

Hillel or Sighted Moon – A Quick Look at the Facts

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(Extracted from News Letter 5854-008)

The 2nd Year of the 4th Sabbatical Cycle

The 23rd year of the 120th Jubilee Cycle

The 3rd day of the 3rd month 5854 years after the creation of Adam

The 3rd Month in the Second year of the Fourth Sabbatical Cycle

The Sixth Sabbath of Seven Sabbaths

The 4th Sabbatical Cycle after the 119th Jubilee Cycle

The Sabbatical Cycle of Sword, Famines, and Pestilence

May 19, 2018

Shabbat Shalom To the Royal Family,

The New Moon of the 3rd Month 5854 Years After Creation

The Third News Crescent moon of this year 5854 has been seen on this past Wednesday evening. Many people wonder why we look for the moon. I will let Roy Hoffman of the Israeli New Moon Society explain it to you.

The commandment to sanctify the month is the first commandment that the Israelites were commanded when they left Egypt. This mitzva is of great importance since the setting of the times, which include more than sixty Mitzvot, depends on it. In addition to the new Kiddush set according to the time of the new moon, the Hebrew calendar also depends on the number of years determined by the state of the sun, grain maturity and other factors.

I want to stress what Dr. Hoffman is about to state. It is well known. That is all Jews know this as fact. Many Messianics or those who are now keeping the Feasts by the Hebrew Calendar do not know this very well known fact. If they did there would not be so many arguments about the calendar. And yet there are.

Before I return to Dr. Hoffman let me quote to you the article about Hillel.

Hillel II (Hebrew: Hillel the Nasi), also known simply as Hillel held the office of Nasi of the ancient Jewish Sanhedrin between 320 and 385 CE. He was the son and successor of Judah III. He was a Jewish communal and religious authority, circa 330 – 365 CE. He is sometimes confused with Hillel the Elder, as the Talmud sometimes simply uses the name “Hillel”.

In two instances his name is quoted in connection with important decisions in Jewish law: in one, Jose ben Abin expounds to him a law; in the other, Hillel cites a mishnah to establish a law (Yer. Ber. ii. 5a; Yer. Ter. i. 41a).

He is traditionally regarded as the creator of the modern fixed Jewish calendar. It first appears in a responsum of R. Hai Gaon (early eleventh century) cited by R. Abraham bar Hiyya in his *Sefer Ha'ibbur*, written in 1123. The topic of that responsum is the 19-year cycle for leap-year intercalations, so the most that can be inferred from that attribution is that Hillel was responsible for the adoption of that cycle for the regulation of the distribution of leap-years.

Actually there is in fact much more that can be inferred from this citation. The citation explicitly refers to the year that this event happened, 670 of the Seleucid era, which corresponds to 358/9 CE. The Molad of Tishrei for that year 4119 would be Sat 23 hours and 233 parts. Under the Gregorian calendar this would be Sat, Sept 20, 0358 17:12. Rosh Hashanah would have begun Friday evening but not before, according to lunar science, a very bright Old Moon will rise Friday morning at 4:11 AM, an hour and 34 minutes before sunrise. The significance of this can be found in the Talmud Rosh Hashanah 25a.

Scholars who have studied the history of the Jewish calendar are in general agreement (and there is much evidence for this in the Talmud itself and in other rabbinic sources) that in practice, the evolution of the calendar into its present form was a gradual process spanning several centuries from the first to about the eighth or ninth century CE. The champion of the view that the calendar was developed in the eighth or ninth century CE is Sacha Stern. This quote is from page 184-5 of his book *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar*

“Of far greater importance, however, is a much later document from the Cairo Geniza: a letter of a Babylonian exilarch – one of the main leaders of the Rabbanite community – with detailed calendrical instructions for the year 835/6 CE. The letter reveals that Passover (15 Nisan) in that year was due to occur on a Tuesday; whilst according to the present-day rabbinic calendar, it should have occurred on Thursday. **According to the exilarch, the setting of Passover on Tuesday was dictated by a concern to avoid visibility of the new moon before the first day of the month. This concern does not exist in the present-day rabbinic calendar.** Once discovered and published in 1922, the exilarch’s letter proved beyond doubt that almost five hundred years after R. Yose and ‘Hillel the Patriarch’, then fixed calendar in its present-day form had still not been instituted.”

So it is very well known that Hillel created the current Hebrew Calendar in 358 C.E and it is this calculated calendar that is in use by most Jews and many of those now keeping the Hebrew Calendar. But notice the last line which I have highlighted. The calendar used to be determined

by the sighting of the moon to begin the month. Not anymore and this is well known according to Dr. Hoffman.

Continuing with Dr. Hoffmans quote;

As is well known, for more than a thousand years the Hebrew calendar has been determined by arithmetic. Today, the Hebrew calendar does not match the calendar determined by sight. Although the gap between the two tablets is increasing over time, we do not have permission to change the calendar until the Sanhedrin is established . Although the sanctity of the month according to evidence is not customary today it is interesting to engage in calculations and practice the evidence of the new moon to be ready when the Sanhedrin will return to drive again. Similar to this we find today dealing with matters of the Temple, a red cow and so on. Of course, we do not intend to change the existing calendar (without the permission of the adjacent Sanhedrin), but only to increase the preoccupation with Torah and its adoration.

In recent years, several individuals and groups have started observing the moon at the beginning of each month to practice the mitzvah of seeing and determine a criterion for vision. There is room to improve the existing vision criteria by observations and analysis according to physical meteorological and physiological considerations. We, the Israeli Society for the New Moon , hereby invite the general public to cooperate with us and try to see the new moon at the beginning of each month. For this purpose, the Israeli Society for the New Moon was founded by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Rabinovich, Rosh Yeshiva of Birkat Moshe, Ma'aleh Adumim . The association cooperates with the Institute for the Study of Kiddush HaChodesh and includes scientists and rabbis from universities, yeshivas, places and others.

The Israeli Society for the Study of the New Moon deals with the issue from an Orthodox rabbinic Jewish perspective. Anyone interested in using the new moon observations of view of other religious views can browse the sites of Muslims , Karaites , Christians and religions evolved from a mixture of form and Judaism

It has been with this understanding that the Hebrew Calendar is out by one, two or even three days and in some years by as many as 33 days. We at sightedmoon.com have returned to sighting the moon to begin the month and using the barley to begin the year. We began to do this back in 2005 and continue to share the observations of those in Israel from various groups to determine when the month begins.

This is critical to know in order to determine when the Holy Days are in the first and seventh month. We are now in the 3rd month. The following report is from Devorah's Date Tree.

The new moon was sighted from Israel this evening, May 16, 2018!

* From Jerusalem by Devorah Gordon at 7:40pm followed by Harold Tarter, Cari Tarter, and GilAshendorf.

* From Tiberias by Dennis Chkolnik at 7:45pm.

* From Eilat by Lukas Schneider and his two sons Alon and Lior at 7:50pm.

* From Kfar Tapuach by Ephraim Lee, Yonatan Lee, and Gideon Lee

This means that Rosh Chodesh (the first day of the month) is from sunset May 16, 2018 – sunset May 17, 2018. Be sure to keep track of what number month this is based on when you started the new year.

Having said and shared the above, some are wondering why we are keeping Shavuot or Pentecost one week after the rest of the world does. Both Christians and Jews are keeping it at the same time on May 20th, 2018. The Jews use Sivan 6 each year and it can be on any day of the week. But this year it just so happens to be on a Sunday.

When we use the crescent moon to begin the month this changes the Holy Days by 2 days this year from the Hebrew Calendar. As such the Sunday that you are to count the omer from during the days of Unleavened Bread was also changed. Because the Hebrew Calendar had Passover on Friday night and Sabbath and the 16th of Nisan, which is when they start the counting of the Omer, was on this Sunday. Those of us using the crescent moon Passover began that Sunday night and Monday. This meant that the Sunday of the wave sheaf day was a full week later on the last day of Unleavened Bread.

You can see a calendar showing the Crescent moon and the start of Passover on [this chart](#). Stop and consider what we are saying here. Stop and read Lev 23 and know that if you keep the Holy Days at the wrong time you have sinned even if you thought you were doing it right. Stop being sheep and start to be the leader you have been called to be. Know and understand why there is a difference this year of 7 days for Shavuot.