

CHAPTER 2: JUDAISM'S PRACTICE IN WORSHIP

Shabbat in Home and Synagogue

Of all the festivals and high days of Judaism, Shabbat is first and foremost. It is a weekly celebration for religious Jews and celebration it is. According to Judaism every man is a king, his wife a queen and his children princes and princesses on Shabbat. Shabbat finds its perfect meaning and fulfillment in Mashiach who said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you REST (perfect Shabbat)." (Mt 11:28) Shabbat Shalom finds its real meaning and fulfillment in the Prince of Peace who died to restore peace between the sinner and the Heavenly Father.

The mitzvah reads:

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work,...Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex 20:8-11)

For the Christian, Shabbat is a shadow which points to Christ. For the adherent of Judaism, Shabbat is an 'island in time' - "the usual breaking off point from tradition, and also the point at which many Jews rejoin Judaism." (Herman Wouk)

Judaism looks upon Shabbat as a memorial to the creation of the world and a memorial to the Exodus from Egypt. This signifies both a refraining from work and a freedom from slavery to human masters.

Because so much ritual, tradition and worship are connected with the Shabbat observance, this chapter on the worship of Judaism shall center first upon the celebration of Shabbat both at home and at the synagogue.

Rabbi Donin says:

To properly honor the Sabbath and to capture its beauty and spiritual delight, it is necessary to prepare for its coming. The preparations in a household should be no less elegant than the preparations the same family might make to receive a distinguished and beloved guest. What might a family do if a very honored guest was coming for dinner?

- A man would plan on getting home from work in plenty of time to shave, bathe and get dressed.

- A mother would see to it that she and her children were washed and dressed in clean clothes.

- The dinner table would be set in advance, but the menu would be a little more elaborate than that served at a daily meal. In a poor home, meat and fish would be reserved for the Sabbath meals. But even where meat and fish are on the family's daily menu, there are still many distinctions that a hostess makes when serving a special festive meal, both in types of dishes as well as in the number of courses.

- A house would be thoroughly cleaned, or at least straightened up.

- Every member of the family would take care of the most pressing chores before the guest arrives.

- One can also imagine that members of a household might warn friends, neighbors and business associates not to interrupt by telephone calls while their guest is visiting with them. It would not only be rude to the visitor but disturbing to all if there were constant interruptions.

All this is done before the honored guest arrives. This is also what must be done to prepare properly for the Sabbath.

(TO BE A JEW pp 70,71)

In his code of law, the Misheh Torah, Maimonides gives instructions as to how Shabbat is to be observed in these excerpts:

In order to honor the Sabbath one should, as a matter of religious duty, take a hot bath on Friday, get

dressed in festive clothes, and sit in a dignified manner waiting to receive the Sabbath, just as if one were going out to meet the king...One should set his table properly on Friday night, even if he feels the least need for food, and likewise at the end of the Sabbath, so as to honor the Sabbath at both its commencement and its termination...There were some sages of old who split firewood for cooking, lit lamps, or went to market to buy food or drink for Sabbath. Indeed, the more a man does in this respect the more praise he deserves... The more one spends for the Sabbath, the better. However, the sages of old declared:

"Make your Sabbath as weekday, and do not depend upon the charity of others." One should be particularly careful to have no less than three meals on the Sabbath: one in the evening, one in the morning, and one on the afternoon...The custom of the righteous men of old was as follows: On Sabbath morning they would go to the synagogue, then return to eat the second meal, then go to the schoolhouse (beth ha-midrash) to read Bible and Mishnah until after the afternoon service; finally, they would return home and sit down to the third Sabbath meal, eating and drinking until the end of the Sabbath. (Yad, Shabbath 30:2-10)

Shabbat begins with a lighting of the Sabbath

candles approximately twenty minutes before sundown on Friday evening. It is said that Jews begin their new day at about six o'clock in the evening because of the words of Genesis, "And it was evening and it was morning day..." The minimum number of candles that are to be lit is two - symbolizing the two forms of the Mitzvah: "'Zachor'-Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Ex 20:8), and 'Shamor'-Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Dt 5:12). It is the woman who lights the candles thus fulfilling the mitzvah. She pronounces the blessing after she lights the candles rather than before so that she will not profane Shabbat by kindling a fire. She closes her eyes so that she may delay the pleasure of welcoming the Shabbat light after she has said the blessing. While the wife is engaged in observing the Shabbat mitzvah in the home, the father and his sons are gathered in the synagogue for the first of three or four religious services.

Before going to the synagogue, a wise husband never neglects to purchase fresh flowers for his wife. Once the family is united in the home, the family worship begins. The entire family gathers about the table to sing the traditional 'Shalom Aleichem.' Next the father blesses each one of his children, placing his hands on their heads and saying, "May God make you as Ephraim and Manasheh (to sons)." For daughters, this blessing is pronounced, "May God

make you as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah." The father concludes his blessing with the priestly Aaronitic benediction.

The Shabbat Kiddush (sanctification) is pronounced by the father while holding a full cup of wine in his hand. Everyone then washes his hands according to prescribed ritual. The two loaves of white bread (Challah) are distributed and eaten. The Challah is a reminder of the double portion of bread which the Israelites received in the desert.

Before the festival meal, the father sings the 'Ayshet Chayil' in honor of his wife. This is a song taken from the Book of Proverbs which is a eulogy to the Jewish wife and mother, extolling her role within the family.

In American Jewish communities, the family meal is followed by a service at the synagogue which is attended by the entire family. The prayer service in turn is followed by the 'Oneg Shabbat', the Sabbath Delight which may include the singing of folk songs and an elaborate community meal. Often this meal is provided by the parents of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

The following morning, another service is attended. Both on Shabbat and on Sunday, the opportunity is taken to instruct children and adults. Sunday also serves as a congregational meeting day for the various committees and service clubs of the synagogue.

Sometime after 6 o'clock Saturday, the recitation of 'Havdalah' (separation) is required to mark the conclusion of Shabbat. The Havdalah blessing is spoken over a cup of wine which is filled to overflowing. Fragrant spices kept in a special decorative box are smelled by all. In ancient times, spices were spread after a meal to cover cooking odors. This could not be done until the conclusion of Shabbat so this smelling of the spices signified that Shabbat had come to an end.

Before the conclusion of Shabbat, the special Havdalah candle is lit. This candle is made of two or more braided wicks, since the flame of a torch and not a regular candle is required by tradition. The Havdalah candle comes in various sizes and colors although blue and white and red and white are the most popular color combinations used. The flame is held high by a member of the household (usually a child) while the blessing is pronounced, "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe who creates the light of the fire." At the conclusion of the blessing, a person usually examines his hands by the light of the flame in order to derive some immediate use from the light, that the blessing may not be said in vain. Once again the wine cup is picked up and this time the essence of the Havdalah prayer is spoken:

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe who makes a division between the sacred and the secular, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six working days. Blessed art Thou, Lord, who makes a distinction between the sacred and the secular.

Before concluding the discussion of Shabbat, Judaism's concept of what constitutes "work" must be reviewed. In Exodus and Deuteronomy, the mitzvah states that Israel is to refrain from any מְלָאכָה, 'melakha'

- "work" or as Judaism defines it - "forbidden task". The Hebrew concept or definition of melakha is not at all identical with what is meant by the English word "work". For this reason, the Hebrew term will be used meaning a task forbidden on Shabbat.

Shabbat which means 'rest' and its prohibition of work points the believer to the perfect rest which is found only in Christ.

Jewish use of the Hebrew word melakha generally implies either (1) that is done in the course of one's employment, profession or occupation; or (2) an activity that involves great physical exertion.

Judaism states that it is the Oral Torah that defines what the Bible means by the term melakha. The Mishna (Shabbat 7:2) lists thirty-nine categories of activities which qualify as melakha. Some common activities forbidden as melakha include:

- cooking or baking (even if it does not involve lighting a fire;
- grinding, fine chopping, straining;
- washing clothes (by hand or machine);
- knitting, crocheting, embroidering;
- sewing, pasting, gluing;
- constructing or repairing;
- writing, erasing, drawing, painting, coloring, typing;
- hair cutting, shaving, nail paring;
- kindling or extinguishing a fire;
- cutting or tearing;

- garden and lawn care;
- carrying, pushing or moving an object more than six feet.

And now Rabbinic Law takes over to erect the fence around Torah:

- buying and selling;
- riding an animal (or car);
- boating;
- playing a musical instrument;
- switching on or off electric lights or any electrical appliance;
- wedding ceremonies;
- journeying on foot or otherwise beyond three quarters of a mile from the place where one is spending Shabbat.

Also to be shunned are activities which are not in themselves melakha nor directly lead to them but constitute "a weekday task" in the opinion of the rabbis. Examples include:

- heavy jobs such as rearranging furniture in the house;
- watching television even when pre-set before Shabbat;
- preparing for a post-Shabbat activity;
- engaging in exercises or athletic activities; reading business correspondence.

All Shabbat Laws are suspended when a person's life is in danger. It is a duty to do whatever is necessary to save a life.

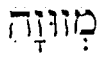
Home Ritual and Worship

A religious Jew will never refer to God without having his head covered. Nowhere is this commanded in the Bible nor is it legislated by the Sages. It simply became the custom not to go about bareheaded - at home, in the synagogue and outdoors - lest reference is made to HaShem without showing respect. In ancient Rome, a headcovering was worn by a servant or slave. A free man went bareheaded. The Jews evidently adopted this practice of covering their heads in a Beth HaKenneset and in prayer and whenever God's Name was mentioned in blessings (such as during meals) to emphasize that they were the servants of God. It became a way to show reverence to God. Today, a headcovering is demanded in the synagogue and any 'makom kaddosh' (holy or sanctified place). This demand is only made upon males.

The headcovering that is usually worn is called a 'yarmulke' in Yiddish and a 'kippah' (dome) in Hebrew. No religious significance is attached to this particular type of headcovering.

Orthodox men wear beards and sidelocks, often called prayerlocks. The Hebrew word for these sidelocks is 'payot'. The reason for this custom is to be found in the mitzvah as it is recorded in Leviticus 19:27: "Do not cut

the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard." The halakha by relating this verse to Leviticus 21:5 prohibits the use of a razor or knife to be used to shave the face. Leviticus 21:5 reads: "Priests must not shave their heads or shave off the edges of their beards or cut their bodies." All these customs had to do evidently with heathen practices particularly of the pagan priests. How is it that some Jews are clean shaven and still manage to remain in good standing with Judaism? According to Judaism it is permissible to cut facial and head hair with a scissors and in modern times with an electric razor since this appliance operates on the principle of a scissors rather than a knife. Nevertheless, the fully bearded male face still reflects the image of Judaism.

One identifying mark of a Jewish home is the 'Mezuzah'. Mezuzah,  , actually means "doorpost upon which hinges swing", but Judaism has applied this term to the scroll enclosed in a metal, wood or stone case which is affixed to the doorposts of not only the exterior doors of the house but also the inner doorposts with the exception of toilets and bathrooms. Deuteronomy 6:6 reads: "Write them (the Ten Words, the Miztvot) on the doorframes of your houses and your gates."

Maimonides already declared that those who look upon the mezuzah as a lucky charm for a household are ignorant.

Those fools not only fail to fulfill the mitzvah

itself, but they have taken a great mitzvah, which involves the Oneness of God and the reminder (emphasis mine) to love and worship Him, and treat it as though it were an amulet designed to benefit them personally.

(Hil. Mezuzah 5:4)

It should be stated again that knowledgeable religious Jews do not feel that they are literally fulfilling the mitzvah concerning the writing of God's Law on their doorposts. As can be seen already from the time of Maimonides, the mezuzah is a symbol to remind Jews of the command to love and worship the Lord.

I had the opportunity to get to know a Jewish lady doctor who moved to Jordan, Minnesota with her Jewish husband. She told me that her father gave them very careful instructions the first time that he visited them in their new home. "Just remember," he said, "travel through your new town and look for a mezuzah on a door. Even in a little 'stetl' like this, there is always one token Jewish family." "But Papa," the daughter replied, "We are the token Jewish family in Jordan."

Synagogue Ritual and Worship

Two articles of ritual clothing which are to be seen not only in the synagogue but also in the home are the 'Tallit' and the 'Tefillin'.

The Tallit (prayer shawl) and its accompanying 'tzitzit' (fringes) are spoken of in the Book of Numbers:

The Lord spoke to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them" 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels [fringes] on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. You will have the tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord your God.'" (Nu 15:37-41)

Because of the words "you will have the tassels to look at and so you will remember...", the tallit is never worn at evening prayer services. The sole exception is the Kol Nidre service on Yom Kippur night.

Tallit comes from the Hebrew-Aramaic verb לל which means "to cover". The tallit is worn over the head or thrown around the shoulders only by men. The use of blue thread in each fringe has been discontinued since the secret method of dying threads sky blue by the inhabitants of Akko was lost and forgotten in the dispersion.

The instructions as to how the 'tzitzit' (fringes) are to be tied has been handed down by the Oral Torah.

There is a mystical and symbolic meaning attached to the procedure. The thirty-nine windings that go into the making of each of the four fringes equals the numerical value of the Hebrew words for "The Lord is One." The wearing of the tallit was already common by the time of Christ and in all probability he wore this garment in the synagogue and temple. Once again it should be underlined that religious Jews in the main do not feel that they are literally obeying the mitzvah concerning the tallit. It is a symbol and reminder of obedience to the Torah.

The tefillin or phylacteries are worn in the remembrance of the word of the Lord in Deuteronomy: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts...Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads." (Dt 6:8)

The tefillin are never worn on Shabbat or festivals because these days in themselves are called reminders of the Covenant between God and Israel.

The tefillin consist of two small black boxes which contain scrolls of parchment upon which are written Exodus 13:1-10; 13:11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. These four passages all include the command to wear the tefillin as a symbol of love and devotion. Once again, please note that the wearing of tefillin is to be only a symbol of remembrance not the observance of the the mitzvah itself.

Tefillin comes from the Hebrew ^{ללף} meaning "to judge, to pray." The emphasis is upon the meaning of prayer, since this is when the tefillin are donned. Women do not wear tefillin or the tallit.

The following glossary will hopefully assist in familiarization with the ritual items and the people of the synagogue (Beth HaKnesset - House of gathering in Hebrew).

Holy Ark (aron kodesh) - a cabinet or recess in the wall in which are stored the scrolls of the Torah. The curtain covering the aron kodesh is called a 'parokhet' and it is generally richly embroidered. This covering symbolizes the veil or curtain that once separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

The Torah - is covered with a protecting mantle and is adorned with crowns, breastplate and bells. A Torah pointer called a 'yad' (hand) in Hebrew is used by the reader to point out the words as he reads. The Torah is considered to be a holy object and therefore touching it should be avoided [attitude toward the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament].

Eternal Light (ner tamid) - a lamp that is placed above and somewhat in front of the Holy Ark. It burns continually as a symbol of the Bible directive to "cause a lamp to burn continually in the tabernacle outside of the curtain that is before (the Ark of) the testimony..." (Ex 27:20,21)

Bimah is the platform set apart from the Ark on which stands a table (shulchan). From this table the Torah is read to the assembly and the reader or Cantor leads the congregation in services. This is the origin of the term used to describe having the honor of reading Scripture during the service (something that Jesus was asked to do in his hometown synagogue in Nazareth). It is called in Hebrew an 'aliyah' which means "to go up".

Menorah serves as a reminder of the seven branched candelabrum which once stood in the temple at Jerusalem. In order not to duplicate that candelabrum, either a six or eight branched menorah is used today.

Mechitza (literally a curtain) - a divider which separates men and women in an Orthodox synagogue.

Beth HaMidrash is another name for the synagogue. In Hebrew this means "House of Study".

Rabbi (rav in Hebrew) - the religious head of the Jewish community. His training includes studies of Torah, Talmud and Codes of Law.

Cantor (chazzan in Hebrew) - he represents and leads the congregation in their prayers before God. He is called upon to chant the prayers during the main Shabbat services, holidays, weddings and funerals. He is generally the trained musician in the synagogue and is a paid employee as is the rabbi.

Sexton (shamash in Hebrew) - generally charged with the

care and maintenance of the ritual items of the synagogue. He also serves as the Torah reader (Baal-Koray), or as a substitute for the cantor. He works with and assists the rabbi in many ways including assisting in Jewish education particularly of children.

The Priest (kohen in Hebrew) is to administer the priestly blessing and benediction of Aaron. He holds his hands in a particular way as he gives the blessing. The assembled people are not to look as he blesses them but evidently somewhere along the line someone peeked. A picture of the position of hands during the priestly benediction is included among the illustrations.

Baal Tekiah is the person who blows the shofar (ram's horn) on Rosh Hashana.

Swaying during prayer or 'shuckling' as it is called in Yiddish is a custom observed by many Jews while they are praying or studying Torah.

Kissing is also considered to be an important part of worship in that it is a universal sign of love, affection and devotion. This is why the sin of Judas is so vividly demonstrated with his betrayer's kiss. In the synagogue the tallit is kissed before it is put on. The tefillin are kissed when they are removed from and put back into their carrying bag. The tzitzit are kissed at the end of Barukh She-amar and during recitation of the Shema. The mezuzah

is kissed upon entering or leaving a house. The Torah and Siddur (prayerbook) are kissed before putting them away and the curtains of the Ark are kissed when they are opened and closed.

The kiss is a clear indication of intimate love and affection. When my friend Isaac sees me he rains kisses upon me. Being of Western and Germanic persuasion, this is something to which I am certain I will never become accustomed but it serves to remind me of the close connection between love of God and love of the neighbor. These are the two main mitzvot according to Jesus and they cannot be separated.

This entire chapter's discussion of worship will now conclude with but one observation. When you have stripped away all the ritual and formalism of Judaism's worship two concepts are still prominent. They are concepts which should be carefully examined for they are the concepts of family and joy.

At the present time we are engaged as a Church Body in preparing a new hymnal. Much is heard about the need for new liturgies, new hymns, new praise songs. All of what is new in the whole world will serve no purpose if Christians forget that worship is a family expression of a growth in knowledge of God's Word and the subsequent praise and service. Without the uniting bond of an honest and genuine

joy all liturgies and modes of worship are left dry and lifeless. After twenty years of parish ministry, I have come to the conclusion that the Christian church is at times the prime offender in the disruption of the Christian family. By this I mean all the various meetings which segregate the members of the family and separate them during the normal school year week. As a result, the concept of family is at times lacking in our worship because this segregation is unconsciously continued. There was a time, of course, when this was an official posture in many congregations. German Lutheran congregations separated the men from the women and children as scrupulously as the 'mechitza' in Orthodox synagogues. At least the separation demanded on Shabbat was not continued during the coming week among the Jews. Concerning the second concept of joy in worship all that is required is to listen on a Sunday morning. Sometimes I think that even God is bored with the rather glum and somber whimper that issues forth from Christians who have either lost or misplaced their joy.

Amen.

JUDAISM'S PRACTICE IN FESTIVALS

The rather liberal Jew, Harry Gersh, has this to say about the festivals of Judaism:

Jewish holidays stand on two legs, one in heaven and the other on earth. They cannot be divided. Take God out of any Jewish holiday and you take away one of its two legs - and it falls flat...Hanukkah is as important today as it was a thousand years ago because it celebrates not only victory in a war, but the reason for that war: the Jews' willingness to die rather than to give up their God. Hanukkah belongs half to the Jews and half to God...Pesach celebrates the Jews' escape to freedom, the beginning of the Jews as a nation. In much the same way, July 4 is Independence Day for Americans. Yet how many Americans really use the Fourth of July holiday as a day of remembrance? But Jews celebrate Pesach today much as their fathers did, with the same words and the same ceremonies. Pesach has the same observance now that it did a thousand years ago because of its religious meaning...It's the same with Rosh

Hashanah. Without its message of repentance and a new beginning it would be another New Year's Eve - without the parties. (WHEN A JEW CELEBRATES pp 105,106)

Sterling and high sounding sentiments indeed! But upon closer examination, it is immediately evident that the festivals of Judaism do not hold the meaning today that they did for those who waited for God to keep his promise that he would send the Messiah to save his people from their sins. Passover today has no lamb. How can a Jew observe the mitzvah concerning the lamb that is delivered in Deuteronomy? "Roast it [the lamb] and eat it at the place the Lord your God will choose." (Dt 16:7) To be sure, there is no temple at Jerusalem where the lambs for Passover may be slaughtered. This should serve all the more to point out the fact that there has been a change. Passover cannot be celebrated as God's People celebrated this festival before the fulness of the time. A Passover celebration in accord with the Lord's mitzvah is an impossibility today.

Shavuot and Sukkot are harvest and thanksgiving festivals. Even in Israel these festivals cannot be observed as they should be because there is no temple. It was commanded that firstfruits and offerings be brought to the temple in thanksgiving for the harvest. Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles are the 'Shalosh Regalim', the three pilgrimage festivals that all males were to attend annually.

No temple - no mitzvah; no mitzvah - no festival. All the festivals of Judaism are covered by the inspired words of St. Paul in his Letter to the Colosians: "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or in regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." (Col 2:16,17)

There is a value in reviewing the substance which is Christ in the shadow which is Judaism's festivals. We shall follow the calendar year of Judaism in the examination of Judaism's festivals beginning with:

ROSH HODESH

Determining when a new month in the Jewish calendar began was very important. First of all, the dates for celebrating festivals depended upon it. Secondly, the first day of each month - Rosh Hodesh - was an important holiday in its own right. The mitzvah reads:

"Also at your times of rejoicing - your appointed feasts and New Moon festivals - you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am the Lord your God." (Nu 10:10)

As far as a discussion of the Hebrew calendar is concerned, please review Dr. Lawrenz's fine article and illustration on the following pages:

APPENDIX C

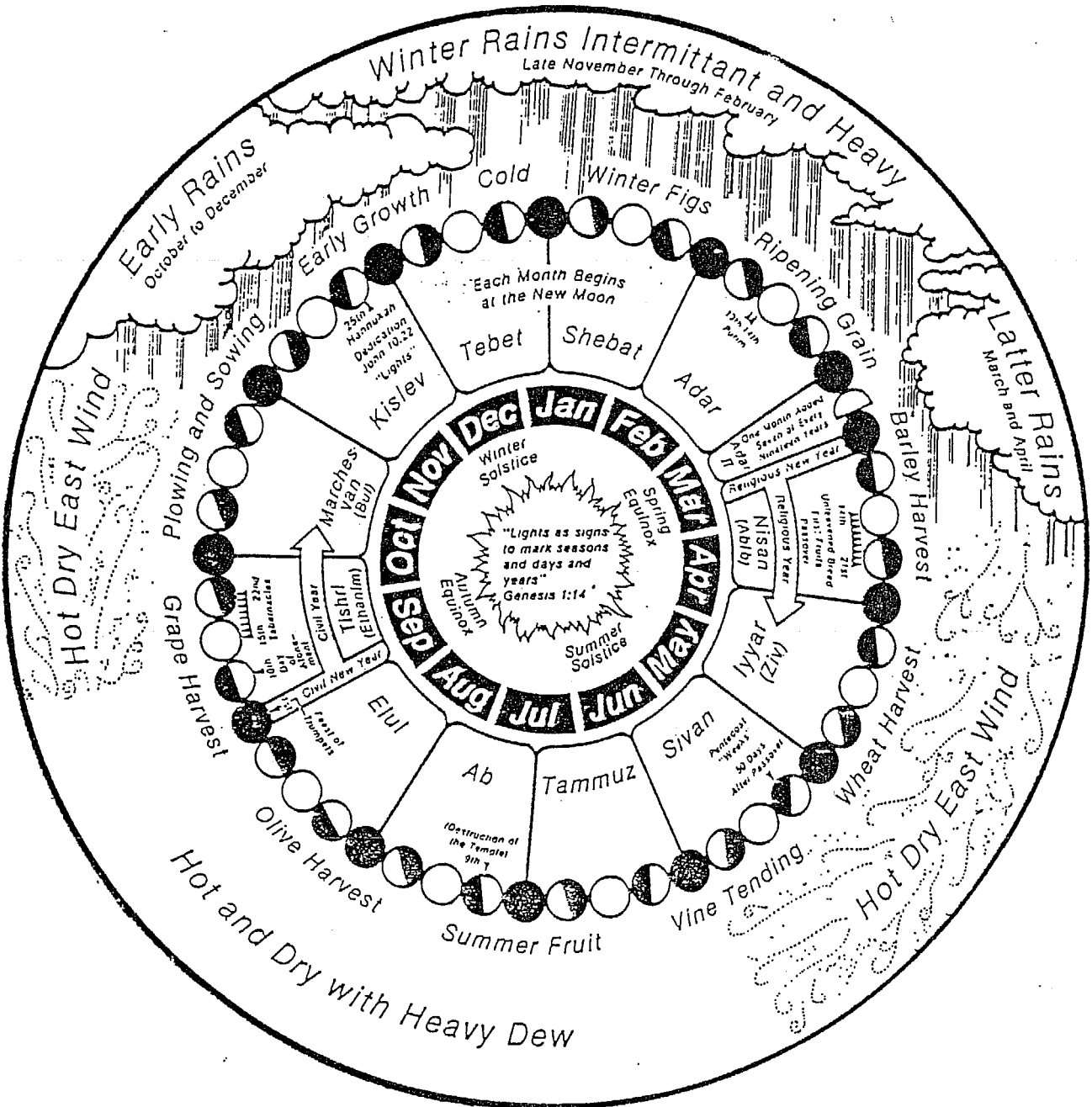
The Hebrew Calendar

The Hebrew calendar was regulated by four factors: sun, moon, the climate of the Promised Land, and the religious feasts commanded by God. Like other ancient peoples the Hebrews were aware of the solar year with its $365\frac{1}{4}$ days. Months, however, were marked off by the moon. A new month began whenever the horns of the waxing moon were first seen by the priests in Jerusalem. Since twelve lunar months do not make a full year, a thirteenth month was inserted every few years, usually after Adar or Elul. Priests tried to keep the months and seasons in step with each other so that the important festivals did not fall too early or too late. The names of the months used on the chart are those of the late Old Testament. They were borrowed from the Babylonians and are still in use today. In the days of Solomon the months were simply numbered (first month, second month, etc.). Only four of the earlier Hebrew names for the months are known. They are indicated on the chart in parenthesis.

The Promised Land has a Mediterranean type of climate with two principal seasons: (1) the summer with long, hot, dry days and dewy mornings, and (2) the winter with shorter, cooler days punctuated now and then by three or four days of continual downpour. Summer and winter are separated by short transitional periods in which the wind shifts to the east off the desert. Summer arrives regularly in mid-June. The beginning of the rainy season is not so predictable. It may begin with a shower in mid-October or delay as late as mid-December. Climate produces two harvest seasons, one in April-May and the other in September-October. These harvest seasons coincide with the opening and closing of the Hebrew calendar and with the principal feasts ordained by God through Moses. Passover and Pentecost embrace the grain harvest. Trumpets and Tabernacles with the Day of Atonement in between mark the fruit harvest. Passover falls on the full moon of the first month of the religious year. Trumpets opens the civil year. Purim, which falls in Adar, was added in the days of Esther. The Feast of Dedication (modern Hannukah) in Kislew was added to the calendar between the Old and New Testaments and is mentioned only in John 10:22.

John C. Lawrenz

THE HEBREW CALENDAR



How is it decided on which particular day to celebrate Rosh Hashanah or Pesach or Shavuot? Jewish months are counted from the coming of one new moon to the next - $29\frac{1}{2}$ days. One Jewish month has 29 days and the next 30 days. The sun year is measured by the return of the sun to the same place in the sky. The sun year is $365\frac{1}{2}$ days in duration. The problem that presents itself is that the sun year and the moon year don't match up. Twelve moon months do not make up one sun year. Harry Gersh explains the solution in this way:

In the early years, the priests would not announce the date of Pesach until they had sent messengers into the country to see how the grain was doing. If the barley wasn't ripening, if the lambs were too small, Pesach was put off for a month. This gave the year an extra month-13 moons instead of 12. The Jewish leap year does not add just a day but a whole month! ...The Jewish leap year is longer than a sun year. The way it was worked out, one came every two or three years, seven times in 19 years. And although most of the months are about at the same season year after year, the sun and moon calendars are exactly equal every 19 years. A Jewish holiday in 1971 will fall on the same date in the general sun calendar in 1990 and 2009. You can see why even in olden times Jews studied arithmetic and astronomy. (WHEN A JEW CELEBRATES p 110)

DAY OF ATONEMENT

יום כפור

Yom Kippur Calendar

1975	5736	Monday	September 15
1976	5737	Monday	October 4
1977	5738	Thursday	September 22
1978	5739	Wednesday	October 11
1979	5740	Monday	October 1
1980	5741	Saturday	September 20
1981	5742	Thursday	October 8
1982	5743	Monday	September 27
1983	5744	Saturday	September 17
1984	5745	Saturday	October 6
1985	5746	Wednesday	September 25
1896	5747	Monday	October 13
1987	5748	Saturday	October 3
1988	5749	Wednesday	September 21
1989	5750	Monday	October 9
1990	5751	Saturday	September 29
1991	5752	Wednesday	September 18
1992	5753	Wednesday	October 7
1993	5754	Saturday	September 25
1994	5755	Thursday	September 15
1995	5756	Wednesday	October 4
1996	5757	Monday	September 23
1997	5758	Saturday	October 11
1998	5759	Wednesday	September 30
1999	5760	Monday	September 20
2000	5761	Monday	October 9
2001	5762	Thursday	September 27
2002	5763	Monday	September 16
2003	5764	Monday	October 6
2004	5765	Saturday	September 25
2005	5766	Thursday	October 13
2006	5767	Monday	October 2
2007	5768	Saturday	September 22
2008	5769	Thursday	October 9
2009	5770	Monday	September 28
2010	5771	Saturday	September 18

שֵׁשׁ רֵגָלִים

SHALOSH REGALIM

First Days of the Pilgrim Festivals

1975	March 27	May 16	September 20
1976	April 15	June 4	October 9
1977	April 3	May 23	September 27
1978	April 22	June 11	October 16
1979	April 12	June 1	October 6
1980	April 1	May 21	September 25
1981	April 19	June 8	October 13
1982	April 8	May 28	October 2
1983	March 29	May 18	September 22
1984	April 17	June 6	October 11
1985	April 6	May 26	September 30
1986	April 24	June 13	October 18
1987	April 14	June 3	October 8
1988	April 2	May 22	September 26
1989	April 20	June 9	October 14
1990	April 10	May 30	October 4
1991	March 30	May 19	September 23
1992	April 18	June 7	October 12
1993	April 6	May 26	September 30
1994	March 27	May 16	September 20
1995	April 15	June 4	October 9
1996	April 4	May 24	September 28
1997	April 22	June 11	October 16
1998	April 11	May 31	October 5
1999	April 1	May 21	September 25
2000	April 20	June 9	October 14
2001	April 8	May 28	October 2
2002	March 28	May 17	September 21
2003	April 17	June 6	October 11
2004	April 6	May 26	September 30
2005	April 24	June 13	October 18
2006	April 13	June 2	October 7
2007	April 3	May 23	September 27
2008	April 20	June 9	October 14
2009	April 9	May 29	October 3
2010	March 30	May 19	September 23

Unfortunately, it is not only astronomy that the Jews studied but also the heathen pseudo-science of astrology. The signs of the zodiac are to be seen on the sixth century synagogue floor at Bet Alpha. Many of those who took part in the Seminary Summer Quarters in Israel have seen this evidence of an attempt to mix religion and the occult.

Another vestigial trace of Jewish belief in astrology is very common but not as obvious. When one Jew congratulates or wishes good luck to another Jew, he says, "Mazal Tov" which literally means "a good star or constellation".

Today Rosh Hodesh observances are limited to a few appropriate readings of Torah and some special prayers in the synagogue. Some Orthodox Jews still follow a practice begun by the mystic cabbalists in Safed in the 1500s. They observe the day before Rosh Hodesh as a kind of mini-Yom Kippur, in fact, they call it Yom Kippur Katan (small). On this day they fast and address prayers for forgiveness for the previous month.

Another custom which welcomes the new month is followed by the Orthodox on a cloudless night anytime from three days after sighting the new moon until the fifteenth day. They perform a Kiddush Levana (moon sanctification). There must be a minyan, for it is a religious service. The Orthodox, young and old, go out into the night dressed in

their holiday clothes and welcome the moon with blessings, prayers, and, sometimes, with dancing.

ROSH HASHANAH

Like all Jewish holidays, Rosh Hashanah begins at sunset. Rosh Hashanah is followed by a ten day period of repentance which culminates with Yom Kippur. In Hebrew, these days have traditionally been called 'Yamim Noraim' which means "days of awe". The mitzvah which has been applied to Rosh Hashanah reads:

Say to the Israelites: "On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the Lord by fire." (Lv 23:24,25)

Rosh Hashanah, of course, is celebrated today as Jewish New Year. It is the occasion for a special synagogue service, a family feast, an opportunity to wish loved ones 'Shanah Tovah' (a good year), and to hear the plaintive sound of the 'shofar' (ram's horn) in accord with the commandment. A Jew who is a shut-in who cannot be present at the synagogue must be visited privately and the shofar blown in his presence. The prayers include primarily petitions for peace and happiness all over the world. A special holiday delicacy is

slices of apple dipped in honey and eaten in the hope that the coming year may be as fruitful and sweet.

The most important part of Rosh Hashanah observance in the sounding of the shofar is carefully regulated by Oral Torah. The man who blows the shofar is known as the Baal Tekiah and his qualifications include not only his ability to sound this difficult instrument but that he also have the reputation of being pious and righteous. In Israel the shofar is to be heard in Orthodox communities on Friday afternoons ushering in the Shabbat in addition to Rosh Hashanah. The shofar is also blown during the swearing in of a new president.

One other custom which is followed on Rosh Hashanah is symbolically casting sins into a running stream (תַּשְׁלִיךְ) This custom has its origin with the words of the prophet Micah: "You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea." (Mi 7:19) The reader will notice how the action is transferred from the Lord doing the casting away of sins to the action of the sinner himself.

Reference to the Book of Life is made frequently during Rosh Hashanah. The Book is said to be divided into three sections: the Book of Life for the righteous, the Book of Life for the wicked, and the Book of Life for those in between. Does this sound suspiciously like heaven, hell and purgatory?

Rosh Hashanah sets the pattern for determining the dates for the other festivals and holidays. The rule is that Rosh Hashanah must not fall on a Sunday, a Wednesday, or a Friday so that Yom Kippur (a day of total fasting) might never fall on Friday or Sunday. Yom Kippur landing on a Friday or Sunday would mean two days of fasting since food could not be prepared on Shabbat. This was considered to be too heavy a burden to lay on the people. In years when Rosh Hashanah would regularly fall on one of the forbidden days, a day is simply added or subtracted from one month or the other.

Rosh Hashanah is in reality a special Rosh Hodesh. According to the Mishna, there were four New Years: the first of Nisan—the first month of the ecclesiastical calendar determining the dates of festivals and the length of a king's reign; the first of Elul—the beginning of the year for tithing of animals; the first of Shvat (later changed to the 15th)—the new year of the trees, a way of calculating the fruit harvest for tithing purposes; and the first of Tishri the seventh month—started the civil calendar and was used to determine the sabbatical and jubilee years. Why should the first of Tishri take precedence over all the other new years? If the Oral Torah has any truth to it, the only Biblical support that could be cited would be the fact that both in the Books of Leviticus and Numbers the Lord

commands the Jews to observe the first day of the seventh month as a special day (Lv 23:24,25; Nu 29:1).

YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is the most solemn day on the Jewish calendar. The mitzvah reads:

The Lord said to Moses, "The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering to the Lord by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the Lord your God....This is a to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. 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." (Lv 23:26-32)

One problem with the Hebrew in this and related sections is the translation of עִנִּיתֶם . The King James and all the Jewish authorities translate this verb as "afflict your souls." The verb itself is a piel, perfect, 2nd person, plural. Already in the piel, the verb עָנָה can mean "afflict your souls". This doesn't take into account the plural אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם as a direct object. This

combination can be translated as "fast" although for some unknown reason both in Biblical and modern Hebrew the hithpael of this verb is translated as "fast" (abstain from food and drink). One thing is certain: the NIV translation "to deny yourselves" is interpretive and too weak.

Yom Kippur is a day of repentance and prayer for pious Jews. In Bible times in accord with God's command, this solemn day was highlighted by the sacrifice for the high priest, his family and the people - the sprinkling of the blood in the Holy of Holies - the sacrifice of a goat and the exclusion of the scape goat over which the sins of the people were recited. All of this pointed beautifully to the Christ who would suffer outside the gate, take the sins of the world upon his sinless shoulders and die a shameful death as one rejected and despised.

Judaism has made this solemn foreshadowing of Christ's Atonement into a day of confession, disavowing oaths that cannot be kept (Kol Nidre -all vows) and a remembering of the dead. The shofar signals the end of a long and hard day for the worshippers and it is high time to begin plans for the rejoicing of Sukkot.

Our Christian hymn reminds us:

Not all the blood of beasts
 On Jewish altars slain
 Could give the guilty conscience peace
 Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb,
 Takes all our sins away;
 A sacrifice of nobler name
 And richer blood than they.

Judaism has denied the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament and the perfect sacrifice of God's Son and twisted and contorted the entire concept of God's atonement making it only another weak effort on the part of the sinner to save and justify himself. Rabbi Brasch writes:

The religious philosophy of the day is indicated by the English form of its name. By his sins, man lost his sense of unity with God and by his self-centered life has not only drifted away from his Maker but has also separated himself from his fellow men. Yom Kippur comes to urge him to 'penitence, charity and prayer.' By these, he can again become at-one with the Almighty and his brethren. (emphasis mine) (THE JUDAIC HERITAGE p 39,40)

It's the same age old story of Man the sinner providing his own salvation.

One custom followed by Orthodox Jews shows a trace of the scape goat that was commanded. The custom is called 'Kapparat' (expiations) and is bizzarre to say the least. Observed on the day before Yom Kippur, it begins with the man holding a rooster (or a woman a hen) in his right hand

reciting verses from the Psalms and the Book of Job. the bird is then swung three times around the head while the person says three times, "This is my change, this is my redemption. This rooster (hen) shall be killed, while I shall be admitted to and allowed a long, happy and peaceful life." Even if Pesach no longer has its lamb, Yom Kippur has its chicken.

Another custom which is wide spread is the wearing of white clothing on Yom Kippur to show the certainty of the worshipper that he has made himself acceptable before the Lord who judges all flesh.

As was stated before, the Yom Kippur concluding services include 'Yitzkor', the memorial prayers for the dead. The final service is called 'Neilat HaShearim' (closing of the gates). There is a long drawn out blast of the shofar and the cry goes up, "l'shanah hab'ah b'y'rushalaim - the next year in Jerusalem". This messianic expectation is only repeated at one other time of the year - during the seder of Pesach.

SUKKOT

Sukkot means "tabernacles," "booths," or "temporary huts," for these were the temporary dwelling used by the Benai Yisrael during their forty-year camping trip in the

desert. As a reminder of the fact that it is the Lord who has provided them with homes, and fields, and vineyards, and orchards, the Lord commanded them to celebrate this festival every year. The mitzvah reads:

The Lord said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord's Feast of Tabernacles (Hag HaSukkot) begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work.. (Lv 23:33-35)

So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival unto the Lord 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 the Lord your God for seven days. Celebrate this as a festival to the Lord for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate in the seventh month. Live in booths for seven days. All native born Israelites are to live in booths, so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.'" (Lv 23:39-43)

As in all things, the Oral Torah of Judaism gives a host of regulations and special conditions and situations either to fulfill the mitzvah or to set it aside but two distinctive characteristics remain: the 'sukkah' (booth) and the four species:

a lulav (לולב) - the youngest shoot (or branch) of a

palm tree (כַּפֵּת הַמָּרִים)

a branch of a willow which grows near water (ערב -
to be whitish - the wood)

a branch of a myrtle which has a lovely smell (עֵבֶת
עֲנָף -branches thickly interwoven)

an etrog - (אֶתְרוֹג) - Aramaic for the Hebrew

עֵץ הָדָר = "ornamental tree"; in modern usage a
citron which looks like a lemon but is a great
deal larger.

These four species are supposed to represent all growing things in the world. The willow and myrtle branches are tied around the palm branch and it collectively is called the 'lulav'. The etrog is kept in a well padded box to protect it from damage. The etrog must be in perfect condition. Sukkot is somewhat of a Jewish Thanksgiving in our modern age.

During Sukkot, one of the daily rituals in the synagogue dating back to the days of the temple is the reciting of the 'Hoshanah' prayer while circling the 'bimah'

and holding the etrog and lulav. On the seventh day of Sukkot, the bimah is encircled seven times (reminiscent of Jericho) while many prayers (Hoshanot) are said. For this reason, the seventh day is called Hoshanah Rabbah meaning "many hosannahs". Another custom which may have its roots in the Herodian temple era is the beating of the extra 'arav', the willow branches. This is supposed to remind the people of the sound and the sight of rain which is so important in Eretz Yisrael. Because of this custom, Hoshanah Rabbah is also called "The Seventh Day Of The Willow".

PESACH

Sukkot, Shavuot, and Pesach are the three pilgrimage festivals but the queen of all Jewish festivals is Pesach. Circumcision and Passover have often been called the Old Testament sacraments which means that there is so much to say about Pesach that it is difficult to know where to start or what is even more important, where to stop. The three main portions of Scripture which deal with the mitzvot of Pesach are Leviticus 23:4-8; Numbers 9:1-14; Deuteronomy 16:1-8. Pesach, of course, is also referred to as Hag HaMatzot (Festival of Unleavened Bread) and in modern times as Zman Heirutenu (the Time or Season of our freedom).

Was it the Passover Seder meal which Jesus ate with his disciples on Thursday evening of Holy Week? Matthew states in his Gospel: "He replied, 'Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, the Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover." (Mt 26:18,19) Mark says: "The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover." (Mk 14:16) Dr. Luke tells us: "Then came the day

of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed...and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' (Lk 22:7,11) Some feel that John seems to say that the Passover meal was eaten on Friday in that he writes by divine inspiration: "Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover." (Jn 18:28)

The problem would seem to center around when did the 14th day of Nisan actually begin. From the former discussion in the first section, we gather that the Pharisees made up the popular party and had their roots more with the common man. The Jewish historian Josephus who was a Pharisee living in the days of Jesus states in his explanation of the law of Passover that the Passover lamb "must be eaten during the night with nothing left for the morning." (ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS, III, x, 5) The Pharisees and the common people reckoned the day from sunrise to sunrise while the Sadducees used the sunset to sunset reckoning. This means that Jesus and his disciples could eat the Passover meal on Thursday evening and the Sadducee and priestly enemies could eat their Passover meal on Friday evening. Because it is the record of Scripture

that Jesus ate the Passover in the Upper Room with his disciples on Thursday evening of Holy Week, this decides the question for the Christian.

One other very simple solution to the problem can be observed in present day observance of the the Festival of Passover. Philip Birnbaum states, "In the Diaspora, the Seder service is conducted twice, on the first and second nights of Pesach, while in Eretz Yisrael only on the first night." (ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JEWISH CONCEPTS pp 510,511) Today this may be a trace of what very well may have been two different evening Seder meals at the time of Christ.

Of the two important mitzvot of Pesach, one is still followed and one is not. Jews today still celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. No bread with yeast is to be found in the entire house, in fact, the house is scoured from top to bottom in the search of 'hametz' (leaven) until not even a crumb can be found. At the same time, the most important feature of Pesach is omitted: there can be no lamb.

The Seder (order) may take on different wording but the sequence remains primarily the same. Each guest at the Passover table is provided with a 'Haggadah' (account) with the order of service printed out so that all may take part in what is a religious ceremonial meal. The basic order is as follows:

The Lighting of the Festival Candles.

Kadesh - the blessing of the wine and partaking of the first of four cups of wine.

Urhatz - the ceremonial washing of the hands.

Karpas - the dipping of lettuce in salt water and praise of God for creating the fruits of the earth.

Yahatz - the division of the middle 'matzah' and the hiding of a half called 'afikoman' (hidden).

Magid - the recitation of the meaning of Passover: during the telling of the account of the ten plagues, wine from the chalice is spilled in a saucer or dish; a second cup of wine is drunk.

Rohatzah - hands are washed a second time accompanied by a benediction.

Motzi

Matzah - the leader holds the top matzah and pronounces the blessing for bread and a special benediction for the matzah; he then gives each member at the table a taste of the bread.

Maror - Everyone speaks a blessing over the bitter herbs and dips it into the 'haroset'.

Korech - the leader breaks the bottom matzah and places the maror in between as a sandwich (eating unleavened bread with bitter herbs).

Shulchan

Orech - the meal is eaten

Tzafun - afikoman is given as dessert to all the guests

Berech - the third cup of wine is drunk after saying grace; hymns are sung including the Hallel. Messianic desire is expressed with the words- "The next year in Jerusalem".

Niztrah- the concluding lines of the Seder.

Observing even a modern Passover Seder meal is taking a step back in time. An opportunity is presented to reflect upon what happened that Thursday evening in the Upper Room when the Savior celebrated the last Seder meal that would have any real meaning as a religious observance. Listed below are only a few striking comparisons of the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper and the Passover Seder.

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET: This involved more than the custom of washing a guest's feet before he partook of a meal. It took place while the meal was being served and so it was the Rohatz, the ritual cleansing. The surprising thing for the disciples is that Jesus takes the ritual cleansing one step farther and performs the task of the lowest slave in washing their feet. Peter realizes the spiritual significance of this cleansing when he impulsively shouts, "...Not just my feet but my hands and my head as well." (Jn 13:9) Clinging to his Jewish concept of ritual cleansing, Peter does not realize that when the sinner is cleansed by Christ, he is completely clean.

THE PRESENTING OF THE SOP TO JUDAS: The commonly held belief is that the 'sop' was a piece of bread that was then dipped into a kind of stew. The diminutive ψωμίον is not limited to bread. The word is taken from the verb which simply means "to feed by putting small pieces of food in the mouth". What is described in John 13:21-27 is, perhaps, the Maror, the dipping of the bitter herbs into the haroset (a mixture of apple/nut/wine and cinnamon.) This would explain why those disciples who did not hear the special significance that Jesus gave to this act were neither surprised nor upset by the dramatic way that Jesus indentified his betrayer. This also would mean that Judas had most certainly already departed when Jesus instituted the Sacrament of his Holy Supper.

THE LONG DISCUSSION OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES: This would provide an entirely new meaning to the ancient practice of asking, "What does this mean?" - an introduction to the Magid.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENT: Two notes from Dr. Lawrenz's Passover Booklet suffice -

(NOTE: When our Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he did so "after supper," that is, after the Passover meal had been eaten. How fitting that the aphikomen was used for the institution of the Holy Supper. It was the piece broken from the second of three pieces of matzah which formed the 'unity.' It was

'buried' and now 'resurrected.' Jesus is the one whom we receive in the Lord's Supper "in, with, and under the bread." (p 35)

(NOTE: It is at this place "after supper" that Jesus took the "cup of blessing" [the third cup that is drunk at Passover] or 'cup of redemption' and instituted the sacrament of his blood. The Apostle Paul refers to it as the 'cup of blessing.' [a special blessing is pronounced over this cup] Eucharist means 'blessing.') (p 37)

One other observation having to do with matzah is shared from the Passover Booklet written by Dr. Lawrenz: Leaving the seder plate we see a pair of plates heaped with large, flat crackers. Each is a MATZAH (pronounced mah-tzah), a flat 'cake' of unleavened bread. Matzah has neither yeast nor salt. It is therefore quite bland in taste. In ancient times the unleavened bread was usually round. Regardless of shape, matzah has two remarkable characteristics. In preparing the matzah, the baker pricks the surface. In baking the matzah, the oven leaves brown stripes across the surface. During the Passover ceremony, one of these crackers is broken, hidden, and later restored. Most remarkable of all, this broken matzah is placed between two others and the three together are referred to by the Jews as the

'unity.' Although the significance may be lost to unbelieving Jews, the Christian will quickly see Christ in the broken matzah. He is a unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He was broken and pierced. By his stripes we are healed. He was hidden three days in the earth and then brought back to life again at the resurrection. (p 9)

On a practical note, a meaningful way of explaining what happened on the night in which Jesus was betrayed is to reenact specific portions of the seder before partaking of the Lord's Supper during a Maundy Thursday vesper service. On several occasions, I have had the privilege of presenting the message of Christ in the Passover Seder to various congregations. We have had as many as 200 people at one time participate in a Christian Seder. A source that is recommended so highly is the booklet written by Dr. Lawrenz. I believe that it can only be obtained through him.

SHAVUOT

Shavuot is the third and final of the pilgrimage festivals and served in Bible times as yet another thanksgiving celebrations. Pesach came in the spring (aviv) and Shavuot marks the end of the cycle. The mitzvah reads:
"From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeeeks.

Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath and then present an offering of new grain unto the Lord." (Lv 23:15,16)

It is clear from two other names by which Shavuot is known that it was a harvest festival. Hag Hakatzir means "festival of grain" and Yom HaBikkurim means "day of first fruits". Once again, since there is no temple to which to bring an offering, Judaism in an attempt to maintain an observance of Shavuot (weeks) has given it a new meaning: a celebration of the giving of Torah on Mt. Sinai. Torah includes the Written and Oral Torah.

In support and in illustration of this new meaning for Shavuot, modern religious Jews make a point of eating at least one dairy meal during the celebration of this concluding feast. In the words of Rabbi Donin:

...Some see this as symbolizing a 'land flowing with milk and honey [I wonder if any Jew ever stopped to see that this means you get the honey at the beginning of the year - Rosh Hashanah - and the milk at the end -Shavuot; a typical Hebraic inversion]. Others see it as emphasizing, on this festival which marks the giving of the Torah, the interdependence and unity of the Written and Oral Torah. [emphasis mine] For the very same verses that speak of bringing 'the choicest fruits of the land unto the house of the Lord your God' in celebration of Shavuot also stress that "You must not

boil a kid in its mother's milk" (Exodus 23:19, 34:26)

On the basis of the latter part of these verses, the Oral Torah based its prohibition of eating milk and meat together. Hence, a separate dairy meal is eaten to emphasize the total unity of the verse and the authenticity of the Oral Torah. [emphasis mine]

TO BE A JEW pp 240,241)

This constitutes an interesting hermeneutic to prove a classic case of eisegesis.

The other festivals celebrated by Judaism are not really included within the scope of this thesis since they are man ordained and not instituted by God. They are simply indentified below with a brief explanation:

Purim (lots) - a celebration commemorating God's deliverance of the Jews in the Book of Esther; today an excuse for masquerades, synagogue melodrama (boo and hiss and cheer), and the only sanctioned invitation to get 'really smashed' - "drink until you can't remember whether it is Mordechai or Haman who is to be praised or cursed."

Hanukkah - an intertestamental celebration of the dedication of the temple under Yehuda Maccavi. Today it helps Jewish children to avoid the temptation of Christmas.

Simchat Torah- seven ceremonial processions around the synagogue in which people take turns carrying the Torah scrolls.

Tu B'shvat - the new year of the trees - somewhat of an Israeli Arbor Day.

Yom HaAtzmaut- Israel's Independence Day celebration highlighted by the singing of the national anthem "HATIKVA" (the hope).

Lag Ba-Omer - a special day of rejoicing and merriment in the spring of the year.

Tishah B'Av - a fast day to mourn the loss of both temples in 586 BC and 70 AD; observed on the ninth day of Av.

A Concluding Thought is that Judaism's practice in observing the festivals is very much like the clay lamp that sits on my desk. It comes from Hevron and is dated from Iron I. It may have been used to light the darkness in a Judean home when David ruled as king in that city. It's interesting to examine because it tells me something about life in Bible Times. Since I have the luxury of electric lights I wouldn't think of using a clay lamp to light my study. So also with the festivals of Judaism. They are empty and meaningless since they still point to a messiah who is

coming. Messiah has come as it was foretold. He is the perfect rest, the One who atones, the One who makes all things new, the One who shed his blood for forgiveness, the One who exchanges our wilderness tabernacle for an eternal mansion in heaven.

JUDAISM'S PRACTICE IN SYMBOLS

What is meant in this instance by practice is Judaism's use of two symbols which have become synonymous with Judaism and the Jews. The first symbol is by far the most ancient and that is the

Menorah

It is the Lord who commanded the first menorah (lampstand) to be made in Exodus 25:31-40. Either Bezalel or both Bezalel and Oholiab completed the construction of the lampstand in accord with the pattern delivered by the Lord to Moses. It was to be the first of many menorahs for Israel:

They made the lampstand of pure gold and hammered it out, base and shaft; its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms were of one piece with it. Six branches extended from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other. Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on one branch,

three on the next branch and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand. And on the lampstand were four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms. One bud was under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second pair, and a third bud under the third pair-six branches in all. The buds and branches were all of one piece with the lampstand, hammered out of pure gold. They made its seven lamps, as well as its wick trimmers and trays, of pure gold. They made the lampstand and all its accessories from one talent of pure gold. (Ex 37:17-24)

It would seem that there were fourteen menorot in all. The first was neither cast nor welded but hammered from a single lump of pure gold. This is the menorah that stood in the sanctuary of the tabernacle. Solomon was not content with one menorah but built no less than ten, placing five on the southern and five on the northern sides of the entrance leading to the Holy of Holies of the first temple. The fate of the first menorah is unknown but it is probable that the menorot of Solomon were looted and carried away as spoil by Nebuchadnezzar after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C. Jewish tradition claims that before the final assault on Jerusalem, priests secretly buried the menorot at

an unknown spot and there they remain to this very day (shades of RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK).

It is only the Mishna which provides information concerning the other menorot. There was supposedly a single menorah which was cast and not hammered out as the first which was placed in the post-exilic temple. This menorah was reportedly destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes when he plundered the temple. Yehuda Macavi immediately restored a menorah to the temple when he rededicated the sanctuary three years later in 165 B.C. This menorah was said to have been made of wood which was then replaced by a menorah made of silver.

Herod the Great constructed the magnificent menorah that was taken by Titus to Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. According to the Talmud, this menorah was six feet high with a width of three feet across the branches which themselves were four inches thick. Wild imaginations have this treasure buried in every important city from Rome to Byzantium or perhaps even hidden in the secret treasure vaults of the Vatican (shades of RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK II).

Today the menorah is the official emblem of the State of Israel. This is the symbolism according to Judaism: the menorah speaks of spiritual conquest and the undying and irresistible force of light; light was God's

prime work in creation and man, formed in the divine image, was meant to dispel darkness. This means that the menorah's lamps speak of enlightenment, learning, understanding and reason - all of which are considered to be of ultimate importance to Judaism. The six lamps placed on the branches of the menorah are seen as a reminder of the six days of creation, while the central lamp, toward which all the others turned, is considered the symbol of Shabbat. Or, the seven lights are understood to be a reflection of the seven celestial spheres, showing the emanation of the divine spirit and man's laborious path from the mundane to the spiritual, from crude materialism, stage by stage and step by step, to the realm of the sacred, and there, finally, to a meeting with God, face to face. Again, it is so very clear that Judaism maintains that man must seek and reach out to God rather than God reaching out and providing redemption and salvation for man.

Until recent times, because of a regulation concerning the duplication of articles from the destroyed temple, menorot have traditionally possessed six or eight branches. Particularly is this true of the Hanukkah Menorah although in this the symbolism points to the eight days when the oil in the temple menorah miraculously did not run out, which is represented by the eight candles and the ninth candle

serving as a 'shamash' (servant). This ban has been lifted in modern times, a fact which is evidenced by the large impressive menorah which stands close to the Knesset in Jerusalem. The emblem is maintained by Judaism but the true Light which is Christ has still been rejected.

The Shield of David

The Shield of David - 'Magen David' in Hebrew - is a figure formed by two interlocking equilateral triangles, one of which is inverted. It is an ancient symbol which is to be found chiseled in stone among the ruins of the synagogue at Capernaum along with other symbols such as the menorah and of all things, a swastika. It (the shield) is frequently and erroneously referred to as the Star of David.

The symmetrical form of the Star is explained as a symbolic representation of the identity of the upper and lower worlds, the natural and the supernatural. Its six points were seen as representative of God's universality and omnipresence, whose power extended to the north, south, east, west, below and above. Its twelve corners were interpreted as representative of the twelve tribes of Israel. The intertwined, equilateral triangles were believed to combine mystically the beginning of the world with present day existence, the six points being the six days of creation.

In this symbol we see the mysticism and preoccupation with magical figures and designs which have ever been so much a part of Orthodox Judaism whose inspired Book condemns all the tricks and trades of wizards and witches.

Today the Shield of David is emblazoned upon a gigantic blue and white tallit. It is the national flag of the State of Israel. From the time of World War II when Jews were forced to wear this symbol for the purpose of indentifying those doomed to the concentration camps it has become for Jews and Judaism what the Cross is for Christians. For the Jew, the Magen David can only stand for allegorical and millennialistic hopes for a future earthly kingdom ruled by a worldly messiah. For the Christian, the Cross continues to stand for a kingdom that is not of this world ruled by the Messiah who gave his life that we might be his own and live under him in his kingdom. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.