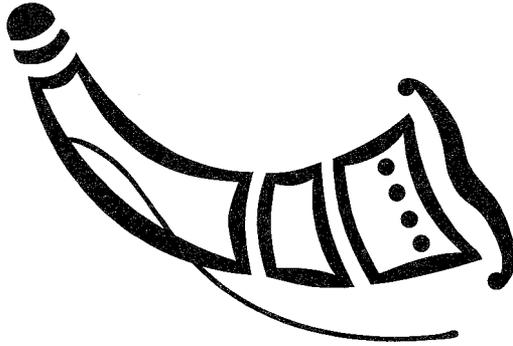


THE CALENDAR AND THE DAYS OF AWE



We affirm the importance of the Days of Awe (Yamim Nora'im), comprising Rosh ha-Shanah ("New Year") and Yom Kippur ("Day of Atonement"), devoted to deep reflection, repentance and spiritual renewal.

The Jewish year is punctuated by a series of festivals, the most ancient of which relate to the agricultural origins of Judaism and are closely linked to the seasons. The calendar is, however, based on the lunar cycle. A lunar month lasts twenty-nine or thirty days, and in ancient times a new month was deemed to have begun with the sighting of the new moon in Jerusalem.¹

Twelve lunar months total only 354 days whereas the solar year (the time for the earth to revolve around the sun) is 365¼ days. This means that, if no adjustments were made, within a decade *Pesach* - the 'spring' festival - would find itself 90 days earlier (so in the Northern hemisphere winter) while the 'autumn' harvest festival of *Sukkot* would be in their summer. In order to regulate this, a thirteenth month is added seven times every nineteen years between *Adar* and *Nisan*, known as *Adar Sheni* (second *Adar*), to ensure the festivals, based on lunar dates, remain in conjunction with the solar cycle and its seasons.

The order of the months and the festivals that fall in them is shown in the table below - note that the biblical calendar (possibly based on the Babylonian reckoning) regards the year as beginning in the spring of the Northern hemisphere.

HEBREW MONTH	Approximate civil equivalent	FESTIVAL(S) IN THAT MONTH (the 'Major Festivals' - those referred to in the Five books of Torah - are shown in bold).
1. Nisan	March/April	15th Pesach (first and last days of 7) 27 th <i>Yom ha-Sho'ah</i> - Holocaust Memorial Day
2. Iyar	April/May	5 th <i>Yom ha-Atzma'ut</i> - Israel's Independence Day 18 th - <i>Lag b'Omer</i> - 33 rd day of <i>Omer</i>
HEBREW MONTH	Approximate civil	FESTIVAL(S) IN THAT MONTH* (Festivals referred to in the Torah are shown in bold.)

¹ The need for the sighting of the new moon in Jerusalem to be reported by two independent witnesses became redundant once the establishment of a calendar in the 4th century CE by Hillel II enabled the timing of the new moon to be calculated mathematically.

	equivalent	
3. Sivan	May/June	6th Shavu'ot
4. Tamuz	June/July	
5. Av	July/August	9 th <i>Tisha b'Av</i> - Fast of the 9 th of <i>Av</i>
6. Elul	August/ September	
7. Tishri	September/ October	1st Rosh ha-Shanah 10th Yom Kippur 15th Sukkot (first day of 7days) 22nd Sh'mini Atzeret/Simchat Torah
8. Cheshvan	October/ November	
9. Kislev	November/ December	25 th <i>Chanukkah</i> (8 days) - a 'Minor' festival
10. Tevet	December/ January	
11. Sh'vat	January/ February	15 th <i>Tu biShvat</i> - New Year for Trees - a 'Minor' festival
12. Adar - or Adar Sheni in a leap year	February/ March	14 th <i>Purim</i> - a 'Minor' festival

* Minor fast days are not included here.