

# Jewish Feasts & Festivals



SCTR 19 – “Religions of the Book”

Prepared by Felix Just, S.J.



# Hebrew Calendar: “Lunisolar”

- Twelve “months/moons” (alternating 30 or 29 days)
- Total 353, 354 or 355 days (cf. 365¼ solar days)
  - or 383, 384, or 385 days in “Leap Years”
- Extra month (Adar II) added in Leap Years
  - Years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 & 19 of each 19-year cycle
- So months remain in the same solar seasons:
  - Tishri in Fall (Sept/Oct); Nissan in Spring (Mar/Apr), etc.
- *Rosh Codesh* (1<sup>st</sup> day each month)
  - Specials Psalms; Women free from work



# Shabbat (Sabbath)

- **Weekly Day of Rest** ("Observe" & "Remember")
  - Fri. before sunset to Sat. nightfall (ca. 25 hours)
  - God "ceased work" on 7<sup>th</sup> day of creation (Gen 2:1-3)
  - No work allowed (39 types of "work"; how strict?)
  - Home/Family: 2 candles; 3 festive meals; wine/bread
- **Shabbat Services**
  - Several different synagogue services (min. 10 men)
  - Readings from **Torah & Prophets** (annual cycle)
  - Prayers, Blessings, Sermon, etc.
  - Lots of **Psalms** prayed/chanted

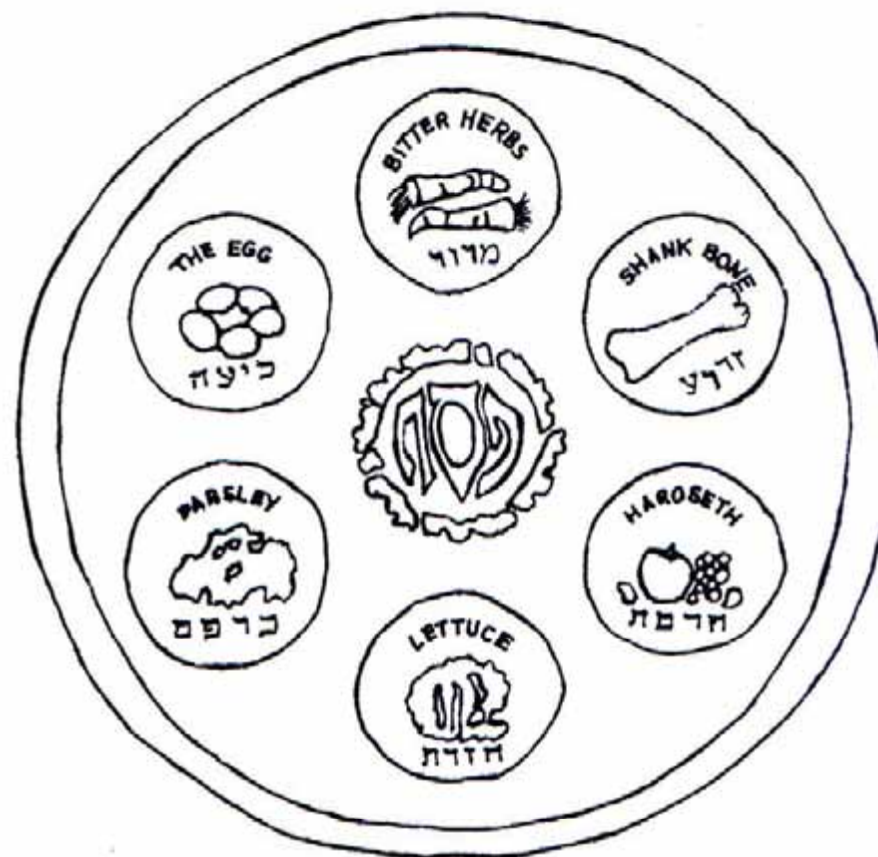


## Major Jewish Feasts (Overview):

1. Rosh Hashanah / Jewish New Year
2. Yom Kippur / Day of Atonement
3. Sukkot / Tabernacles/Booths
4. Pesach / Passover
5. Shavu'ot / Weeks/Pentecost
6. Hanukkah / Feast of Lights
7. Purim / Feast of Lots
8. Simchat Torah / Rejoicing in the Torah
9. Tisha B'Av / 9<sup>th</sup> of Av: Destruction of Two Temples



# Pesach / Passover



# Sukkoth / Tabernacles/Booths





# Shavu'ot / Weeks/Pentecost





# Interim Review:

## Three Ancient Pilgrimage Feasts

- Multiple Backgrounds for Each:
  - Agricultural; Historical; Biblical events
- Passover (Pesach)
  - Spring; **Song of Songs**
- Weeks/Pentecost (Shavu'ot)
  - Summer; **Book of Ruth**
- Tabernacles/Booths (Sukkoth)
  - Fall; **Book of Ecclesiastes/Qoheleth**



# Rosh Hashanah / New Year



# Yom Kippur / Day of Atonement



# Feasts of the First Month (*Tishri*)

High Holy Days / Sukkot / Simchat Torah

TBR

## TISHRI 5761

						1 Rosh Ha-Shanah
2 Rosh Ha-Shanah	3 Fast of Gedaliah	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 Yom Kippur	11	12	13	14	15 Sukkot
16 Sukkot	17 Sukkot	18 Sukkot	19 Sukkot	20 Sukkot	21 Sukkot	22 Shemini Atzeret
23 Simchat Torah	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

# Hanukkah / Feast of Lights





# Purim / Feast of Lots



# Simchat Torah / Rejoicing Torah





# Other Jewish Feasts

- Tisha B'Av – “Ninth (Day) of (Month of) Av”
  - Destruction of First & Second Temples of Jerusalem in 586 BCE (by Babylonians) and 70 CE (by Roman), respectively
  - Synagogue Reading: **Book of Lamentations**
- Five Minor Fasts (1/2-day fasts)
  - *Fast of Gedalia* (Tishri 3) - during High Holy Days
  - *Fast of Tevet* (Tevet 10) - Siege of Jerusalem Began
  - *Fast of Esther* (Adar 13) - day before Purim
  - *Fast of the Firstborn* (Nisan 14) - day before Passover
  - *Fast of Tammuz* (Tammuz 17) - Walls of Jerusalem Breached



# National Holidays of State of Israel

- Yom HaShoah / "Day of the Shoah" (Nisan 27)
  - Six million Jews killed in Holocaust & Resistance Heros
- Yom HaZikaron / "Memorial Day" (Iyar 4 or 3)
  - Fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism
- Yom HaAtzma'ut / "Independence Day" (Iyar 5 or 4)
  - Declaration of Independence in 1948  
(moved up a day if Iyar 5 is a sabbath)
- Yom Yerushalayim / "Jerusalem Day" (Iyar 28)
  - Capture/unification of all Jerusalem in 1967

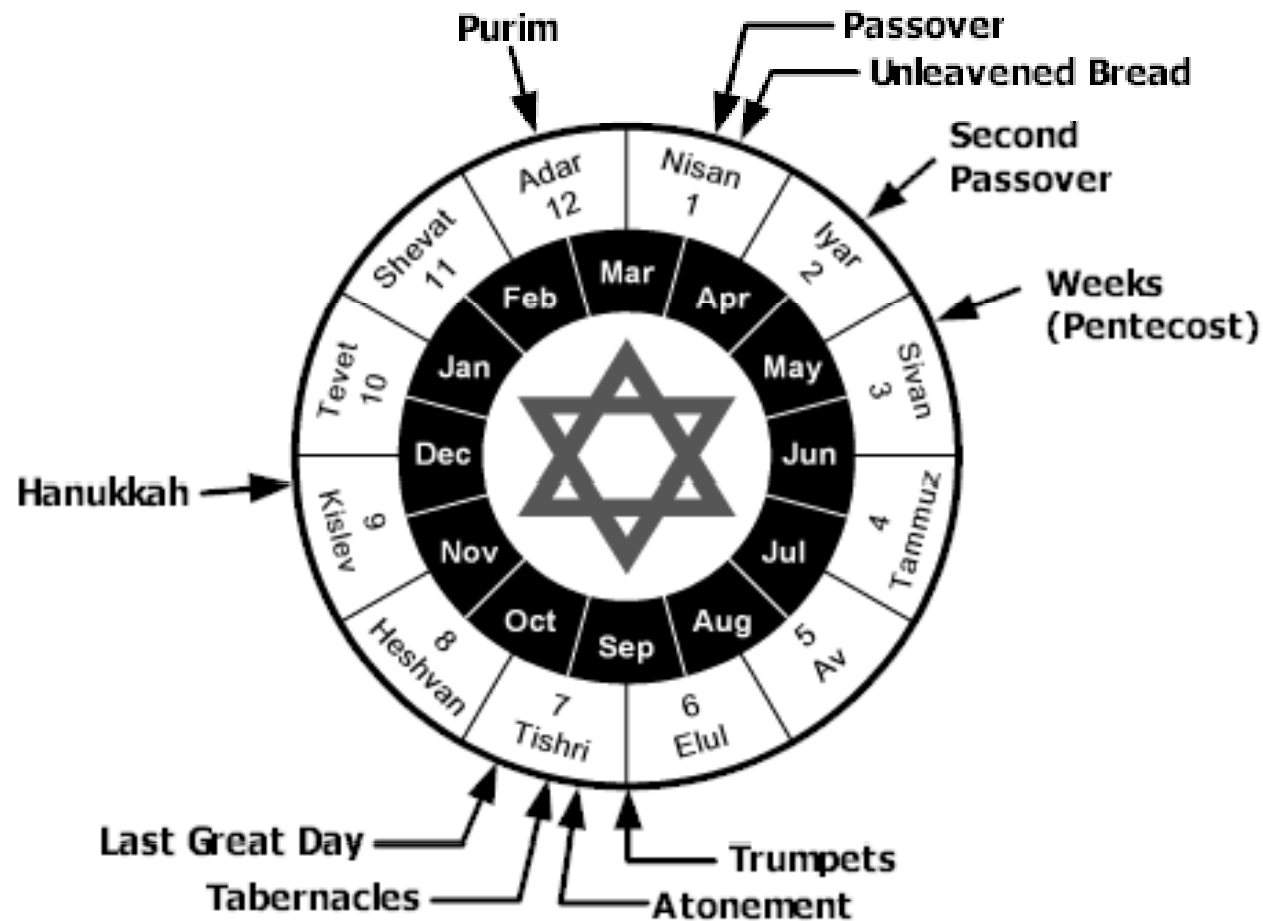




## Conclusion / Commonalities?

- Most Jewish Feasts Commemorate Major **Historical Events:**
  - Most in Hebrew Bible; some post-biblical
  - Some disasters/defeats; some victories/joys!
- *Most* Jewish Feasts are closely connected with the **Hebrew Bible**
  - Biblical injunctions to celebrate a feast
  - Biblical readings in synagogue services

# Hebrew Calendar: Review



<b>2014</b> <b>January</b>	Snake 4711	2nd 12th Month Starts		Chinese	31st- 1st Month Starts	Horse 4712
	1935 S.E.	2nd Poush (Sikh Poh) Starts		Indian	31st Magh (Sikh) Starts	1935 S.E.
	5774 CE	2nd Shevat Starts		Jewish	31st Adar I Starts	5774 CE
	1435 AH	2nd Rabi' al-awwal Starts		Muslim	31st Rabi' al-thani Starts	1435 AH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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The Hebrew words 'Rosh Chodesh' literally means Head of the month or First of the month. These are the words describing end of month of the previous month and the celebration of first day of New Month

			1 Dark Moon Amavasya Shakyamuni Al-Muhaq Molad Bank Holiday	2 New Month Starts Hilal Chodesh	3	4 Vinayak Perihelion Monlam Prayer
			11:13 AM New Moon St.	7:20 AM Waxing 2	3:32 AM Waxing 3	8:56 PM Waxing 5

5	6 Baptism	7 DurgAstami Mahakala Puja Al-Darbeeya al-awal Seven Herb Festival	8 DurgAstami Mahakala Puja Al-Darbeeya al-awal Hari Navami	9	10	11 Capricorn Sun Ekadashi Coming of Age - 18
6:28 PM Waxing 5/6	4:44 PM Waxing 6/7	3:48 PM Waxing 7/8	3:40 PM Waxing 8/9	4:17 PM Waxing 9/10	5:33 PM Waxing 10/11	7:20 PM Waxing 11/12

12 Dvadashi Mawlid al Nabi	13 Pradosh "al-bid" Fast	14 "al-bid" Fast	15 Full Moon Purnima Amitabha al badr fast Keh-seh Tub'Shevat	16	17	18
9:28 PM Waxing 12/13	11:51 PM Waxing 13/14	Waxing 14	2:20 AM Full Moon St.	4:52 AM Waning 1	7:22 AM Waning 2	9:47 AM Waning 3

19 Timkat	20 Sankasti Marin Luther King	21	22	23 KrsnAstami Dakini Day Al-Darbeeya al-thani	24 KrsnAstami Dakini Day Al-Darbeeya al-thani	25 Burn's Night
12:02 PM Waning 3/4	2:02 PM Waning 4/5	3:40 PM Waning 5/6	4:48 PM Waning 6/7	5:19 PM Waning 7/8	5:07 PM Waning 8/9	4:08 PM Waning 9/10

26	27 Ekadashi Holocaust Memorial	28 Pradosh al - istitar	29 SivaRatri Dharmapala's day Al-Hillal al-akheer	30 Dark Moon Amavasya Shakyamuni Al-Muhaq Molad	31 New Month St Hilal Chodesh	1st Quarter Rises at Noon Full Moon Rises at Sunset Last Quarter Rises at Midnight Dark Moon 348 - 360° New Moon Start Rises at Sunrise
2:23 PM Waning 10/11	11:54 AM Waning 11/12	8:50 AM Waning 13	5:19 AM Waning 14	9:38 PM Waxing 1	5:51 PM Waxing 1/2	

National Days		2014	Moon in Stars	St. Time	2014	National Awareness	Dt.	International Events
01 New Year's Day Holiday in World	Jan-01	P.Shadha	1:32 AM	<b>J A N U A R Y  2014</b>	<b>J A N U A R Y  2014</b>	<b>Emancipation Day Jan 1</b> Celebrated in remembrance of the day the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Lincoln in 1863 ending slavery. Women's Self Empowerment 1st Week  <b>Religious Freedom Day Jan 20</b> Each year the President calls upon Americans to "observe this day through appropriate events and activities in homes, schools, and places of worship." The day is the 1786 anniversary of the Virginia State grant of Religious Freedom.  <b>National Blood Donor Month</b> Cervical Cancer Awareness Month Poverty in America Awareness Mth National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month Food Allergy - Intolerance Last Week	01	Global Peace Family Day
01 Independence Day in Haiti	Jan-01	U.Shadha	10:26 PM				06	World day for War orphans
01 Universal Fraternity Day in Mozambique	Jan-02	Shravana - Capricorn	7:19 PM				11	International Day for Peace in Kenya
02 Ancestry Day in Haiti	Jan-03	Dhanishta	4:24 PM				24	National Girl Child day of India
02 St. Berthold Day in Switzerland	Jan-04	Satabisha - Aquarius	1:53 PM				27	Holocaust Remembrance Day
04 Independence Day in Burma	Jan-05	P.Bhadra	11:55 AM				28	Data Protection Day
04 Martyrs Day in Zaire	Jan-06	U.Bhadra	10:39 AM				<b>United States America</b>	
06 Children's Day in Uruguay	Jan-07	Revati - Pisces	10:08 AM				01	New Year's Day
07 Pioneer's Day in Liberia	Jan-08	Ashwini - Aries	10:25 AM				13	Stephen Foster Memorial Day
09 Day of the Martyrs in Panama	Jan-09	Bharani	11:27 AM				20	Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day
11 Armed Forces Day in Liberia	Jan-10	Krittika	1:07 PM				<b>Great Britain</b>	
12 Zanzibar Revolution Day in Tanzania	Jan-11	Rohini - Taurus	3:17 PM				01	Scottish Bank Holiday
13 National Liberation Day in Togo	Jan-12	Mrgasira	5:50 PM				01	Scotland UK Public Holiday Monday
15 Martin Luther King Holiday in USA	Jan-13	Ardra - Gemini	8:37 PM				06	Handsel Monday
15 Arbor Day in Jordan	Jan-14	Purnavasu	11:31 PM				25	Burns Night
16 Martyrs Day in Benin	Jan-16	Pushya - Cancer	2:28 AM				28	Scotland UK Up-Helly-Aa
18 Revolution Day in Tunisia	Jan-17	Ashlesha	5:23 AM					
19 Confederate Heroes Day in Texas	Jan-18	Magha - Leo	8:14 AM					
19 N.day of Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus	Jan-19	P.Phalguni	10:57 AM					
20 Army Day in Mali	Jan-20	U.Phalguni	1:25 PM					
20 National Heroes Day in Guinea-Bissau	Jan-21	Hasta - Virgo	3:32 PM					
21 Our Lady of Altagracia in D.Republic	Jan-22	Chitra	5:11 PM					
23 Feast of St. Ildefonsus	Jan-23	Svati - Libra	6:14 PM					
23 National Handwriting Day	Jan-24	Visakha - Scorpio	6:35 PM					
24 Economic Liberation Day in Togo	Jan-25	Anuradha	6:11 PM					
26 Republic Day in India	Jan-26	Jyeshtha	5:01 PM					
26 Australia Day in Australia	Jan-27	Mula - Sagittarius	3:10 PM					
Lee-Jackson Day in Virginia (3rd Monday)	Jan-28	P.Shadha	12:44 PM					
Martin Luther King Day in New York (3rd Monday)	Jan-29	U.Shadha	9:53 AM					
Robert E. Lee's Birthday in Alabama & Mississippi (3rd Monday)	Jan-30	Shravana - Capricorn	6:48 AM					
	Jan-31	Dhanishta	3:41 AM					

Baha'i, Christian, Jewish & Islamic Days Start - Sunset to Sunset - For Hindus - Sunrise to Sunrise Special worship days for Muslim is Friday (Jum'ah), Jewish is Friday/Saturday (Sabbath), for Christian is Sunday Season of Day is when the Sun reigns, and for the Night is when the Moon reigns. Jeremiah 31:35.												



# Jewish Calendar is Slowly Drifting Off Track

Feb 16th, 2010 | By [Melech ben Ya'aqov](#) | Category: [Featured Articles](#)

## If Trend Continues, Passover Will Be In May and Rosh Hodesh One Day Later

Concept by Bruce Brill

Written by Melech Ben Ya'aqov

*To start off this new era of Your Jerusalem, we have reprinted one of our favorite and most important articles from the "old" Your Jerusalem. The following article originally ran as the headline article in the February, 1999 edition of Your Jerusalem.*



Has the Jewish Calendar's expectation of Rosh Hodesh shifted? Photo of new moon visible just after sunset. (New moon, difficult to see, is inside circle.)

Taken from Ein Karem, Jerusalem.

The Jewish calendar, laid out by Hillel II in the year 4119 (358 – 359 C.E.) and in use now for approximately 1,650 years, may have slowly drifted off track according to new research done by leading experts in the field of Biblical Astronomy. The drift is due to small discrepancies between the values of astronomical constants used by the Rabbinical sages and their corresponding values according to the latest NASA data. Compounded over many years, these small discrepancies seem to have resulted in meaningful shifts in the Jewish calendar.

The calendar has shifted both in its expectation of the time of the monthly *molad*, or New Moon, and its expectation of the date and time of the *tekufah*, or vernal equinox. The first shift means that Rosh Hodesh may fall a day later than the makers of the calendar seem to have intended; the second shift means that the festivals of Pesah, Biquirim (Shavuouth), and Sukkot now fall an average of 13 days later than the makers of the calendar seem to have intended.

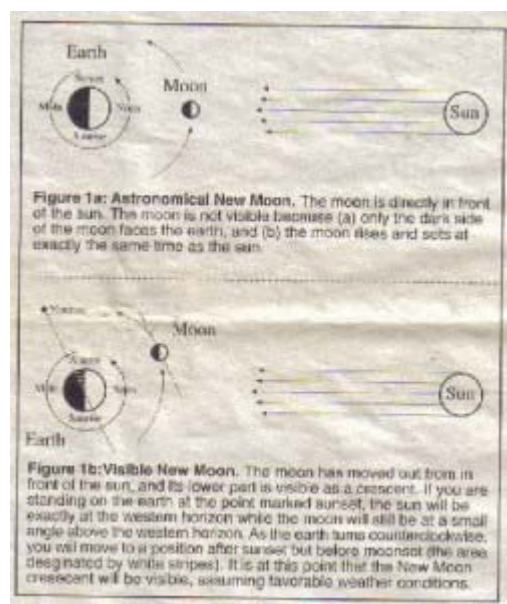
If the current trend continues, more and more Rashei Hodesh (New Months) will be declared a day later than intended and Pesah will slowly drift towards May, Biquirim (Shavuouth) towards August, and Sukkoth towards November. Opines Bruce Brill, who has done extensive research on the subject based on personal new moon sightings in Jerusalem, "The Jewish people need to celebrate feasts and fasts at the celestially correct times. ... The Jewish people are out of sync." Astronomer Robert Wadsworth of the Institute of Biblical Astronomy in Oregon City, Oregon echoes this sentiment, "It is my strong opinion that the Jewish calendar has gotten out of sync from what was originally intended by its creators."



## ROSH HODESH SHIFT

Rosh Hodesh seems to have shifted, in some cases, to one day later than originally intended by the makers of the Jewish Calendar. This shift is due to a slight discrepancy in the value of the *synodic period* of the moon as determined by the Rabbinical sages and its corresponding value according to the latest NASA data.

The *synodic period* of the moon, known in layman's terms as the "month", is the exact time between one Astronomical New Moon and the next. The Astronomical New Moon occurs when the moon, revolving around the earth, is on exactly the same side of the earth as is the sun. [See Figure 1a] While the length of any given synodic period (month) can vary by up to +/- 0.7 days, the average synodic period, or average month, is constant over a period of many years, and is a crucial value in determining the calendar's "Rashei Hodesh", or New Months.



Reprinted from Your Jerusalem, Feb. 1999

The value used by the sages for the average synodic period is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 1 "hayleq" (1/18 of a minute or 3 1/3 seconds). Translated into a decimal fraction, this value becomes 29.530594 days. According to the latest NASA data, the average synodic period of the moon is 29.530588 days, a difference of 6 millionths of a day, or translated into seconds, 0.5184 seconds. This means that, according to the value obtained by NASA, each month the Jewish calendar gains approximately an extra half second above and beyond what it should.

While half a second per month may seem insignificant, a simple calculation shows that, over time, it is not. If the Jewish calendar gains 0.5184 seconds per month, then each 12-month (regular) year it gains an extra 6.2208 seconds and each 13-month (leap) year it gains an extra 6.7392 seconds. Leap years in the Jewish calendar follow the rule, "7 leap years every 19 years." Then, another simple calculation shows that in the approximately 1650 years the Jewish calendar has been in use, there have been 608 leap years, while the remaining 1,042 years have been regular 12-month years. Thus over 1,650 years, the Jewish calendar has gained a total of  $608 * 6.7392 = 4,097$  seconds from leap years and a total of  $1,042 * 6.2208 = 6,482$  seconds from regular years, for a grand total of 10,579 seconds from both leap and regular years combined. Expressed in hours, 10,579 seconds comes out to be 2.94 hours.

The bottom line: the Jewish calendar is about 3 hours later in its expectation of the New Moon.

Based on the workings of the current Jewish calendar, this opens the possibility for many Rashei Hodesh to be declared a day late.

The process works as follows: In Hillel's calendar, the average synodic period fixes a monthly point in time which can be called the "Jewish (or Average) Molad". (The word *molad* comes from the Hebrew root for birth and means 'the birth of the new moon'. It is the Jewish Molad of Jerusalem which is announced in synagogues around the world on the Shabbath before every Rosh Hodesh.) Each month's Jewish Molad is a specific jump in time from the previous

month's Jewish Molad. This jump? You guessed it — the average synodic period of the moon as reckoned by Hillel II: 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 1 "hayleq" (29.530594 days). Since this jump is a bit large, the calendar is inching forward each month.

Rosh Hodesh Tishrei, which in turn sets the Rashei Hodesh for the entire year, is based on the Jewish Molad of Tishrei; Rosh Hodesh Tishrei occurs on the same day as the Jewish Molad of Tishrei unless the Jewish Molad of Tishrei occurs past noon, in which case Rosh Hodesh Tishrei is pushed off by one day. The result of this pushing off by one day is that the rest of the months of the year are also pushed off by one day. (Partial corrections can be achieved by shortening Kislev.) Now we can understand why a three hour lateness in the calendar can make such a difference: more and more Jewish Molads of Tishrei will cross the noon line, and therefore more and more Rashei Hodesh of Tishrei will be pushed off by one day, resulting in the pushing off of the Rashei Hodesh for the entire year.

## SHIFT OF THE FESTIVALS

The Festivals seem to have shifted forward by an average of approximately 13 days over 1650 years. The shift is due to a slight discrepancy in the value of the solar year as determined by the sages and its value according to the latest NASA data.

The solar year is the exact time that it takes for the earth to make one revolution around the sun. The secular (Gregorian) calendar is based on the solar year, the latest value of which is given by NASA as 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 45.6 seconds. Hillel II figured it at 365 days and 6 hours, a surplus of 11 minutes, 14.4 seconds. Simple calculation shows that over a period of 1,650 years, this would cause the Jewish calendar to drift forward 12 days, 21 hours, 7 minutes and 12 seconds.

The bottom line: the Jewish calendar is an average of 13 days later in its expectation of any given date in the solar year.



Karaites, who until this day keep Rosh Hodesh according to actual observation of the moon, celebrate after viewing the crescent new moon.

The current Jewish calendar, which is susceptible to drifts such as those described above, stands in strong contrast to the more flexible and self-correcting system, in use before, of fixing New Moons and Festivals based on human observation.

## ROSH HODESH IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

In times before the calendar was codified, Rosh Hodesh (the New Month) began when 2 valid Jewish witnesses (ordinary citizens) from the Land of Israel sighted the crescent of the New Moon after it emerged from its position directly in front of the sun.

Sighting the New Moon is not as trivial a matter as it may seem at first glance (no pun intended): when the moon is

located directly in front of the sun (at the time of the Astronomical New Moon), the dark side of the moon faces the earth and thus the moon is invisible from the earth. [See Figure 1a] In addition, since the sun and the moon are both at exactly the same direction from the earth, they rise and set at exactly the same time. This means that even if, hypothetically, the dark side of the moon were to be illuminated by some external light source other than the sun, the moon would still be invisible because whenever the moon is in the sky, the bright sun would also be in the sky, outshining the moon.

Rosh Hodesh begins when the New Moon emerges from its position in front of the sun. [See Figure 1b] This occurs 1 to 2 days after the Astronomical New Moon, and when it does, the situation has changed only slightly: (1) only a tiny portion of the light side of the moon faces the earth and the New Moon appears as a sliver; (2) the New Moon rises and sets only slightly later than the sun.

The bottom line: the only way to view the New Moon is to find its tiny crescent near the western horizon just after the sun sets (when the strong light of the sun no longer makes it impossible to see), and just before the moon sets (only about half an hour later). The observation is therefore difficult due to (1) time limitations (the moon is about to set), (2) position (the moon, about to set, will appear only a tiny angle above the western horizon), and (3) size (the moon is a tiny crescent).

If the New Moon was sighted by witnesses and the sighting was validated by the judges on the 30th day after the beginning of the previous month, then the judges declared the 30th day to be the first day of the New Month, or Rosh Hodesh. News of Rosh Hodesh was then transmitted by messenger and hilltop fire signal, and it was permitted even to violate the Shabbath in order to transmit this news. If two witnesses did not come or were not validated by the judges on the 30th day after the beginning of the previous month, then Rosh Hodesh would begin automatically on the 31st day after the previous Rosh Hodesh. Rosh Hodesh was considered a time of celebration and renewal. (The root of the word *hodesh* is *hadash*, or new.) Celebrations were common, and extra (*mussaf*) sacrifices were offered in the Holy Temple.)

## PESAH IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Just as Rosh Hodesh was not fixed in advance within the lunar cycle, but determined based on observation, so the Pesah (Passover) Festival was not fixed within the solar cycle (year), but was also determined based on observation. Though Pesah was always required to be on the 15th day of the First Month, ("On the 14th day of the first month towards the evening is the Lord's Passover. And on the 15th day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread." [Leviticus 23:5]), the First Month could be pushed off by one lunar cycle by adding a month to the previous year (making it a leap year.) This was done if certain signs that Spring had not yet come were present when the First Month was scheduled to begin. The signs were important because Passover is required to fall in the Spring: "This day you come out [of Egypt] in the month of the Spring. And it shall be when the Lord shall bring you into the land of the Canaanites ... a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month." [Exodus 13:4]

What signs needed to be present in order to postpone Passover for one month? The Babylonian Talmud provides its opinion in tractate Sanhedrin 11b: "A year may be made leap on three grounds: (1) on account of the premature state of the grain crops, (2) or that of the fruit trees, or (3) on account of the lateness of the *tekufah* [vernal equinox, or official start of Spring]."

The explanation is as follows: (1) Grains, especially barley, which ripen in early Spring in the Land of Israel, had to be ready in time to be brought to the Holy Temple for the Omer [First Fruits] offering on the second day of Pesah. [Leviticus 23:12]. This is because the Omer offering consisted of, among other things, flour made from barley. (2) It was preferable that the fruit trees be ripe in time for Biquirim (Shavuoth) 50 days later, when both another meal offering, "The New Meal Offering", was brought to the Holy Temple as well as the "First Fruits Basket" [Deuteronomy 26:1]. (3) The previous year could be made leap if the vernal equinox (March 21 or 22 in the current secular calendar) occurred later than the first day of Passover. If it did, then Passover would occur in the Winter, which contradicted the injunction mentioned above that it fall in Spring.

It was not enough for one of these signs to be present in order to declare a Leap Year — at least two of them had to

be present. If a Leap Year was indeed declared, then the month following the 12th month of the previous year (known now as Adar) became the 13th month of the previous year (Adar II) and not the 1st month of the New Year (now known as Nissan). Then, the month following the 13th month became the first month of the New Year.

## CONCLUSION

The old system, before the institution of the calendar, was a flexible and self-correcting system based on human observation of events which would never drift too far from their intended periods. When the Nation of Israel switched over to the fixed calendar, it became tied to numerical constants which, due to minute deviations from actual corresponding astronomical values, have been slowly dragging us "out of sync" over a period of many years.

The problem, then, is this: What does a nation, in this case the Nation of Israel, do when the laws it has set for itself begin to take it away from the natural timing and flow of the universe as laid down by God? This is the meaning of the opinions expressed earlier that the Jewish Nation is "out of sync." Next month we will present to you the work of various individuals and groups who are currently attempting to solve this problem by changing back to the more authentic and more accurate system of celestial and terrestrial observation.

*Do you have any comments about this article, or do you see a grammatical or other print error? Please e-mail us at [comments@YourJerusalem.org](mailto:comments@YourJerusalem.org).*

Tags: [calendar](#), [karaites](#)

## No Comments to "Jewish Calendar is Slowly Drifting Off Track"



1. [mahendra hirani](#) says:  
*Your comment is awaiting moderation.*  
**10 May 2012 at 9:07 PM**

the above information is correct and here is my findings see the month of june and july of 2012 and the moon phases

<http://www.multifaiths.com/pdf/ramadan2012.pdf>

## Leave a Comment



# Jewish Calendar, Festivals and Holy days

(Edited by Alon Gildoni, The Jewish Agency for Israel 5768)

## THE JEWISH CALENDAR

TISHREI (Sept-Oct)

CHESHVAN (Oct – Nov)

KISLEV (Nov-Dec)

TEVET (Dec-Jan)

SHVAT (Jan-Feb)

ADAR (Feb-March)

**Note: In a Leap Year, the month ADAR II is added.**

NISSAN (March-April)

IYAR (April-May)

SIVAN (May-June)

TAMMUZ (June-July)

AV (July-August)

ELUL (Aug-Sept)

YEAR:	2008/5768-69
Tu B' Shevat	Tue Jan 22
Ta'anit Esther	Thu Mar 20
Purim	Fri Mar 21
Pesach	Sun-Sun Apr 20-27
Yom haShoah	Thu May 1
Yom haZikaron	Wed May 7
Yom haAtzma'ut	Thu May 8
Lag baOmer	Fri May 23
Yom Yerushalayim	Mon Jun 2
Shavuot	Mon-Tue Jun 9-10
Shiva Asar B' Tammuz	Sun Jul 20
Tisha B' Av	Sun Aug 10
Rosh Hashanah	Tue-Wed Sept 30-Oct 1
Tzom Gedaliah	Thu Oct 2
Yom Kippur	Thu Oct 9
Sukkot / Shmini Atzeret	Tue-Wed Oct 14-22
Chanukah	Mon-Mon Dec 22-29
Asarah B' Tevet	Tue Jan 6 ('09)

The Jewish calendar is a lunisolar calendar, or "fixed lunar year," based on twelve lunar months of twenty-nine or thirty days, with an intercalary lunar month added seven times every nineteen years (once every two to three years) to synchronize the twelve lunar cycles with the slightly longer solar year. Each Jewish lunar month starts with the new moon; although originally the new lunar crescent had to be observed and certified by witnesses, the timing of the new moon is now mathematically determined.

Concurrently there is a weekly cycle of seven days, mirroring the seven day period of the Book of Genesis in which the world is created. The names for the days of the week, like those in the Creation story, are simply the day number within the week, with Shabbat being the seventh day. The Jewish day runs from sunset to the next sunset, and accordingly, standard times and time zones have no place in the Jewish calendar.

To compute the civil (Gregorian) year, simply add the number 1240 to the shortened Hebrew year. For example, the year 5767 "shortened", becomes 767 adding 1240 makes 2007.

## Rosh Ha-Shanah - The Jewish New Year

Rosh Ha-Shanah is the Jewish new year and day of judgement, in which God judges each person individually according to their deeds, and makes a decree for the following year. The holiday is characterized by the special mitzvah of blowing the *shofar*.

- For a the month of Elul which precedes Rosh Hashana, special additional prayers are added to the prayer service, known as Selichot (forgiveness).

Rosh Ha-Shanah (ראש השנה) - 1–2 Tishrei

According to the Jewish oral tradition, the creation of the world was completed on Rosh Hashanah.

The recitation of *Tashlikh* ( occurs during the afternoon of the first day. Rosh Ha-Shanah is always observed as a two-day holiday, both inside and outside the boundaries of Israel.

## Aseret Yemei Teshuva - Ten Days of Repentance

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are ten days, known as the Aseret Yemei Teshuva. During this time it is "exceedingly appropriate" for Jews to practice "Teshuvah," which is examining one's deeds and repenting for sins committed against both God and one's fellow man in anticipation of Yom Kippur. This repentance can take the form of additional supplications, confessing one's deeds before God, fasting, and self-reflection. On the third day, the Fast of Gedalia is celebrated.

## Yom Kippur - Day of Atonement

- Yom Kippur (יום כיפור) - 10 Tishrei

Yom Kippur is considered by Jews to be the holiest and most solemn day of the year. Its central theme is atonement and reconciliation. Eating, drinking, bathing, anointing with oil, and marital relations are prohibited. Fasting begins at sundown, and ends after nightfall the following day. Yom Kippur services begin with the prayer known as "*Kol Nidrei*", which must be recited before sunset. (*Kol Nidrei*, Aramaic for "all vows," is a public annulment of religious vows made by Jews during the preceding year. It only concerns unfilled vows made between a person and God, and does not cancel or nullify any vows made between people.)

A *Tallit* (four-cornered prayer shawl) is donned for evening prayers; the only evening service of the year in which this is done. The *Ne'ilah* service is a special service held only on the day of Yom Kippur, and deals with the closing of the holiday. Yom Kippur comes to an end with the blowing of the *shofar*, which marks the conclusion of the fast. It is always observed as a one-day holiday, both inside and outside the boundaries of the land of Israel.

## Sukkot

Sukkot (סוכות or סוכות *sukkōt*) or *Succoth* is a 7-day festival, also known as the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles, or just Tabernacles. It is one of the three pilgrimage festivals mentioned in the Bible. The word *sukkot* is the plural of the Hebrew word *sukkah*, meaning booth. Jews are commanded to "dwell" in booths during the holiday. This generally means taking meals, but some sleep in the *sukkah* as well. There are specific rules for constructing a *sukkah*. The seventh day of the holiday is called Hoshanah Rabbah.

- Sukkot (חג הסוכות) - 15–22 Tishrei

## Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

Simchat Torah (תורה שמחת) means "rejoicing with the Torah". It actually refers to a special ceremony which takes place on the holiday of Shemini Atzeret. This holiday immediately follows the conclusion of the holiday of Sukkot. In Israel, Shemini Atzeret (or Eighth Day Assembly) is one day long and includes the celebration of Simchat Torah. Outside Israel, Shemini Atzeret is two days long and Simchat Torah is observed on the second day, which is often referred to by the name of the ceremony.

The last portion of the Torah is read, completing the annual cycle, followed by the first chapter of Genesis. Services are especially joyous, and all attendees, young and old, are involved.

## Hanukkah - Festival of Lights

- Hanukkah (חנוכה) - 25 Kislev – 2 or 3 Tevet

The story of Hanukkah is preserved in the books of the First and Second Maccabees. These books are not part of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), they are apocryphal books instead. The miracle of the one-day supply of oil miraculously lasting eight days is first described in the Talmud.

Hanukkah marks the defeat of Seleucid Empire forces that had tried to prevent the people of Israel from practicing Judaism. Judah Maccabee and his brothers destroyed overwhelming forces, and rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem. The eight-day festival is marked by the kindling of lights — one on the first night, two on the second, and so on - using a special candle holder called a *Chanukkiyah*, or a *Hanukkah menorah*.

There is a custom to give children money on Hanukkah to commemorate the learning of Torah in guise of Jews gathering in what was perceived as gambling at that time since Torah was forbidden. Because of this, there is also the custom to play with the dreidel (called a *sevivon* in Hebrew).

## Tenth of Tevet

This minor fast day marks the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem as outlined in 2 Kings 25:1 "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about."

As a minor fast day, fasting from dawn to dusk is required, but other laws of mourning are not observed. A Torah reading and Haftorah reading, and a special prayer in the Amidah, are added at both Shacharit and Mincha services.

## Tu Bishvat-New Year of the Trees

- Tu Bishvat (ט"ו בשבט - חג האילנות) — 15 Shevat

Tu Bishvat is the new year for trees. According to the Mishnah, it marks the day from which fruit tithes are counted each year. In modern times, it is celebrated by eating various fruits and nuts associated with the Land of Israel. During the 1600s, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria of Safed and his disciples created a short seder, called *Hemdut ha-Yamim*, reminiscent of the seder that Jews observe on Passover, that explores the holiday's Kabbalistic themes.

## Purim - Festival of Lots

- Erev Purim and Fast of Esther known as "Ta'anit Ester" — 13 Adar
- Purim (פורים) — 14 Adar
- Shushan Purim 15 Adar
- In leap years on the Hebrew calendar, Purim is observed in the Second Adar (Adar Sheni).

Purim commemorates the events that took place in the Book of Esther. It is celebrated by reading or acting out the story of Esther, and by making disparaging noises at every mention of Haman's name. In Purim it is a tradition to masquerade around in costumes and to give *Mishloakh Manot* (care packages, i.e. gifts of food and drink) to the poor and the needy. In Israel it is also a tradition to arrange festive parades, known as *Ad-D'lo-Yada*, in the town's main street.

Although Rosh Hashanah marks the change of the Jewish calendar year, Nisan is considered the first month of the Hebrew calendar. The Mishnah indicates that the year of the reign of Jewish kings was counted from Nisan in Biblical times. Nisan is also considered the beginning of the calendar year in terms of the order of the holidays.

In addition to this New Year, the Mishnah sets up three other legal New Years:

- 1st of Elul, New Year for animal tithes,
- 1st of Tishrei (Rosh Hashanah), the New Year for the calendar year and for vegetable tithes
- 15th of Shevat (Tu B'Shevat), the New Year for Trees/fruit

## Pesach Passover

- Erev Pesach and Fast of the Firstborn known as "Ta'anit Bechorim" — 14 Nisan
- Passover/Pesach (פסח) (first two days) — 15 (and 16) Nisan
- The semi-holiday days between the "first days" and the "last days" of Passover are known as *Chol Hamo'ed*, referred to as the "Intermediate days".

Pesach (Passover) commemorates the liberation of the Israelite slaves from Egypt. No leavened food is eaten during the week of Pesach, in commemoration of the fact that the Jews left Egypt so quickly that their bread did not have enough time to rise.

The first seder begins at sundown on the 15th of Nisan, and the second seder is held on the night of the 16th of Nisan. On the second night, Jews start counting the *omer*. The counting of the *omer* is a count of the days from the time they left Egypt until the time they arrived at Mount Sinai.

## Sefirat Ha'Omer - Counting of the Omer

Sefirah (ספירת העומר, *Sefirat Ha'Omer*) - Counting the Omer

Sefirat Ha'Omer is the 49 day ("seven weeks") period between Pesach and Shavuot; it is defined by the Torah as the period during which special offerings are to be brought to the



Temple in Jerusalem. Judaism teaches that this makes physical the spiritual connection between Pesach and Shavuot.

This period is a time of partial mourning, during which weddings, parties, and dinners with dancing are not prohibited, in memory of a tens of thousands of our people who died in a plague during the lifetime of Rabbi Akiba. Haircuts during this time are also forbidden.

## Lag Ba'omer

**Lag Ba'omer** (ל"ג בעומר) is the 33rd day in the Omer count (ל"ג is the number 33 in Hebrew). The mourning restrictions on joyous activities during the Omer period are lifted on Lag Ba'Omer and there are often celebrations with picnics, bonfires and bow and arrow play by children. In Israel, youth can be seen gathering materials for bonfires.

The origins of the holiday begin with the time of Rabbi Akiva. The Talmud (Yevamot 62b) states that 24,000 of Rabbi Akiva's students died from a mysterious divine-sent plague. The Talmud then goes on to say that this was because they did not show proper respect to one another, befitting their level. Jews celebrate Lag Ba'omer as the traditional day that this plague ended. This is the view recorded in the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, 120:1-10.

Others say that these students were killed in the Bar Kokhba revolt (in which Rabbi Akiva was a major figure), the plague being the Roman occupation. As an act of censorship, the Talmud attributed their deaths to lack of respect to one another, afraid attributing their deaths to resisting the Roman empire would be viewed as treachery. Viewed in this context, the lighting of bonfires on this evening seems logical, since in ancient times bonfires were used as signals in wartime.

There is some conjecture that the holiday marks the temporary victory of Bar Kochba's men over the Romans.[3] The holiday became a symbol emphasizing the struggle for national liberation and freedom. The bonfires and the bow&arrow games coincide with Bar Kocvha's revolt.

The day is also the Yortsayt, the anniversary of the death, of the Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai [4] who is believed by some to have authored the Zohar, a landmark text of Jewish mysticism.

## New Israeli/Jewish national holidays

Since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel has established four new Jewish holidays.

- Jerusalem Day
- Yom HaShoah — Holocaust Remembrance day
- Yom Hazikaron — Memorial Day
- Yom Ha'atzma'ut — Israel Independence Day

These four days are national holidays in the State of Israel, and have since been accepted as religious holidays in general by the following groups: The Union of Orthodox Congregations and Rabbinical Council of America; The United Hebrew Congregations of

the Commonwealth (United Kingdom); The Chief Rabbinate of the State of Israel; All of Reform Judaism and Conservative Judaism; The Union for Traditional Judaism and the Reconstructionist movement.

## **Yom HaShoah - Holocaust Remembrance day**

- Yom HaShoah (לשואה ולגבורה יום הזכרון) — 27 Nisan

Yom HaShoah is also known as Holocaust Remembrance Day, and takes place on the 27th day of Nisan.

## **Yom Hazikaron - Memorial Day**

- Yom Hazikaron (הזכרון לחללי מערכות ישראל יום) — 4 Iyar

Yom Hazikaron is the day of remembrance in honor of Israeli veterans and fallen soldiers of the Wars of Israel. The Memorial Day also commemorates fallen civilians, slain by acts of hostile terrorism.

## **Yom Ha'atzma'ut — Israel Independence Day**

- Yom Ha'atzma'ut (יום העצמאות) — 5 Iyar

Yom Ha'atzma'ut is Israel's Independence Day. An official ceremony is held annually on the eve of Yom Ha'atzma'ut at Mount Herzl. The ceremony includes speeches by senior Israeli officials, an artistic presentation, a ritual march of flag-carrying soldiers forming elaborate structures (such as a Menorah, a Magen David and the number which represents the age of the State of Israel) and the lighting of twelve beacons (one for each of the Tribes of Israel). Dozens of Israeli citizens, who contributed significantly to the state, are selected to light these beacons.

## **Jerusalem Day**

- Jerusalem Day (ירושלים יום) — 28 Iyar

*Jerusalem Day* marks the 1967 reunification of Jerusalem and The Temple Mount under Jewish rule during the Six-Day War almost 1900 years after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

## **Shavuot - Feast of Weeks - Yom HaBikurim**

- Shavuot (שבועות) — 6, 7 Sivan

Shavuot, The Feast of Weeks is one of the three pilgrim festivals (*Shalosh regalim*) ordained in the Torah, Shavuot marks the end of the counting of the *Omer*, the period between Passover and Shavuot. According to Rabbinic tradition, the Ten Commandments were given on this day. During this holiday the Torah portion containing the Ten Commandments is read in the synagogue, and the biblical Book of Ruth is read as well. It is traditional to eat dairy meals during Shavuot.

## Seventeenth of Tammuz

The 17th of Tammuz traditionally marks the first breach in the walls of the Second Temple during the Roman occupation.

As a minor fast day, fasting from dawn to dusk is required, but other laws of mourning are not observed. A Torah reading and Haftarah reading, and a special prayer in the Amidah, are added at both Shacharit and Mincha services.

## The Three Weeks and the Nine Days

- The Three Weeks: Seventeenth of Tammuz, 17 Tammuz – 9 Av
- The Nine Days: 1–9 Av

The days between the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av are days of mourning, on account of the collapse of Jerusalem during the Roman occupation which occurred during this time framework. Weddings and other joyful occasions are traditionally not held during this period. A further element is added within the three weeks, during the nine days between the 1st and 9th day of Av — the pious refrain from eating meat and drinking wine, except on Shabbat or at a *Seudat Mitzvah* (a Mitzvah meal, such as a *Pidyon Haben* — the recognition of a firstborn male child — or the study completion of a religious text.) In addition, one's hair is not cut during this period.

## Tisha B'av - Ninth of Av

- Tisha B'Av (באב צום תשעה) - 9 Av

Tisha B'Av is a fast day that commemorates two of the saddest events in Jewish history that both occurred on the ninth of Av - the destruction in 586 BCE of the First Temple, originally built by King Solomon, and destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. Other calamities throughout Jewish history are said to have taken place on Tisha B'Av, including King Edward I's edict compelling the Jews to leave England (1290), the Jewish expulsion from Spain in 1492, Germany's declaration of war against Russia during World War I, and the first killings at the Treblinka death camp (1942).

## Rosh Chodesh - the New Month

The first day of each month and the thirtieth day of the preceding month, if it has thirty days, is (in modern times) a minor holiday known as Rosh Chodesh (head of the month). The one exception is the month of Tishrei, whose beginning is a major holiday, Rosh Hashanah. There are also special prayers said upon observing the new Moon for the first time each month.

## Shabbat - The Sabbath - שבת

Jewish law accords the Sabbath the status of a holiday. Jews celebrate a *Shabbat*, a day of rest, on the seventh day of each week. Jewish law defines a day as ending at nightfall, which is when the next day then begins. Thus, *Shabbat* begins at sundown Friday night, and ends at nightfall Saturday night.

In many ways *halakha* (Jewish law) gives *Shabbat* the status of being the most important holy day in the Jewish calendar.

- It is the first holiday mentioned in the *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible), and God was the first one to observe it.
- The liturgy treats the Sabbath as a bride and queen.
- The Torah reading on the Sabbath has more sections of *parshiot* (Torah readings) than on Yom Kippur, the most of any Jewish holiday.
- There is a tradition that the Messiah will come if every Jew observes the Sabbath twice in a row.
- The Biblical penalty for violating *Shabbat* is greater than that for violating any other holiday.

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