

ניסן - NISAN

Rosh Hashshana

1:1 There are four new years:

- (1) the first day of Nisan is the new year for kings and festivals;
- (2) the first day of Elul is the new year for tithing cattle. R. Eleazar and R. Simeon say, "It is on the first day of Tishre."
- (3) The first day of Tishre is the New Year for the reckoning of years, for Sabbatical years, and for Jubilees for planting [trees] and for vegetables;
- (4) the first day of Shebat is the new year for trees, in accord with the opinion of the House of Shammai. The House of Hillel say, "On the fifteenth day of that month [is the new year for trees]."

On the Hebrew calendar, months are counted from Nissan in the spring, but year numbers change in Tishri (the seventh month) in the fall. The month that is the beginning of months referred to above is Nissan, and this is quite clear from the passage in Exodus, which goes on to talk about preparations for Pesach (Passover), which begins on Nissan 15.

The month of Nisan begins, in particular, the period (*tekufah*) ¹ תקופה of the spring. The three months of this period--Nisan, Iyar, Sivan--correspond to the three tribes of the camp of Judah--Judah, Issachar, Zebulun--who were situated to the east of the Tabernacle. In the Torah, Nisan is referred to as "the month of the spring" (האביב חודש).

2 Samuel 11:1 Then it happened in the **spring**, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem.

¹ **Tekufot** (Hebrew: תקופות, singular: **tekufa**) are the four seasons of the year recognized by the Talmudical writers. The four tekufot are:

1. Tekufat Nisan, the vernal equinox (March 21), when the sun enters Aries; this is the beginning of spring, or "eit hazera" (seed-time), when day and night are equal.
2. Tekufat Tammuz, the summer solstice (June 21), when the sun enters Cancer; this is the summer season, or "et ha-katsir" (harvest-time), when the day is the longest in the year.
3. Tekufat Tishrei, the autumnal equinox (Sept. 23), when the sun enters Libra, and autumn, or "et ha-hatsir" (vintage-time), begins, and when the day again equals the night.
4. Tekufat Tevet, the winter solstice (Dec. 22), when the sun enters Capricornus; this is the beginning of winter, or "et ha-ḥoref" (stripping-time), when the night is the longest during the year.

Each tekufa, according to Samuel Yarḥinai, marks the beginning of a period of 91 days and 7½ hours. It will be noticed that the tekufot fall from fourteen to eighteen days later than the true solar equinox or solstice; this, however, does not interfere with the calendar, which follows the figures of R. Ada.

יום חמישי, י"א באב, תש"ע

תְּשׁוּבָה *teshubah* (1000c)

Meaning: a return, answer

Origin: from 7725

Usage: answers (2), return(1), spring(2), turn(3).

2Ki 13:20 Elisha died, and they buried him. Now the bands of the Moabites would invade the land in the **spring** of the year.

בוא verb qal participle masculine singular absolute

0212.0 בוא (bô') **go in, enter.** In the Hiphil, "bring." (ASV and RSV generally similar.)

(212a) באָה (bi'â) **entrance.**

(212b) מְבוֹא (mābô') **entrance.**

(212c) תְּבוֹאָה (t'ebû'â) **produce.**

Nisan is a month of miracles, as its name stems from the Hebrew word for "miracles" (ניסים). The fact that the name Nisan (ניסן) possesses two nuns (נ and נ) implies according to the sages to "miracles of miracles" (ניסים ניסי). Of the future redemption, it is said: "As the days of your exodus from Egypt, I shall reveal to him wonders." This verse is often explained to mean that the wonders of the redemption of the future will be wondrous and miraculous even relative to the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt--hence "miracles of miracles."

Spring is the time of the rebirth of nature, of renewed growth and actualization of latent potential. This is intimated in the very first mitzvah that the Children of Israel were commanded to perform, before leaving Egypt: "This month is for you the head of months; it is for you the first of the months of the year." The root of the word for "month," (חודש), is identical to the root of the word "new" (חדש). Thus, "this month," the month of Nisan, is the source of all "renewal" that will appear throughout the year. In the above cited verse the root "new" appears three times--a triple renewal ("A triply winded thread is not easily severed").

The redemption of Israel is likened to a process of "sprouting" and "flourishing" (צמיחה). One of the names in the Bible for the Mashiach himself is *Tzemach* (צמח) "the sprout," as it is written: "His name is Tzemach and from beneath him [from the earth] he will flourish" (Zachariah 6:12)

The greatest miracle of the month of Nisan--the month of redemption--is that in Nisan nature itself experiences true renewal. The prophet says: "Just as in the days of your going out of Egypt, I will show you wonders" (Micah 7:15). From this, we learn that the miracles of the future redemption will be "wonders" even in comparison to the miracles of the exodus from Egypt. Some explain that the miracles of the exodus from Egypt were so powerfully supernatural that they broke the natural order of the world. In the future redemption, however, the miracles will unite with nature and will illuminate the world through nature. Presently, the myriad miracles "encloded" in nature are concealed by the cloak of nature. In the future, nature will become a transparent pane through which the brilliant, Divine light of the miracle of true renewal of all reality will shine. Of the future it is said: "Night (nature) as day (miracles) will shine" (Psalms 139:12).

NISAN 1

CREATION OF THE WORLD

RH 10b-11a It has been taught: R. Eliezer says: In Tishri the world was created; in Tishri the Patriarchs⁹ 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; 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.

THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

Rosh Hashshana 1:1 see above

THE FORMER AND LATER RAINS

Ta'anit (fast) 1:2 They ask for rain only near [the time of] rain. R. Judah says, "He who passes before the ark on the last day of the Festival— "the latter person [at the Additional Service] makes mention [of rain], the former one [at the Morning Service] does not make mention [of rain]. "On the first day of Passover, the former person makes mention of rain, the latter person does not make mention of rain." Up to what time do they ask for rain? R. Judah says, "Until Passover is passed." R. Meir says, "Until the end of Nisan, "since it says, And he causes to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first [month] (Joel 2:23)."

5a GEMARA. R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: Does then the former rain **מלקוש** (*malkosh*) [fall] in Nisan? The former rain **יורה** (*yoreh*) surely [falls] in Marcheshvan.² It has been taught: Former rain, [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan. He replied: Thus said R. Johanan, This verse was fulfilled in the days [of the prophet] Joel, the son of Pethuel, That which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locust eaten etc. In that year, although Adar had passed yet no rain had fallen, and it was not until the first of Nisan that the first rain, came down.

THE MISHKAN (TABERNACLE) IS ESTABLISHED

Shemot 40:2, 17

Midrash Rabbah Numbers XIII: 2. AND HE THAT PRESENTED HIS OFFERING... WAS, etc. This bears on the text, Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south wind, etc. (S.S. IV, 16). R. Jose used to expound as follows: When did the consecration begin? On the twenty-third of Adar. And on the first of Nisan the days of consecration were completed.

Commentary notes to The Biblical Calendar by Dr. Eliyahu Ben Avraham

² In modern times, this month has become known as *Cheshvan* or *Mar Cheshvan*, which seems to have originated at the time that Jews came back to Israel after the Babylonian Exile. The prefix *Mar* (which means bitter) is a reference to this month having no festivals or rejoicing, but much suffering for Jews throughout the ages. Also during this month, God brought down the Flood and drowned the world (except for Noach and those with him on the ark.) *Mar* also means drop and refers to the first rains **יורה** (the *Yoreh*), which fall in *Cheshvan*.