it decreases again, until all its light disappears, the days of the month are completed and its circumference is empty, without light.*

Many of these elements were used by pagan cultures, which does not mean that it invalidates its inherent truth. This is exactly what Babylon did, to twist the truth and use it to do evil or simply complicate certain aspects. But it is known that this knowledge of the truth always existed in different cultures. Several examples of these are the ancient monuments that exist around the world, which are used to mark the point of the year when the sun crosses the equator, heading towards the northern hemisphere.



In Mexico there is the temple of Kukulcan (Feathered Serpent), known as “The Castle” for the Mayans, who did things that were not permitted by the Torah, such as human sacrifices, extracting people's hearts, etc. Despite these actions, they had astronomical knowledge that was comparable to that of our present age; they also had a much more complex calendar than the Hebrew calendar, perhaps comparable to the Egyptian calendar. The Chichen Itza pyramid consists of four stairs on the four sides, and at the time of the spring equinox, when the sun is crossing the equator, the image of a snake forms exactly on that day on the staircase of this pyramid.

In Stonehenge, England, there is also a monument of stones; no one knows how they got there, but right on the spring equinox, on March 21, the sun passes between the two main rock monoliths.

A similar situation has occurred since the 1200s in Cambodia, where three Buddhist pagodas were built to the goddess Vishnu, in which the sun passes and settles on the exact top of this pagoda (this middle tower), on the day of the spring equinox.

Some interesting data about these structures: If the measurements of the exterior walls are added, the total sum is 365.24 hats (1 hat = 0.435 meters) repeated 12 times, which gives the duration of the solar year with its 12 months. The circumference that encompasses the corners of those same walls gives a curve whose length is 365.36 hats repeated 24 times, which is the duration of the lunar year and its cycles: twelve full moons, twelve new moons. In the main temple, the dimensions of the upper level axes are 189 on the east / west axis and 176.24 on the north / south axis. Adding these numbers together gives the length of the solar year. The stairs are separated from each other by 12 hats like the phases of the moon (from full moon to full moon). The main tower and the altar have an average of  $91 \times 91$  hats, which is the average duration in days between an equinox and a solstice and vice versa.

Therefore, we can deduce that this event happened on a day recognized worldwide in all cultures, because it was the day that in the northern hemisphere, on which civilization originated, the harvest of the agricultural year began. Fresh food from the field was a reason to give thanks to the Creator.

It is very important to know how to distinguish what is expressed in the Scriptures from what various cultures conducted as pagan practices, such as the sacrifice of men or children, as well as not ruling out that these populations handled agricultural principles with respect to what was the calculation of the sun and the calculation of the equinoxes.

If we think about it this way, YeHoVaH tells the people of Israel: "***This will be the beginning of the months for you,***" not necessarily because it was something new for the Israelites, because it was something known among the Middle Eastern cultures at that time. As we have seen, different cultures know that the year begins at a certain time, which means that they have knowledge of the best time for the earth to start producing its fruit, as well as how they are going to feed themselves to survive. But YeHoVaH tells Israel in relation to the practices that were carried out among other peoples, "You, Israel are mine, therefore you are not going to mix, you are not going to carry out those kinds of practice."

**Deuteronomy 14:2** *For thou art an holy people unto YeHoVaH thy God, and YeHoVaH hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.*

**Deuteronomy 12:31-32** *Thou shalt not do so unto YeHoVaH thy God: for every abomination to YeHoVaH, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. 32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*

**1 Kings 8:53** *For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord YeHoVaH.*

It is important to understand all this so as not to fall into the error of demonizing these pagan cultures, since it was not necessarily a matter of worshiping the sun, due to its observation, but it was simply an agricultural calculation by which they could carry out agriculture production and be able to survive.

As we saw earlier in the Sanhedrin Talmud, it is indicated that the entire Sukkot festival was required to be after the autumnal equinox, and in this discussion another rabbi said that it was sufficient that only part of the festival fell after the equinox. It is interesting that this event would not happen this year 6020 (2020) if the thirteenth month had not been added. As for those who did not add the thirteenth month but determined it as the first month of the year, this would result in the improper completion of the agricultural year as Sukkot would end before the equinox. The above is not something that is specified exactly in the scriptures, but it is found in the historical references as a mathematical calculation.

There will then be what is known as the sighting of the new moon, which will establish the first day of the first biblical month and also signal the celebration of Pesach on the fourteenth day at sunset as established in the Scriptures. And the next day at sunset the solemn Shabbat will begin, or rather the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the 15th of the first month.





**Leviticus 23:6-8** *And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto YeHoVaH: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.<sup>7</sup> In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. <sup>8</sup> But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto YeHoVaH seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.*

**Exodus 23:15** *Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty.*

**Deuteronomy 16:3-4,8** *Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. <sup>4</sup> And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. <sup>8</sup> Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to YeHoVaH thy God: thou shalt do no work therein.*

In the case of the celebration of Pesach, each year the most common questions arise among the brothers and sisters who join the faith, such as: ***Should we carry out Passover? Do we have to keep it? Do we have to celebrate it? How do we do it?*** To be thorough, the first thing we must understand when talking about *aviv*, about what is barley and its many references, along with the offerings in the Temple in biblical time, is that today there is no Temple. We cannot plant barley in the courtyard of our houses and then go and offer it to the Creator (although we must give thanks for everything that the earth gives us); we are not carrying out that offering in the land that was promised by going to the Temple to give thanks; it is something that is not being done since there is no Temple as it was once entrusted. As for the paschal sacrifice, in the same way there is no Temple wherein to offer the sacrifice of the lamb or do it according to our liking, since the Torah tells us:

*Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which YeHoVaH thy God giveth thee: But at the place which YeHoVaH thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.* **Deuteronomy 16:5-6**



This passage makes it clear to us that we cannot take a lamb and sacrifice it in our home, and argue that this is the paschal sacrifice, because the Scriptures tell us that this is considered a serious offense. This sacrifice could only be performed in the place that is no longer available in Jerusalem. What we are currently doing is not eating the celebration of the true Passover, because although you can eat lamb, we never do it in the sense of a sacrifice.

It is wise never to go to the excessive point of saying to a person: "You cannot eat Passover with us because you are not circumcised," thus expressing in a legalistic way before others that they are not circumcised as the Torah says, and that for that reason they cannot participate in the celebration and eat matzah or unleavened bread.

**Exodus 12:43-45,48** *And YeHoVaH said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: 44 But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. 45 A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. 48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to YeHoVaH, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*

*As we saw earlier, today we are not eating Passover, but we are having dinner in commemoration of what is established, since eating Passover was what was done after the sacrifice of the lamb in the Temple, that is the true Passover. We cannot enter into that rigidity; we already know that in the future we will carry it out when the Messiah is in our midst, in the Millennial Kingdom of which the prophets speak, when all things are restored.*

A question that arises prior to the festivities is about Yeshua's dinner with his disciples, prior to his death on the tree. ***Was Yeshua celebrating the Passover meal with his disciples?*** Michael Rood in his book *The Chronological Gospels*, expresses that this dinner of Yeshua with his disciples has been misinterpreted due to the misunderstanding of certain passages found in the Gospels, such as the verse in which Yeshua says: ***"How I have longed to eat with you this Passover before I suffer!"*** Lucas 22:15.



Later Yeshua is drinking the wine and breaking the bread, but the explanation that Michael Rood gives is that Yeshua is having a completely different dinner with his disciples and it does not correspond to the Passover meal, since Yeshua himself was going to become that lamb the next day. Another reason that Michael Rood explains is that, if Yeshua and his disciples had been eating the Passover meal, they should have presented the lamb before the High Priest, in addition to sacrificing it in the Temple, which could not have been carried out one day before the biblically-appointed day.

Until the Messiah returns, what we can do is clean the yeast in our houses, eat unleavened bread or matzah for seven days, always remembering that all this is related to us. For its part, *aviv* has to do with getting out of our mental and spiritual slavery, in order to be liberated. Although we have a level of understanding, it does not mean that we cannot learn more and have a broader vision next year, since that is the goal, to learn more – always remembering and not refusing to congregate because a brother follows a different calendar, because we all should be trying to act with justice in the eyes of the Creator, and love one another, which does not imply being separated nor bringing division over a calendar topic. If within you is the feeling of remembering Passover with some community that observes the calendar in some way, go ahead and if you decide to do it according to the sighting of the moon and ripe barley, go ahead too. There must always be that unity and that love of which Yeshua our Messiah preached to us:

***"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."***  
**John 13:35**

