

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish Connection - Time and the Jewish Calendar

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee

By Linda S Trapasso

As we begin a new year, I was thinking about calendars. People tend to want to know when something occurred or will occur. So the calendar was invented. Most of the world today uses the Gregorian calendar. We have our own Jewish calendar. Plus there are many other calendars in use throughout the world.



To set the scene...the Gregorian calendar was established in 1582 by Pope Gregory to replace the Julian calendar. The issue was that the celebration of Easter had moved from the spring and lost its closeness to Jewish Passover, two holidays that are linked for Christians. Pope Gregory based the new calendar on the sun (solar) and seasons.

As an aside, did you know that in Israel there is no legally official calendar? The government dates everything using both the Jewish and Gregorian calendars. By the way, the USA also has no legally official calendar, but uses the Gregorian calendar based on a 1751 British Act of Parliament.

Many calendars tie the numbering of years to a historical event. Pope Gregory tied the year to the birth of Jesus, abbreviated AD (Anno Domini, Latin for "In the year of the Lord"), for example, 456 AD.

As Jews, we use a different label for years, as do many in the scientific community. Rather than AD, we use CE for Common Era and replace BC, Before Christ, with BCE for Before the Common Era.



The Jewish calendar's year number is tied to the year of Creation. According to the Gregorian calendar, that date would be Sunday, September 6, 3761 BCE. (If you're interested in the age of the Earth according to Judaism, check here <http://bit.ly/16v3dve>.)

Jewish religious festivals are seasonal and must occur during the appropriate seasons. This requires some adjustment now and then so that the festivals don't move out of place. The Jewish calendar is not a solar calendar, but a lunar one. Thus there is a system to keep the lunar months lined up with the solar seasons.

"Like other calendars, it is set up in a cyclical format. It repeats itself every 19 years during which an additional month is added in years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19. Each year consists of 12 or 13 months, with each

Spring		Summer			
Nisan 1	Iyyar 2	Sivan 3	Tammuz 4	Av 5	Elul 6
ניסן	אייר	סיון	תמוז	אב	אלול
Mar/Apr	Apr/May	May/Jun	Jun/Jul	Jul/Aug	Aug/Sept
Pesach (15) Matzah (16-22) Bikurim (18) HaShoah (27)	Ha'atsmaut (5) HaZikaron (14) Lag B'Omer (18) Yerushalayim (28)	Shavu'ot (6)	Three weeks of Sorrow Fast of Tammuz (17) Tish'a B'Av (9) Tu B'Av (15)		Selichot repentance

Fall		Winter			
Tishri 7	Cheshvan 8	Kislev 9	Tevet 10	Shevat 11	Adar 12/13
תשרי	חשוון	כסליו	טבת	שבט	אדר
Sept/Oct	Oct/Nov	Nov/Dec	Dec/Jan	Jan/Feb	Feb/Mar
Rosh Hashanah (1) Fast Gedaliah (3) Yom Kippur (10) Sukkot (15-22) Simchat Torah (22)		Chanukah (25) to Tevet (4)	Asarah B'Tevet (10)	Tu B'Shevat (15)	Fast Ester (13) Purim (14) Adar II leap year

month having 29 or 30 days. When a leap year occurs, the month of Adar, with 29 days, increases to 30. The additional month of Adar II is added with 29 days." (From "It's About Time" listed in Resources below.)

(Continued on the following page ...)

Time and the Jewish Calendar continued

During the exile to Babylon in 586 BCE, the Jews used the Babylonian calendar, and both have a 19 year cycle. Many month names are similar as the Jews adopted them; for example, the Babylonian month Nisannu is the Jewish month of Nisan. The rules for the Jewish calendar were set down by Hillel II around 400 CE and are still in use today.

Today, we rely on religious organizations and authorities to provide the dates of Jewish celebrations according to the Gregorian (civil) calendar. Holidays are celebrated on the same day of the Jewish calendar every year, but the Jewish year is not the same length as a solar year on the civil calendar used by most of the western world, so the date shifts on the civil calendar.

If you use a computer calendar, many allow the addition of a second calendar. I use MS Outlook and added a Jewish calendar to display alongside the civil calendar. Two good online calendars are <http://www.hebcal.com> and <http://www.jewfaq.org/current.shtml>, plus a date converter at Chabad, http://www.chabad.org/calendar/1000year_cdo/aid/6225/jewish/Date-Converter.htm.

Resources:

<http://www.aish.com/jl/hol/o/48944546.html> “Jewish Time”

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/526872/jewish/Hours.htm “Hours”

<http://bit.ly/193rzKi> “Jewish Time” at My Jewish Learning

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_calendar “Hebrew Calendar”

<http://www.simpletoremember.com/articles/a/jewish-time/> “Jewish Time” (Check out the resource list for this Web site (go to the bottom of the page and click Resources.)

<http://www.jewfaq.org/calendar.htm> “Jewish Calendar”

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/407511/jewish/Its-About-Time.htm “It’s About Time”

Something to Think About

In the interest of full disclosure, this column first appeared in the TBA Bulletin in October, 2010. The Crop Walk date has been changed to be accurate for 2013.



Elaine Brody

Autumn is my favorite season. The air is fresh and crisp. The nights are deliciously cool for sleeping, and the early morning grass is wet underfoot. The trees give us a free show of brilliant shades of red, gold, orange and yellow.

People come here from all over the world to see the spectacular show known as “foliage season”. Children gather the brightly colored leaves

and iron them between two sheets of waxed paper to make a placemat or poster. Photographers are out in force trying to capture the beauty. We don’t have to go anywhere. Most of us can see the show from our own windows or on the way to school or work. Each year, as the colors explode before me, I am in awe. I never take the season or its bounty for granted.

Another thing we should not take for granted is the bounty of food that we all enjoy. Tens of millions of people all over the world including the United States go hungry daily and thousands of children the world over die from lack of nutrition. You can help.

This year the Nashua CROP Walk to help end hunger will be held on October 27. This Nashua interfaith effort is the fourth largest walk in New England. Be a part of it. Turn on your computer, type Nashua Crop Walk into the Google search, you will be led to the CROP Walk blog where you will learn how you can become involved. You can sign up to walk, make a donation, help with hosting, or just watch the video. This blog, created by our own Laura Hegfield, is full of information.

So, enjoy the beauty of the autumn with a walk to help end world hunger. You know.... it’s just something to think about.

L'hitraot

Elaine