

The Former and Latter Rains

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I. Introduction

In this paper I would like to explore the calendrical and theological relationships between the spring months and the fall months, between the spring festivals and the fall festivals. Lets start by looking at Joel 2:23 as translated by several different versions

NAS: Joel 2:23 So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the \Lord\ your God; For He has given you the early rain for {your} vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.

NIV: Joel 2:23 Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.

KJV: Joel 2:23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first [month].

Strong's defines FORMER RAIN as: 4175 mowreh, mo-reh'; from 3384; an archer; also teacher or teaching; also the early rain (see 3138):- (early, former) rain.

Strong's defines MODERATELY as: 6666 tsedaqah, tsed-aw-kaw'; from 6663; rightness (abstr.), subj. (rectitude), obj. (justice), mor. (virtue) or fig. (prosperity):- justice, moderately, right (-eous) (act, -ly, -ness).

----- Dictionary Trace -----

6663 tsadaq, tsaw-dak'; a prim. root; to be (causat. make) right (in a moral or forensic sense):-cleanse, clear self, (be, do) just (-ice, -ify, -ify self), (be, turn to) righteous (-ness).

Strong's defines LATTER RAINS as: 4456 malqowsh, mal-koshe'; from 3953; the spring rain (comp. 3954); fig. eloquence:-latter rain.

----- Dictionary Trace -----

3953 laqash, law-kash'; a prim. root; to gather the after crop:-gather.

3954 leqesh, leh'-kesh; from 3953; the after crop:-latter growth.

So, the remez of this verse indicates that the teacher of righteousness will come in the autumn! Now lets note when these rains occur during the year, according to the Talmud:

Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 5a GEMARA. R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: Does then the former rain [fall] in Nisan? The former rain surely [falls] in Marcheshvan. It has been taught: Former rain, [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan.

Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 6a Our Rabbis have taught: Former rain [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan. You say, Former rain in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan; perhaps it is otherwise, former rain in Tishri and latter rain in Iyar? The text [therefore] adds, in its due season.[1]

The Torah records that the flood in the days of Noah began in Cheshvan (Marcheshvan):

Genesis 7:10-12 And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month--on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

It rained for forty days and forty nights, stopping on Kislev 28, the fourth day of Chanukah.

II. The Spring Festivals are like the Fall Festivals

Passover is introduced by Purim and concluded by Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks. So, too, Succoth, the Feast of Tabernacles, is introduced by the awesome days, which include Rosh Hashana, the Feast of Trumpets, (Yom Teruah) and Yom HaKippurim, the Day of Atonement, and is concluded by Shemini Atzeret, the Eighth Assembly.

The Triads		
Purim	Passover	Shavuot
The bride-to-be is tested.	In the spring.	The Torah is given on Mt. Sinai.
Begin cleaning leaven out of our house.	The bride is chosen.	The bride is made ready, by betrothal.
Eating is a requirement.	Requirements for eating.	No food requirement. Dairy custom.
Physical renewal		
The awesome days, which include Yom Teruah and Yom HaKippurim (a day like Purim).	Succoth	Shemini Atzeret + Sincha Torah
The bride is married.	In the fall.	We rejoice in the Torah and finish Deuteronomy and starting Genesis.
Begin cleaning sin out of our lives.	The marriage feast.	The bride rejoices.
Eating is a requirement.	Requirements for eating.	No food requirement.
Spiritual renewal		

III. Nisan is Like Tishri

Tekufah of Nisan (Vernal Equinox) Nisan – The First Month Ripening of grain

1

New Year for counting months.

The pur is cast.

The Mishkan and Temple start operating.

10

Sacrifice (Passover lamb) is selected.

Israelites enter the promised land.

Abraham and household are circumcized

Physical freedom begins.

Judgement of the firstborn.

Shabbat HaGadol – the Great Sabbath. We examine a lamb for blemishes.

14-15

Sabbath.

Hashem's people enter protective abode.

Passover Seder.

Messiah dies.

Israel must eat matza.

16

17

18

Read the Song of Songs and Exodus 33:12 – 34:26 on the Sabbath during Pesach

19

20

21

Sabbath

Sivan 6

Sabbath

Shavuot – Atzeret

Torah was given on Mt. Sinai.

Large loaves are paraded and waved.

Pilgrimage festival.

Read the book of Ruth

No distinctive practice for the people.

Passover

Feast of Matzah – the bread of affliction.

Israelites begin living in succoth while traveling.

Pilgrimage festival.

First harvest (barley). Barley is waved.

Israel may eat only unleavened food.

Tekufah of Tishri (Autumn Equinox) Tishrei – The Seventh Month Ripening of grapes and olives

1-2

Sabbath

Yom Teruah.
New Year for counting years.
Judgement day.
Messiah, our Temple, comes!

10
Sabbath
Yom HaKippurim
Sacrifice is (two goats) selected.
We return to the state we enjoyed in Eden.
Adam was circumcized when created.
Total Jubilee freedom begins.
Neilah – judgement complete.

On The Sabbath before Yom HaKippurim Shabbat Shuvah ("Sabbath of Repentance")
15

Sabbath

Hashem's people enter protective abode.

Messiah is born.

Israel must live in succah
16
17
18

Read the book of Ecclesiastes and Exodus 33:12 – 34:26 on the Sabbath during Succoth.
19
20
21
22

Sabbath

Shemini Atzeret

Simcha Torah

Reading of Devarim is concluded and started again at Bereshit.

Torah scrolls are paraded and waved.
No distinctive practice for the people.

Succoth

The feast of our JOY!

God's people live in succoth for seven days at rest.

It is a mitzvah to feast in the succah.

Pilgrimage festival.

Final harvest. Lulav and etrog are waved.

Israel must eat all of their meals in the succah.

Another, interesting concept for further exploration, given the bipolarity of the Torah, is the relationship between Shabbat HaGadol ("The Great Sabbath") in Nissan as immediately preceding Pesach, and Shabbat Shuvah ("Sabbath of Repentance") in Tishri as immediately preceding Yom Kippur. It looks to me that there are a number of commonalities as well as basic distinctions between these two particular Shabbats. However, it appears that the major themes presented on these two Shabbats are intertwined. Chiefly, this Shabbat appears in the midst of physical cleansing of our homes, whilst Shabbat Shuvah appears in the midst of spiritual cleansing in our lives. However, the topic of "cleansing" and "preparation" for the festival permeates both Shabbats.

Rosh Chodesh (the new moon – the first day of) Elul, begins a forty day period of Teshuvah – repentance. On Purim, Adar 14/15, we begin a time a repentance. Yom HaKippurim can be separated as: Yom Ha Ki Purim, which means "a day like Purim". Even as the Jews began fasting, and repenting just before Passover, so do we repent in preparation for Passover in a manner similar to the repentance before Tishrei.

In Shas, Shemini Atzeret is called Atzeret shel Feast, the Atzeret of Succoth, as opposed to Shavuot which is called Atzeret without a qualifier (Minachos 65a). In fact, the Midrash (Shir HaShirim 7:2) takes the effort to explain why Shemini Atzeret isn't 50 days after Succoth, why it differs from Shavuot:

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs VII:4 Another explanation: HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THY FOOTSTEPS IN SANDALS (NE 'ALIM): in two closings (ne'alim).[2] R. Hana b. Hanina said: It is as if two traders went into a town together, and one of them said to the other: 'If we both offer our wares together in the town, we will bring down the price. So do you offer yours one week, and I will offer mine the next.' R. Hananiah the son of R. Ibi said: It is written here, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THY FOOTSTEPS not in the sandal, but IN SANDALS. There are two closings: the closing of Passover and the closing of Tabernacles. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Israel: 'You close before Me at Tabernacles, and I close before you at Passover. You close your work before Me at Tabernacles,[3] and I open the heavens and cause winds to blow and bring up clouds and make rain fall and cause the sun to shine and make plants grow and ripen produce, and provide each one of you with a table set out with his needs, and each body according to its requirements. And I close [the heavens] before you at Passover,[4] and you go out and reap and thresh and winnow and do all that is required in the field and find it rich in blessing.' R. Joshua b. Levi said: By rights, the Eighth Day of Assembly should have followed Tabernacles after an interval of fifty days, as Pentecost follows Passover. But since at the Eighth Day of Assembly summer passes into autumn, the time is not suitable for travelling. [God was like] a king who had several married daughters, some living near by, while others were a long way away. One day they all came to visit their father the king. Said the king: 'Those who are living near by are able to travel at any time. But those who live at a distance are not able to travel at any time. So while they are all here with me, let us make one feast for all of them and rejoice with them.' So with regard to Pentecost, which

comes when winter is passing into summer, God says, 'The season is fit for travelling.' But the Eighth day of Assembly comes when summer is passing into autumn, and the roads are dusty and hard for walking; hence it is not separated by an interval of fifty days. Said the Holy One, blessed be He: 'These are not days for travelling; so while they are here, let us make of all of them one festival and rejoice.' Therefore Moses admonishes Israel, saying to them, On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly (Num. XXIX, 35). Thus we may say, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THY FOOTSTEPS IN NE' ALIM.

Passover and Succoth both have a "second chance" to be celebrated.

Iyar 15 through 21 is known as Pesach sheni, the second Passover. This celebration is for those who were unclean, or on a trip, during Passover.

Succoth's "second chance" is called Chanukah. The Israelites were too busy fighting the Syrians to stop for Succoth. They missed the celebration so much, that they celebrated it when they were through fighting: Kislev 25 – Tevet 2.

The sacrifices on Succoth are double the offerings of Pesach, except for the bulls and the goats:

15
16
17
18
19
20
21

Passover

2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.
2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.
2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.
2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.
2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.
2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.
2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Succoth

13 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

12 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

11 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

10 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

9 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

8 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

7 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

The Talmud records that there are four new years. Tishri is the new year for counting years and Nisan is the new year for kings.

Talmud - Mas. Rosh HaShana 2a MISHNAH. THERE ARE FOUR NEW YEARS.[5] ON THE FIRST OF NISAN[6] IS NEW YEAR FOR KINGS[7] AND FOR FESTIVALS.[8] ON THE FIRST OF ELUL[9] IS NEW YEAR FOR THE TITHE OF CATTLE.[10] R. ELEAZAR AND R. SIMEON, HOWEVER, PLACE THIS ON THE FIRST OF TISHRI.[11] ON THE FIRST OF TISHRI[12] IS NEW YEAR FOR YEARS, FOR RELEASE AND JUBILEE YEARS,[13] FOR PLANTATION[14] AND FOR [TITHE OF] VEGETABLES.[15] ON THE FIRST OF SHEVAT[16] IS NEW YEAR FOR TREES,[17] ACCORDING TO THE RULING OF BETH SHAMMAI; BETH HILLEL, HOWEVER, PLACE IT ON THE FIFTEENTH OF THAT MONTH.

Adar

1

7

14

15

Begin to increase your joy.

Moses dies on his birthday.

The pious fast and repent on this day.

Purim

Read the book of Esther
Shushan Purim

Read the book of Esther

Elul

1

Begin 40 day period of teshuvah, repentance.

IV. Talmudic Allusions

Talmud - Mas. Berachoth 35b Our Rabbis taught: And thou shalt gather in thy corn.[18] What is to be learnt from these words? Since it says, This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth,[19] I might think that this injunction is to be taken literally. Therefore it says, 'And thou shalt gather in thy corn', which implies that you are to

combine the study of them[20] with a worldly occupation. This is the view of R. Ishmael. R. Simeon b. Yohai says: Is that possible? If a man ploughs in the ploughing season, and sows in the sowing season, and reaps in the reaping season, and threshes in the threshing season, and winnows in the season of wind, what is to become of the Torah? No; but when Israel perform the will of the Omnipresent, their work is performed by others, as it says. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks. etc.,[21] and when Israel do not perform the will of the Omnipresent their work is carried out by themselves, as it says, And thou shalt gather in thy corn.[22] Nor is this all, but the work of others also is done by them, as it says. And thou shalt serve thine enemy etc.[23] Said Abaye: Many have followed the advice of Ishmael, and it has worked well; others have followed R. Simeon b. Yohai and it has not been successful. Raba said to the Rabbis: I would ask you not to appear before me during Nisan and Tishri[24] so that you may not be anxious about your food supply during the rest of the year.

Talmud - Mas. Shabbath 43b R. Ashi said:[25] Is it then taught, 'in summer' and 'in winter'? Surely, it is stated, 'in the sun because of the sun and in the rain because of the rain.' [That means,] in the days of Nisan and Tishri,[26] when there is sun, rain, and honey.

Talmud - Mas. Rosh HaShana 19b They sent [from Palestine] to Mar 'Ukba to say: The Adar which precedes Nisan is always defective. R. Nahman raised an objection [from the following]: 'For the fixing of two New Moons the Sabbath may be profaned,[27] for those of Nisan and of Tishri'. Now if you say that [the Adar before Nisan] is sometimes full and sometimes defective, I can understand how occasions arise for profaning the Sabbath. But if it is always defective, why should they profane it?[28] — Because it is a religious duty to sanctify [the New Moon] on the strength of actual observation.[29] According to another version, R. Nahman said: We also have learnt: 'For the fixing of two New Moons the Sabbath may be profaned, for those of Nisan and of Tishri'. Now if you say that the Adar which precedes Nisan is always defective, there is no difficulty; the reason why Sabbath may be profaned is because it is a religious duty to sanctify [the New Moon] on the strength of actual observation. But if you say that it is sometimes full and sometimes defective, why should [the Sabbath] be profaned? Let us prolong [the month] today and sanctify [the New Moon] to-morrow?[30] — If the thirtieth day happens to be on Sabbath, that is actually what we do. Here, however, we are dealing with the case where the thirty-first day happens to fall on Sabbath [and we allow the Sabbath to be profaned because] it is a religious duty to sanctify on the strength of actual observation.[31]

Talmud - Mas. Rosh HaShana 21b MISHNAH. FOR THE SAKE OF TWO MONTHS SABBATH MAY BE PROFANED,[32] NAMELY, NISAN AND TISHRI, SINCE IN THEM MESSENGERS GO FORTH TO SYRIA AND IN THEM THE DATES OF THE FESTIVALS ARE FIXED.[33] WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS STANDING THEY USED TO PROFANE SABBATH FOR ALL THE MONTHS, IN ORDER THAT THE SACRIFICE [OF NEW MOON] MIGHT BE OFFERED ON THE RIGHT DAY.[34]

Talmud - Mas. Avodah Zarah 10a Said Rabina: Our Mishnah also proves this, for we learn,[35] 'The first of Nisan is New Year for reckoning [the reign of] kings[36] and of Festivals,' and to the question 'The reign of kings', what is the practical object of this law? R. Hisda replied: [It affects] the dating of documents.[37] Now, the same Mishnah says. 'The first of Tishri is New Year for [counting] years and sabbatical cycles'[38] and when it was asked: 'What practical significance has this ruling?' R. Hisda [again] replied: [It affects the dating of] documents.[39] [The question was then raised:] Is not this rule of dating documents self-contradictory?[40] And the answer given was: 'The one refers to Jewish kings, the other to kings of Gentile nations — the year of Gentile kings being counted from Tishri, and of Jewish kings from Nisan.' Now, in the present time we count the years from Tishri; were we then to say that our Era is connected with the Exodus it is surely from Nisan that we ought to count.[41] Does this not prove that our reckoning is based on the reign of the Greek kings [and not on the Exodus]? That indeed proves it.

V. Midrasic Allusions

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis XXII:4 AND AT THE END OF DAYS IT CAME TO PASS (IV, 3). R. Eliezer and R. Joshua disagree. R. Eliezer said: The world was created in Tishri; R. Joshua said: In Nisan. He who says in Tishri holds that Abel lived from the Festival[42] until Hanukkah.[43] He who says in Nisan holds that Abel lived from Passover until Pentecost. In either case, all agree that Abel was not in the world more than fifty days.[44]

VI. Bi-modal Connections

This section was written by Menachem Leibtag. I have taken the liberty of editing and translating to bring out the bi-modal aspects.

Parashat Emor (Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23) is famous for its lengthy presentation of the "feasts" (the Jewish holidays). These same holidays are also described in the other books of Chumash:

* In Exodus: Parashat Mishpatim (21:1 - 24:18) &

Parashat Ki-tisa (30:11 - 34:35);

* In Numbers: Parashat Pinchas (25:10 - 30:1);

* In Deuteronomy: Parashat Re'ay (11:26 - 16:17).

Would it not have been more logical for the Torah to present all of the laws concerning the feasts together in one parsha?

BACKGROUND / A DOUBLE CALENDAR

Before we begin, a quick note regarding the Biblical calendar. The holidays in Chumash are described in terms of both a solar and lunar calendar. The solar calendar is based on the 365 day cycle of the sun, and contains the four seasons of the agricultural year: the spring and fall equinox; the winter and summer solstice. The lunar calendar is based on the monthly cycle of the moon (roughly 29.5 days). However the precise day on which each month begins is determined by the Sanhedrin. These two calendars are correlated by the periodic addition of an 'extra' month. Chumash employs both the lunar and solar calendars in its description of the feasts. In Chumash, we find two 'sets' of feasts:

PILGRIMAGE FEAST

Exodus 23:14-19

Exodus 34:18-26

Deut. 16:1-17

DAYS OF JUDGEMENT

Hag HaMatza

Feast of Unleavened Bread

Rosh Hashana

Feast of Trumpets

Hag Shavuot

Feast of Weeks

Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement

Hag HaSuccoth

Feast of Tabernacles

Shemini Atzeret

Eighth Assembly

The pilgrimage festivals as a unit, are presented twice in Exodus and once in Deuteronomy:

(1) In Parashat Mishpatim, Exodus 23:14-19, before Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive the first tablets;

(2) In Parashat Ki-tisa, Exodus 34:18-26, when Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive the second tablets;

(3) In Parashat Re'ay, Deuteronomy 16:1-17, while describing the special laws of the site where the Mikdash is to be built.

In each of these three instances, the dates on which these pilgrimage festivals fall are described only by the agricultural time of year in which they are celebrated, i.e. the solar calendar:

PILGRIMAGE FEAST TIME

Hag HaMatza

Feast of Unleavened Bread
Spring

Hag Shavuot

Feast of Weeks
Summer

Hag HaSuccoth

Feast of Tabernacles
Fall

In addition to their description by their agricultural date, each of these three portions focuses on the mitzvah of making a pilgrimage to the central location where the Temple is located, on each of these holidays:

Exodus 23:16-17 "Celebrate the Feast of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field. "Celebrate the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field. "Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign HaShem.

Exodus 34:22-23 "Celebrate the Feast of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign HaShem, the God of Israel.

Deuteronomy 16:1 Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover of HaShem your God, because in the month of Abib he brought you out of Egypt by night...

Deuteronomy 16:16 Three times a year all your men must appear before HaShem your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before HaShem empty-handed:

In contrast to these three portions, the description of the feasts in Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 and 29, is different in several ways:

- 1) They include both: The pilgrimage festivals and The Feasts of Tishrei.
- 2) There is no mention of the mitzvah of going up to the King.
- 3) The holidays in these two portions are presented according to the lunar calendar, i.e. by the specific month and day when each holiday is to be celebrated.

At first glance, the details of the feasts in Emor and Pinchas appears to be quite different:

Parashat Pinchas (Numbers 25:10 - 30:1) focuses on one basic topic - the details of the additional sacrifices which are offered on each holiday.

Parashat Emor, Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23, focuses on different details, such as the prohibition of doing work and more specific laws such as the Omer sacrifice, the two giant loaves of bread, and the four species etc. However, as closer examination shows, these two portions actually complement each other.

In this portion, the description of each holiday includes the very general statement of: "and you shall bring an offering to God", Leviticus 23:8,25,27,36, without specifying precisely what that offering is supposed to be.

Parashat Pinchas simply fills in that detail, for it explains exactly what that Mussaf is, the special additional sacrifices of each holiday:

FEAST MUSSAF

Parashat Pinchas Numbers 25:10 - 30:1

Hag HaMatza

Feast of Unleavened Bread

15th day of the 1st month
2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Hag Shavuot

Feast of Weeks

50 days after Hag HaMatza
2 bulls, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Rosh Hashana

Feast of Trumpets

1st day of the 7th month
1 bull, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement

10th day of the 7th month
1 bull, 1 ram.

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Hag HaSuccoth

Feast of Tabernacles

15th day of the 7th month

Day 1
13 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Day 2

12 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Day 3

11 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Day 4

10 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Day 5

9 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Day 6

8 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Day 7

7 bulls, 2 rams,

14 male lambs,

1 male goat.

Shemini Atzeret

Eighth Assembly

On the Eighth day

1 bull, 1 ram,

7 male lambs,

1 male goat.

[Parashat Pinchas should actually be titled - "Daily and Additional Festival Offerings" - as it details the daily offering and the additional festival offerings brought throughout the course of the entire year, including Sabbath and Rosh Chodesh, the New Moon! We read from this portion on every feast, and we quote from it in our Mussaf prayers.]

Unlike all the other portions, only Parashat Emor describes the unique mitzvah of each holiday:

FEAST MITZVOT

Emor:

Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23

Hag HaMatza

Feast of Unleavened Bread
The special Omer offering of barely

Hag Shavuot

Feast of Weeks
The special offering of loaves of wheat bread

Rosh Hashana

Feast of Trumpets
Blowing the shofar

Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement
Afflict your souls

Hag HaSuccoth

Feast of Tabernacles
Sitting in the Succah. and the four species (lulav and etrog etc.

Based on this analysis, we can summarize as follows:

Sifrei Exodus and Deuteronomy present the pilgrimage festivals in relation to their common purpose as a time for going up to the King during the critical times of the agricultural (solar) year.

Parashat Pinchas (Numbers 25:10 - 30:1) details the specific korban Mussaf of each feast, according to the lunar date of the holidays.

Parashat Emor (Exodus 21:1 - 24:23) describes the unique mitzvah of each feast (using both lunar and solar).

DOUBLE DATING

Parashat Emor, like Pinchas, presents the feasts in order of their lunar dates (month/day). Nevertheless, Emor is different! As the following table shows, when introducing the special mitzvah to be performed in the Mikdash on each of the pilgrimage festivals, the agricultural season (i.e. the solar date) is mentioned as well!

FEAST MITZVOT

Emor:

Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23
SEASON

Hag HaMatza

Feast of Unleavened Bread
The special Omer offering of barely
Leviticus 23:10 "When you enter the Land... and harvest the grain

Hag Shavuot

Feast of Weeks
The special leavened, wheat, loaves of bread.
Leviticus 23:16 "... count seven weeks, then... you shall bring a new flour offering..."

Rosh Hashana

Feast of Trumpets
Blowing the shofar

Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement
Afflict your souls

Hag HaSuccoth

Feast of Tabernacles
Waving the four species: lulav and etrog.
Leviticus 23:39-40 "... when you gather the produce of the land... and you shall take on the first day a goodly fruit..."

In fact, a careful examination of the division of portion in Parashat Emor shows that the agricultural aspect of each of the pilgrimage festivals is presented in a manner entirely independent from the presentation of the feast according to its lunar date! For example, the mitzvah to bring the omer offering and the two loaves of bread are presented in a separate 'dibur' which makes no mention at all of the lunar date!:

Leviticus 23:9-22 HaShem said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before HaShem so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to HaShem a lamb a year old without defect, Together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil--an offering made to HaShem by fire, a pleasing aroma--and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. "'From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to HaShem. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to HaShem. Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to HaShem, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings--an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to HaShem. Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. The priest is to wave the two lambs before HaShem as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to HaShem for the priest. On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. "'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am HaShem your God.'"

Similarly, the mitzvah of the four species, Leviticus 23:39-41, is presented independent of the mitzvah to sit in the succah, Leviticus 23:33-38:

Leviticus 23:33-38 HaShem said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month HaShem's Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present offerings made to HaShem by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to HaShem by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work. "'These are HaShem's appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to HaShem by fire--the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. These offerings are in addition to those for HaShem's Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to HaShem.

Leviticus 23:39-41 "'So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to HaShem for seven days; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before HaShem your God for seven days. Celebrate this as a festival to HaShem for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month.

[Compare these two portions carefully!]

Why is the structure of Emor so complicated? Shouldn't the Torah employ one standard set of dates and explain all the mitzvot of each feast together?

A DOUBLE 'HEADER'

The introductory psukim of this parsha may allude to a possible answer to these questions. Note how the opening two psukim seem to contradict each other:

Leviticus 23:1-3 HaShem said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of HaShem, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. "'There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to HaShem.

Leviticus 23:4-6 "'These are HaShem's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: HaShem's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month HaShem's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.

Should Sabbath be considered one of the appointed times? If yes, then why does pasuk 4 repeat the header "These are 'HaShem's appointed times"? If not, why is it mentioned at all in the first three psukim? Furthermore, there appears to be two types of solemn assemblies in Parashat Emor.

(1) Appointed times - those that Bnei Yisrael declare as solemn assemblies:

Leviticus 23:2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.

(2) Sabbath - which God has set aside to be a solemn assemblies. Read 23:3 carefully!:

Leviticus 23:3 "'There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to HaShem.

Note the repetition of the header: "These are 'HaShem's appointed times" in:

Leviticus 23:4 "'These are HaShem's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times:

This distinction, and the repetition of the header indicates that the first three psukim can be considered a 'double' header: appointed times and Sabbaths. This 'double header' reflects the double nature of this entire parsha. Note the pattern which repeats itself. Each holiday is:

1) Introduced by its lunar date;

2) Followed by a statement that this appointed time is a solemn rehearsal assembly;

3) The prohibition to do work;

4) The mitzvah to offer a sacrifice to HaShem.

The following chart summarizes this pattern, noting the psukim in which these details are described:

The Appointed Times - Solemn Assemblies

Opening pasuk:

"These are 'HaShem's appointed times..." (23:4):

The Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Leviticus 23:6-8 On the fifteenth day of that month HaShem's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days present an offering made to HaShem by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work."

The Feast of Weeks: (note that this holiday lacks a lunar date and the phrase "an offering made by fire...")

The Feast of Trumpets:

Leviticus 23:25 Do no regular work, but present an offering made to HaShem by fire."

The Day of Atonement:

Leviticus 23:27-28 "The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to HaShem by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before HaShem your God.

The Feast of Tabernacles and Shemini Atzeret:

Leviticus 23:33-36 HaShem said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month HaShem's Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present offerings made to HaShem by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to HaShem by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work.

Closing pasuk:

"These are the feasts of HaShem which you shall proclaim..." Leviticus 23:37

Intertwined in this parsha, we find an additional aspect of each feast which relates to the concept of a High Sabbath (the second header mentioned above). In relation to the pilgrimage festivals, the High Sabbath aspect relates to the special agricultural mitzvah of each holiday! [the omer, the two loaves of bread, and the four species] Furthermore, these mitzvot always conclude with the phrase:

"This is a law for all time in all your settlements, throughout the ages". [See 23:14,21,31,41]

The following list summarizes this second pattern in which the word Sabbath or High Sabbath (Shabbaton) is mentioned in relation to each holiday:

The Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Leviticus 23:11 He is to wave the sheaf before HaShem so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath.

The Feast of Weeks:

Leviticus 23:16 Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to HaShem.

The Feast of Trumpets:

Leviticus 23:24 "Say to the Israelites: 'On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a High Sabbath (Shabbaton), a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts.

The Day of Atonement:

Leviticus 23:32 It is a Sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your Sabbath."

The Feast of Tabernacles:

Leviticus 23:39 "So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to HaShem for seven days; the first day is a High Sabbath (Shabbaton), and the eighth day also is a High Sabbath (Shabbaton).

Shemini Atzeret:

Leviticus 23:39 "So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to HaShem for seven days; the first day is a High Sabbath (Shabbaton), and the eighth day also is a High Sabbath (Shabbaton).

Note also that within this parsha, the Sabbath and agricultural aspect is introduced by its own "dibur":

Leviticus 23:9-14 HaShem said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before HaShem so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to HaShem a lamb a year old without defect, Together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil--an offering made to HaShem by fire, a pleasing aroma--and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

This analysis could explain the Sages' understanding that here, Sabbath refers to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as opposed to the Sadducees who argued that it actually refers to first Sabbath after Passover. The Sages' interpretation may reflect a deeper understanding of the entire parsha based on the above analysis.

The most explicit example of this 'double pattern' is found in the psukim that describe Succoth. Note how the Torah first introduces this holiday as a solemn assembly by its lunar date:

Leviticus 23:35-36 "On the 15th day of the 7th month Feast Succoth seven days: on the first day there shall be a solemn assembly... and on the eighth day a solemn assembly..."

As this is the last appointed time (Feast), the next pasuk summarizes all of the feasts:

Leviticus 23:37-38 "These are HaShem's appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to HaShem by fire--the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. These offerings are in addition to those for HaShem's Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to HaShem.

Then, in a very abrupt fashion, after summarizing the appointed times, the Torah returns to Succoth again, but now calls it a Shabbaton, a high Sabbath:

Leviticus 23:39 "So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to HaShem for seven days; the first day is a High Sabbath (Shabbaton), and the eighth day also is a High Sabbath (Shabbaton).

We have shown that the entire parsha exhibits a double nature, as reflected in its 'double header' and its use of both the solar and lunar calendars to describe the feasts. What is the meaning of this double structure?

THE AGRICULTURAL ASPECT

As mentioned above, Parashat Emor, Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23, details a special agriculturally related mitzvah for each of the pilgrimage festivals:

PILGRIMAGE FEAST
AGRICULTURAL

EVENT

Hag HaMatza

Feast of Unleavened Bread

The Omer offering: from the first BARLEY harvest

Hag Shavuot

Feast of Weeks

The two leavened loaves from the first WHEAT harvest

Hag HaSuccoth

Feast of Tabernacles

Taking the four species: the lulav, etrog, hadas and arava

These mitzvot relate directly to the agricultural seasons in Eretz Yisrael in which these holidays fall. In the spring, barley is the first grain crop to become ripe. During the next seven weeks, the wheat crop ripens and is harvested. As this is the only time of the year when wheat grows in Eretz Israel, these seven weeks are indeed a critical time, for the grain which will be consumed during the entire year is harvested during this very short time period.

Similarly, the four species, which are brought to the Temple on Succoth, also relate to the agricultural importance of the fruit harvest at this time of the year, and the need for water in the forthcoming rainy season.

Specifically, when the Torah relates to these agricultural mitzvot, these holidays are referred to as Shabbaton, High Sabbaths. The reason is quite simple. Shabbat relates to the days of the week, and thus, to a natural cycle caused by the sun. So too, the agricultural seasons of the year. They also relate to the natural cycle of the sun, the 365 day cycle of the earth revolving around the sun that causes the seasons.

As these holidays are celebrated during the most critical times of the agricultural year, the Torah commands us to gather at this time of the year in the Bet HaMikdash and offer special offerings from our harvest. Instead of relating these phenomena of nature to a pantheon of gods, as the Canaanite people did, we must recognize that it is God's hand behind nature and therefore, we must thank Him for our harvest.

This challenge - to find God while working and living within the framework of nature - is reflected in the blessing we make over bread: "Who brings forth bread from the earth". Even though we perform 99% of work in the process of making bread (e.g. sowing, reaping, winnowing, grinding, kneading, baking etc.), we thank God as though He had given us bread directly from the ground!

THE HISTORICAL HOLIDAYS

Even though the agricultural calendar alone provides sufficient reason to celebrate these holidays, the Torah finds historical significance in these seasonal holidays as well. The spring commemorates our redemption from Egypt. The grain harvest coincides with the time of the giving of the Torah. During the fruit harvest we recall our

supernatural existence in the desert under the "the clouds of God's glory" in the desert. Just as the Torah employs to the solar date of the feasts in relation to the agricultural mitzvot, the Torah employs the lunar date of these feasts in relation to their historical significance. For example, when describing the Feast of Unleavened Bread which commemorates the historical event of the exodus from Egypt, the lunar date of the 15th day of the first month is used (23:6).

Similarly, when the Torah refers to Succoth as a solemn assembly, it employs solely the lunar date and emphasizes the mitzvah of sitting in the succah, in commemoration of our dwelling in succoth during our journey through the desert (see 23:34-35,43). One could suggest that specifically the lunar calendar is used in relation to the historical aspect, for we count the months in commemoration of our Exodus from Egypt, the most momentous event in our national history:

"ha'chodesh ha'zeh lachem New Moons..." This month (in which you are leaving Egypt) will be for you the FIRST month... (see Exodus 12:1-3).

REDEMPTION IN THE SPRING

From the repeated emphasis in Chumash that we celebrate our redemption from Egypt in the early spring (Exodus 13:2-4 and Deuteronomy 16:1-2), it would appear that it was not incidental that the Exodus took place at that time. Rather, God desired that our national birth take place at the same time of year when the growth cycle of nature recommences. [For a similar reason, it would appear that God desired that Bnei Yisrael enter the Promised Land in the first month of the spring (see Joshua 4:19 & 5:10).]

One could suggest that the celebration of our national redemption specifically in the spring emphasizes its proper meaning. Despite its importance, our freedom attained at the exodus from Egypt should be understood as only the initial stage of our national spiritual 'growth', just as the spring marks only the initial stage in the growth process of nature! Just as the blossoming of nature in the spring leads to the grain harvest in the early summer and fruit harvest in the late summer, so to our national freedom must lead to the achievement of higher goals in our national history.

Thus, counting seven weeks from the Feast of Unleavened Bread until the Feast of Weeks (counting the omer) emphasizes that the Feast of Weeks (commemorating the giving of the Torah) should be considered the culmination of the process that began at the exodus from Egypt, just as the grain harvest is the culmination of its growth process that began in the spring.

[One would expect that this historical aspect of Shavuot, i.e. the giving of the Torah, should also be mentioned in Parashat Emor. For some reason, it is not.]

By combining the two calendars, the Torah teaches us that during the critical times of the agricultural year we must not only thank God for His providence over nature but we must also thank Him for His providence over our history. In a polytheistic society, these various attributes were divided among many gods. In an atheistic society, man fails to see God in either. The double nature of the feasts emphasizes this tenet that God is not only the Force behind nature, but He also guides the history of nations.

Man must recognize God's providence in all realms of his daily life; by recognizing His hand in the unfolding of our national history, and through perceiving His greatness in the creation of nature as well.

Why do we have a New Year in Nisan and a New Year in Tishrei? How Can Nisan be "the beginning of months" and Tishrei be the beginning of the year, in the seventh month? Having two new years is not accidental; rather it grows out of a notion which underlies the Biblical calendar, the notion of two kinds of time: historical and cyclic. Man creates historical time; cyclic time is created by Hashem's recurring patterns.

Nisan marks the beginning of the festival season and the beginning of months. It occurs in the spring, the beginning of the physical renewal of nature. Here we begin our physical renewal with our liberation from the bondage of Egypt, and here we begin the pilgrimage festival cycle with Pesach, Passover.

Tishrei marks the beginning of our spiritual renewal. Here we pray for inclusion in the book of life and we celebrate the beginning of Hashem's Kingship and the remembrance of the righteous for resurrection. This spiritual rebirth occurs at the twilight of the agricultural season, and the twilight of our physical freedom, which began at Pesach.

The Biblical calendar follows the cyclic time of the moon, but is regularly intercalated by man to keep the festivals in their seasons.

These two types of time are both used in the Torah: Physical time, which marks agricultural progress, and cyclic time, which is marked by recurring patterns. Cyclic time is centered in the High Holiday festival cycle. Physical, agricultural, time is found in the three pilgrimage festivals. Succoth, the Feast of Tabernacles, is the end of the pilgrimage cycle, and yet, by its placement in the year, also brings to a close the High Holiday cycle. Seemingly, then Succoth comes at the end of both kinds of time. Shimini Atzeret concludes Succoth and, therefore, concludes both cycles.

VII. Selected Essays

CHOL HAMOED PESSACH: "THESE BONES WILL LIVE!"

By Rabbi Ari Kahn

The Talmud in Megila teaches:

"Rav Huna said in the name of Rav Shesheth: On the Sabbath of Chol Hamoed, on both Pesach and Sukkot we read from scripture "V'ata R'ay" (Shmot 33). The Haftarah on Pesach, "The Dry Bones" (Yechezkel 37) and on Sukkot "The day of the arrival of Gog" (Yechezkal 38)" (Megila 31a)

The passage in the Talmud discusses the appropriate readings for the various Festivals. Generally the text which is read has an intrinsic connection with the day, but in this case no connection is apparent. Over a thousand years ago, this question was asked of Rav Hai Gaon, the leading scholar of his generation. He responded that he was not aware of any intrinsic connection between the scripture read in the Haftorah and these holidays, but continued:

"I have a tradition from the Sages that Resurrection will take place in Nissan, and victory over Gog and Magog, will take place in Tishrei; therefore in Nissan we read of the dry bones (which will live) in the Haftorah, and in Tishrei we read of the battle of Gog" (Tur Oruch Haim section 490, see Otzar Hagoanim Megilah pg 64)

This tradition, that Resurrection is to take place in Nissan, is the key to a number of passages in the Talmud.

It has been taught: R. Eliezer says: In Tishri the world was created; in Tishri the Patriarchs were born; in Tishri the Patriarchs died; on Passover Isaac was born; on New Year Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were visited; on New Year Joseph went forth from prison (Talmud - Rosh HaShana 11a) on New Year the bondage of our ancestors in Egypt ceased; in Nisan they were redeemed and in Nisan they will be redeemed in the time to come. R. Joshua says: In Nisan the world was created; in Nisan the Patriarchs were born; in Nisan the Patriarchs died; on Passover Isaac was born; on New Year Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were visited; on New Year Joseph went forth from prison; on New Year the bondage of our ancestors ceased in Egypt; and in Nisan they will be redeemed in time to come. (Rosh Hashanah 10b-11a)

In this passage we find that two of the great Tannaim, Rabbis Eliezer and Yehoshua, argue not only about biblical chronology but also about eschatology. At the root of this disagreement is the intricate relationship of history and destiny in the view of these great sages. Days have a personality or a charisma of their own, just as people do; therefore the understanding of the past allows us to better understand the future. Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua have a fundamental argument regarding when the world came into being, and their differences are interrelated with the question of how the End of Days will shape up.

Tishrei is a month of judgment, while Nissan is a month of miracles, as is indicated by its very name ("Nissan", perhaps from the root "nes", miracle). In this context, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua differ over the very nature of existence: Is our life defined primarily by justice or mercy? Tosefot, in their comments to the passage in Tractate Rosh Hashanah, point out that actually both aspects are accurate representations of our existence: Rabbi Eliezer focuses on the thought of creation which came into existence in Tishrei, while Rabbi Yehoshua focuses on the actual Creation which took place in Nissan. It is interesting to note that Jewish law reflects the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, as is evidenced by a relatively obscure law: Birchat Hachama, a blessing on the sun which may be made every 28 years when the sun is in the exact alignment it was at the moment of creation, is pronounced in Nissan (see Shulchan Aruch 229:2 Mishna Brura 7).

If creation indeed took place in Nissan, thereby establishing the law in accordance with Rabbi Yehoshua, then we may conclude that Redemption will also take place in Nissan, as per Rabbi Yehoshua. This is interesting in and of itself, but does not seem connected with our original question regarding Resurrection. The connection is only brought out by an additional passage:

This matter is disputed by Tannaim: R. Eliezer said: if Israel repent, they will be redeemed; if not, they will not be redeemed. R. Joshua said to him, if they do not repent, will they not be redeemed! But the Holy One, blessed be He, will set up a king over them, whose decrees shall be as cruel as Haman's, whereby Israel shall engage in repentance, and he will thus bring them back to the right path. Another [Baraitha] taught: R. Eliezer said: if Israel repent, they will be redeemed, as it is written, Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. R. Joshua said to him, But is it not written, ye have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money? Ye have sold yourselves for naught, for idolatry; and ye shall be redeemed without money — without repentance and good deeds. R. Eliezer retorted to R. Joshua, But is it not written, Return unto me, and I will return unto you? R. Joshua rejoined — But is it not written, For I am master over you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion? R. Eliezer replied, But it is written, in returning and rest shall ye be saved. R. Joshua replied, But is it not written, Thus saith the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nations abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, (Talmud - Sanhedrin 98a) Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship? R. Eliezer countered, But is it not written, if thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me? R. Joshua answered, But it is elsewhere written, And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times and a half' and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. At this R. Eliezer remained silent. (Sanhedrin 97b-98a)

Again, Rabbi Eliezer's view of the world is based on merit, on judgment and justice. Redemption is possible only if the Jews deserve it, if they repent. In its conclusion, the Talmud teaches that according to Rabbi Yehoshua, Redemption is unconditional; his statement that G-d would bring a wicked tyrant to persecute us was Rabbi Yehoshua's understanding of Rabbi Eliezer's opinion (The Jerusalem Talmud Ta'anit 1:1, reports that it was Rabbi Eliezer's opinion, and not Rabbi Yehoshua's, that G-d would bring a wicked tyrant on the Jews if they do not repent on their own). In the end of the passage Rabbi Eliezer is silenced by the arguments of Rabbi Yehoshua. Apparently both agree that Redemption will come sooner or later, but Redemption will inevitably come (the Ramban clearly states that in conclusion Rabbi Eliezer concedes to Rabbi Yehoshua, as is indicated by his "silence". See "Sefer HaGeulah" Kitvei Ramban Volume 1 page 277).

Juxtaposing these two Talmudic teachings allows us to draw conclusions regarding the sages' debate: In Tractate Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua argue as to when Creation took place and when the final Redemption will come. If these two arguments are connected, the passage in Tractate Sanhedrin is highly instructive. The argument regarding Redemption, ends with the acquiescence of Rabbi Eliezer, which is consistent with our understanding of the passage in Rosh Hashanah, where the law is also established in accordance with the view of Rabbi Yehoshua. Tosafot's teaching, which reconciles the two positions by identifying each with a "different" Creation, may be applied to both passages equally: There is no fundamental argument, rather, one passage refers to the idea of Creation while the other refers to the actual Creation.

In other words, do we consider the beginning of the process, or are we concerned with the end result? Rabbi Eliezer focused on the beginning of the process of Creation; therefore he speaks of Tishrei, which is the time of Creation in thought, long before anything existed in reality. Similarly, Rabbi Eliezer, when considering Redemption, spoke of the upheaval which will lead to spiritual renaissance. This is the beginning of the process of Redemption. On the other hand, Rabbi Yehoshua focused on the end of the process, the actual Creation. The tradition referred to by Rav Hai Gaon, that resurrection will take place in Nissan, refers to the end of the process of Redemption, resurrection.

Rabbi Eliezer's opinion finds its own expression in the Talmud: The Talmud only uses the phrase "Atchalta d'Geula - "Beginning of the redemption" in one place-

"War is also considered the beginning of the redemption" (Megila 17b)

Rabbi Eliezer, who looked at the beginning of the process of Creation, considered the beginning of the redemptive process as well: The Haftorah for Chol HaMoed Sukkot describes the apocalyptic battle between Gog and Magog ("Armageddon" in English), the beginning of the process of Redemption. This epic battle, which Israel is destined to be swept into if they do not repent in due course, is to take place in Tishrei, the month in which Sukkot is celebrated. Here, then, is the link with the Haftorah which we sought. It is the link between Tishrei and the Atchalta d'Geula which Rabbi Eliezer illuminated.

The association of Resurrection with Nissan has a number of expressions and implications. One of the teachings which both Rabbis agreed on was the birth of Yitzchak on Pesach. Yitzchak is the first biblical figure who is linked with resurrection. One Midrash describes the connection in the following terms: When Yitzchak was tied down to the altar at the Akaida,

The angels began to cry and their tears fell on the blade, the knife rose up to the neck of Yitzchak, for he (Avraham) could not control it. His (Yitzchak's) soul departed him. G-d called Michael (the angel) and said "Why are you standing there? Do not allow him to slaughter him" Immediately Michael called out "Avraham, Avraham" ...he let go (of the knife) and his soul returned, he (Yitzchak) stood on his feet and pronounced the blessing "Blessed is he who restores life to the dead" (Baruch michayei maytim) (Otzar Midrashim page 146)

According to this Midrash, the first one to utter the blessing on restoration of life was Yitzchak, when his own life was restored. This idea is also consistent with a second teaching. We are taught that the first 3 blessings of the amidah are called "Avot". While the other elements of the amidah vary depending on the day, these 3 blessings are constants. The first of these blessings, which speaks of G-d's chesed, is "Magen Avraham", associated with Avraham and the spiritual realm so inseparably associated with him. The second blessing is "Michayei HaMaytim," and is similarly related to Yitzchak. The second blessing starts with "Ata gibor," gevurah being the spiritual attribute associated with Yitzchak and the one which is preserved and expressed 3 times a day by Jews for millennia. The second blessing of the amidah is instructive in other ways:

"You are eternally mighty my Lord, the resuscitator of the dead are you; abundantly able to save ..."

In the winter the phrase which follows is:

"He makes the wind blow and the rain descend, He sustains the living with kindness"

In Israel, in the summer months the subsequent phrase reads :

"Bring down the dew! He sustains the living with kindness"

The difference between these two phrases seems obvious, the distinction being in the object of our prayer, either rain or dew. There is, however, a more subtle difference. The prayer said in the winter is "He makes the wind blow and the rain (geshem) descend, He sustains the living with kindness". There are some who have a custom of saying Gashem (kamatz, instead of segol). The significance of the punctuation goes way beyond the grammatical: "Geshem" is the form of the word which would appear in the middle of a sentence, whereas "Gashem" indicates the

end of the sentence. The alternative readings would indicate whether the second half of the blessing modifies the first, or stands alone. Geshem, rather than Gashem, would indicate that the kindness which is bestowed is the rain itself. The phrase used in the summer is "Moreed hatal," the word tal (dew) punctuated with a kamatz. "Dew" is the end of the sentence, as opposed to a later appearance in the weekday amidah where the word tal, with a patach, is used in the middle of the sentence.

If the term "Bring down the dew!" is the end of the sentence, then it must modify what immediately preceded it; "You are eternally mighty my Lord, the resuscitator of the dead are you; abundantly able to save: Bring down the dew!" Dew is directly connected with resurrection. But what is the nature of this connection? In numerous places in Talmud, Midrash and Zohar, we see that dew is the catalyst which brings about the Resurrection!

"Dew - tal will be used in the future by the Holy One Blessed be He to bring about Resurrection" (Chagiga 12b)

"After each of the 10 Commandments (the people died when G-d spoke) so (G-d) brought dew on them which will be used in the future to resurrect man, and they came back to life" (Shabbat 88b)

"How do we know that Resurrection will only take place via dew?... (Yerushalmi Brachot 5:2)

"The dead (bones) which Yechezkel brought back to life-- dew from heaven descended upon them." (Pirkei d Rebbi Eliezer chapter 33)

"Dew is a symbol of resurrection" (Tanchuma Toldot section 19)

By means of that dew all will rise from the dust, as it says, "for thy dew is as the dew of lights" (Isa. XXVI, 19), these being the supernal lights through which the Almighty will in future pour forth life upon the world. (Zohar, Bereshith, 130b)

Said R. Hiya: 'And what is more, from the words, "Thy dead ones will live" (Isa. XXVI, 19), it is evident that not only will there be a new creation, but that the very bodies which were dead will rise, for one bone in the body remains intact, not decaying in the earth, and on the Resurrection Day the Holy One will soften it and make it like leaven in dough, and it will rise and expand on all sides, and the whole body and all its members will be formed from it, and then the Holy One will put spirit into it.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Assuredly so. And the bone will be softened by the dew, as it says: "Thy dead ones shall live... for thy dew is the dew of plants" (Ibid.)' (Zohar, Shemoth, 28b)

We would expect that the second blessing of the amidah, the one connected with Yitzchak, the blessing which concludes "Blessed is G-d who brings the dead to life", would naturally make reference to the final Resurrection. If so, when we say "Bring the dew!" our intention should be "Bring the resurrection!"

The prayer for rain is said only in the winter. On Pesach, we begin to ask for tal. At the time of our redemption from Egypt, the time of the birth of Yitzchak, we say this blessing with anticipation of the complete Redemption, the end of the Redemption: Resurrection. This is the full circle of the second blessing of the amidah and the link between the month of Nissan, the birth of Yitzchak, the Exodus and the result of the Redemption which Rabbi Yehoshua sought to draw in the passage in Tractate Rosh HaShanah.

We started out by noting that different days have different personalities. We are taught that we place an egg on the Seder plate in mourning for the Temple's destruction. (Mishna Brura 473:23) The Rama states that the reason for eating eggs at the Seder is that the first day of Pesach always falls on the same day of the week as the Ninth of Av (476:2, see Michaber 428:3). This teaching is not merely informing us about a quirk in the calendar; it describes an intrinsic relationship which may seem strange at first glance. How is the day of redemption related to the day of destruction? Both days possess the same charisma or personality. In one, the potential was realized, hence we have Pesach. In the other, the potential was not realized, hence the Ninth of Av. In a similar vein, we are taught that on the day the Temple was destroyed the Messiah will be born (Aggadot Brieshit, Buber edition section 68, see the

disputation of the Ramban). In other words, the day of the destruction is also the day of hope for future redemption. For this reason the Prophet Zecharia said:

Thus says the Lord of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall become times of joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts to the house of Judah; ... (Zecharia 8:19)

The fast of the 5th month is what we refer to as the Ninth of Av, Av being the 5th month. This day will become a time of celebration with the coming of the Messiah. Rav Tzadok haKohen of Lublin made a very brief but important comment on this idea, explaining that when the Messiah comes the Ninth of Av will indeed become a holiday like Pesach and Sukkot-- a seven-day festival ending on the Fifteenth of Av (Pri Zaddik, D'varim 20b).

This idea needs to be explained. We are taught in the Mishna that the happiest times of the year were the Fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur:

R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: there never were in Israel greater days of joy than the fifteenth of Av and the day of atonement. On these days the daughters of Jerusalem used to walk out in white garments which they borrowed in order not to put to shame any one who had none... The daughters of Jerusalem came out and danced in the vineyards exclaiming at the same time, young man, lift up thine eyes and see what thou chooseth for thyself. Do not set thine eyes on beauty but set thine eyes on [good] family. Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the lord, she shall be praised. (Mishna Ta'anit 4:8).

Yom Kippur is a solemn day; why was it considered joyful? On this day, during the time of the Beit Hamikdash, the people saw the Kohen Gadol exit the Holy of Holies safely. They witnessed an absolute indication of their total exoneration before G-d. Their joy was therefore understandable. But what is the significance of the Fifteenth of Av? Tosafot in Ta'anit 30b cites a bizarre Midrash:

R. Levi said: On every eve of the ninth of Av Moses used to send a herald throughout the camp and announce, 'Go out to dig graves'; and they used to go out and dig graves in which they slept. On the morrow he sent out a herald to announce, 'Arise and separate the dead from the living.' They would then stand up and find themselves in round figures 15,000 short of 600,000. In the last of the forty years, they acted similarly and found themselves in undiminished numerical strength. They said, 'It appears that we erred in our calculation'; so they acted similarly on the nights of the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th. When the moon was full they said, 'It seems that the Holy One, blessed be He, has annulled that decree from us all'; so they proceeded to make [the fifteenth] a holiday. (Midrash Rabbah - Lamentations Prologue XXXIII)

In the desert, as a result of the sin of the spies which took place on the 9th of Av, the entire generation was to die. Each year for the next forty years the people would dig graves and lie in them on the Ninth of Av. In the morning the town crier would say "The living are to separate (get up)", leaving the dead behind. In the 40th year no one died. The people assumed that they had erred in the counting, and the following day must be the Ninth, so they entered the graves again. The following morning again no one had died. They repeated this procedure until the 15th of the month, at which point, seeing the full moon, they realized that the decree was over.

My understanding of the Midrash, and the teaching of Rav Tzadok, is as follows: The Ninth of Av has the same potential as Pesach. Instead of realizing its potential it became a symbol of destruction and failure of the Jewish people. The Ninth of Av will one day become a holiday commemorating the coming of the Messiah who is born on that day. The last day of this holiday will be the Fifteenth of Av, the day when the Jews arise from the grave, confident of life, realizing that the decree of death is over, forever.

If the first day of Pesach is parallel to Tish'a B'Av, perhaps the Fifteenth of Av may be paralleled with the Seventh Day of Pesach. On the Seventh Day of Pesach, the Jews stood between the Sea and an army of Egyptians. They thought there was no hope; they thought they were dead. But G-d performed a miracle and turned the water into dry land, thereby saving them from certain death. On the Fifteenth of Av, the Jews left their graves, and witnessed G-d's mercy.

When the Jews left Egypt they had three goals: 1. To leave Egypt, 2. To receive the Torah, 3. To build the Temple. In the Ramban's Introduction to the Book of Shmot he explains that Shmot is the book of redemption, but the book can not end after leaving Egypt nor after the receiving of the Torah. The book does not end until the Mishkan-Temple is built. Pesach marks the celebration of leaving Egypt, but it can not be seen in a vacuum. On Pesach we immediately begin counting the days until the Torah is given at Sinai. But receiving the Torah is not an end in and of itself. Receiving the Torah means living the Torah, following its statutes, taking the ideals described in the Torah and turning them into a wonderful reality. The reality of living the Torah necessarily leads to the Messianic Age, and culminates in the end of this Age - Resurrection. For this reason, on the Shabbat of Chol Hamoed we read the description of how dry bones shall live, for the bones coming to life are the culmination of the Redemption begun on Pesach.

"You are eternally mighty my Lord, the resuscitator of the dead are you; abundantly able to save: Bring down the dew!"

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[1] Deut. XI, 14.

[2] As explained infra.

[3] Or, you complete your pilgrimages then, Tabernacles being the third and last pilgrimage festival of the year (M.K.).

[4] Rain ceases then (Radal).

[5] I.e., the year is reckoned to commence at different dates for different purposes, as the Mishna goes on to specify.

[6] The first month of the Jewish calendar (in Biblical times known as 'the month of Abib', or the springing corn), commencing in the latter half of March or the earlier part of April.

[7] If a document is dated with a certain year in a king's reign, the year is reckoned to have commenced in Nisan, no matter in what month the king came to the throne. The Gemara discusses what kinds of kings are meant _ whether Israelitish or other.

[8] The meaning of this is discussed infra in the Gemara.

[9] The sixth month of the Jewish calendar.

[10] For purposes of tithing it was necessary to specify the year in which cattle were born, because cattle born in one year could not be given as tithing for cattle born in another, v. Lev. XXVII, 32.

[11] So that according to these authorities there were only three New Years.

[12] The seventh month.

[13] I.e., from the first of Tishri in these years ploughing and similar operations were forbidden. V. Lev. XXV, 4, 11.

[14] For reckoning the years of 'uncircumcision'. V. Lev. XIX, 23.

[15] I.e., those gathered after this date could not be used as tithing for those gathered before. Cf. n. 6.

[16] The eleventh month.

[17] For tithing the fruit. V. notes 6 and 11.

[18] Deut. XI,14.

[19] Joshua I, 8.

[20] Sc. the words of the Torah.

[21] Isa. LXI, 5.

[22] Tosaf. point out that this homily conflicts with that given above on the same verse by R. Hanina b. Papa.

[23] Deut. XXVIII, 48.

[24] Nisan being the time of the ripening of the corn and Tishri of the vintage and olive pressing.

[25] In reply to the objection from the last cited Baraita.

[26] The first and seventh months of the Jewish year, corresponding roughly to mid-March-April and mid-September-October.

[27] By the watchers for the new moon, who are allowed to exceed the two thousand cubit limit in order to report their observation to the Beth din in Jerusalem. V. infra 23b.

[28] Since the New Moon can be fixed without actual observation.

[29] Even though the observation is not necessary for the purpose.

[30] I.e., in all such cases we can make Adar thirty days, and if the watchers have seen the new moon on Sabbath, they need not report till the next day.

[31] Hence we do not make New Moon on the thirtieth day, the new moon not yet having been observed, and it is not permitted to make it on the thirty-second.

[32] By witnesses who have seen the new moon, in order that they may give information in Jerusalem at the earliest possible moment. V. supra.

[33] It is difficult to see what reason this furnishes for allowing the witnesses to break the Sabbath. Rashi explains that if the witnesses are not allowed to bring the news on Sabbath, the New Moon will not be sanctified till Sunday, and so the messengers instead of setting out as soon as Sabbath is over will not set out till several hours later, and this might make them late in some places in giving notice of the date of Passover. V. Rashi and Tosaf.

[34] Lit., 'for the proper adjustment of the sacrifice'.

[35] R. H. 2a.

[36] The reign of a Jewish King was always reckoned from Nisan, so that even if it began in the preceding month, it would be in its second year in Nisan.

[37] The year given in dating legal documents was that of the reign of the present king.

[38] V. above note.

[39] For the purpose of dating documents Tishri is to be regarded as the beginning of the year.

[40] According to the early part of the Mishnah the year should begin with Nisan, while in the latter part it is said to begin with Tishri.

[41] Since the Exodus occurred in Nisan.

[42] Tabernacles, which commences on the 15th of Tishri.

[43] The feast of lights, commencing on the 25th of Kislev.

[44] The passage is difficult. Both assume that AT THE END OF DAYS means at the end of one of the seasons of the year; and that Abel was murdered on the very day of the sacrifice. R. Eliezer applies it to autumn, R. Joshua to spring, so that AT THE END OF DAYS will mean about mid-winter (about 21st December) or midsummer (about 21st June), after which the seasons begin to change, and Hanukkah and Pentecost fall about these dates respectively. But 'Passover' and 'Tabernacles' are employed here loosely, the beginning of Nisan or Tishri being actually meant, and similarly Pentecost and Hanukkah, a date about a fortnight before being meant--otherwise the period is above 60 days. If on the other hand these are exact, then 50 days is only stated approximately.