

HALACHIC AND HASHKAFIC ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

SERIES 2: 28 - CALENDAR CONUNDRUMS

PART 2: USING THE SECULAR CALENDAR

OU ISRAEL CENTER - SUMMER 2022

- In Part 1 we looked at the astronomical and biblical foundations of the Jewish calendar. We also saw some of the sectarian divisions during the Second Temple period which focused on the calendar.
- In this shiur we will look be'H at the fixed Jewish calendar and some of the tensions between the Jewish and secular calendars.

A] THE EMPIRICAL CALENDAR IN TEMPLE AND MISHNAIC TIMES

- The Jewish calendar continued to work as an empirical calendar until it was fixed in the Talmudic period.
- The empirical nature of the calendar rested on two principal platforms - (i) the declaration of the new moon; and (ii) the decision to add the extra month in a leap year.

A1] KIDDUSH HACHODESH

1. ה אין ראית הירח מסורה לכל אדם כמו שבת בראשית שכל אחד מונה ששה ושבת בשביעי. אלא לבית דין הדבר מסור עד שיקדשוהו בית דין ויקבעו אותו היום ראש חדש הוא שיהיה ראש חדש. שנאמר (שמות יב ב) החדש הזה לכם - עדות זו תהיה מסורה לכם.

ו בית דין מחשבין בחשבונות כדרך שמחשבים האיטליאנים שיודעין מקומות הפוכבים ומהלכם וחוקרים ומדקדקים עד שידעו אם אפשר שיראה הירח בזמנו שהוא ליל שלשים או אי אפשר. אם ידעו שאפשר שיראה יושבין ומצפין לעדים כל היום פלו שהוא יום שלשים. אם באו עדים ודרשו וחקרום כהלכה ונאמנו דבריהם מקדשין אותו. ואם לא נראה ולא באו עדים משלימין שלשים ויהיה חדש מעבר. ואם ידעו בחשבון שאי אפשר שיראה אין יושבים יום שלשים ואין מצפין לעדים. ואם באו עדים יודעין בודאי שהו עדי שקר או שנראית להם דמות לבנה מן העבים ואינה הלבנה הנדאית.

ז מצות עשה מן התורה על בית דין שיחשבו וידעו אם נראה הירח או לא נראה. ושידרשו את העדים עד שיקדשו את החדש. וישלחו וידעו שאר העם באי זה יום הוא ראש חדש כדי שידעו באי זה יום הן המועדות. שנאמר (ויקרא כג) אשר תקראו אתם מקראי קדש ונאמר (שמות יג) ושמרת את החקק הזאת למועדה.

ח אין מחשבין וקובעין חדשים ומעברין שנים אלא בארץ ישראל שנאמר (ישעיה ב) כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' מירושלים...

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5. The [establishment of Rosh Chodesh] based on the sighting of the moon is not the province of every individual, as is the Sabbath [of the weekly cycle]. [In the latter instance,] everyone counts six days and rests on the seventh day. [The sanctification of the new month,] by contrast, has been entrusted to the court. [The new month does not begin] until it has been sanctified by the court, and it is the day that they establish as Rosh Chodesh that is Rosh Chodesh. [This is implied by the verse,] "This month will be for you...", - i.e., the testimony [concerning the new month] will be entrusted to you.

6. The [High] Court would make calculations in a manner resembling the calculations of the astronomers, who know the location of the stars and their paths [in their orbits]. They would perform careful research to determine whether or not they would be able to sight the moon at the appropriate time - i.e., the thirtieth night. If [the judges] determined that it was possible to sight [the moon], they would sit waiting for witnesses [to come and testify] throughout the entire thirtieth day. If witnesses came, and [the court] examined their testimony according to law, and verified the truth [of their statements], the court would sanctify [the new month]. If [the moon] was not sighted, and witnesses did not come, they would complete the thirtieth day, thus making the month full. If, according to their calculations, [the judges] knew that it was impossible for the moon to be sighted, they would not sit [in session] on the thirtieth day, nor would they await [the arrival] of witnesses. If witnesses came, they would know that they are false witnesses, or that clouds appeared to them in a form resembling the moon, but it was not the real moon.

7. It is a positive commandment of the Torah for the court to calculate and determine whether or not the moon will be sighted, to examine witnesses until the moon can be sanctified, and to send forth [messengers] to inform the remainder of the people on which day Rosh Chodesh was observed, so that they will know the day [on which to celebrate] the festivals [as implied by Leviticus 23:2]: "that you will pronounce as days of holy convocation," and [as implied by Exodus 13:10]: "And you shall observe this statute in its appointed season."

8. The calculations and the establishment of the months and the leap years is carried out only in Eretz Yisrael [as implied by Isaiah 2:3]: "For out of Zion will emerge the law, and the word of God [will emerge] from Jerusalem."

2. ח ואחר כך אחר שתתקיים העדות ראש בית דין אומר 'מקדש' וכל העם עונים אחריו 'מקדש מקדש'. ואין מקדשין את החדש אלא בשלשה. ואין מחשבין אלא בשלשה. ואין מקדשין אלא חדש שנראה בזמנו. ואין מקדשין אלא ביום ואם קדשוהו בלילה אינו מקדש.

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Afterwards - i.e., after [the witnesses'] testimony is substantiated - the head of the court declares, "It has been sanctified." And all the people respond, "It has been sanctified. It has been sanctified." A minimum of three judges is required to sanctify the new moon. Similarly, the calculations [regarding the moon's position] must be made by three judges. The new moon is sanctified only when it is sighted at its appropriate time. Moreover, the moon is sanctified only during the day. If it was sanctified at night, the sanctification is of no consequence.

A2] IBUR HASHANA

3. א שנה מעברת היא שנה שמוסיפין בה חדש. ואין מוסיפין לעולם אלא אדר ועושין אותה שנה שני אדרין אדר ראשון ואדר שני. ומפני מה מוסיפין חדש זה? מפני זמן האביב כדי שיהא הפסח באותו זמן שנאמר (דברים טו:א) שמור את חדש האביב - שיהיה חדש זה בזמן האביב. ולולא הוספת החדש הזה הפסח בא פעמים בימות החמה ופעמים בימות הגשמים. ב על שלשה סימנין מעברין את השנה. על התקופה ועל האביב ועל פרות האילן. כיצד? בית דין מחשבין ויודעין אם תהיה תקופת ניסן בששה עשר בניסן או אחר זמן זה מעברין אותה השנה. ונעשו אותו ניסן אדר שני כדי שיהיה הפסח בזמן האביב. ועל סימן זה סומכין ומעברין ואין חוששין לסימן אחר. ג וכן אם ראו בית דין שעדין לא הגיע האביב אלא עדין אפל הוא. ולא צמחו פרות האילן שדרךן לצמוח בזמן הפסח. סומכין על שני סימנין אלו ומעברין את השנה. ואף על פי שהתקופה קדם לששה עשר בניסן הרי הו מעברין. כדי שיהיה האביב מצוי להקריב ממנו עמר התנופה בששה עשר בניסן. וכדי שיהיו הפרות צומחין כדרך כל זמן האביב.

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1. A leap year is a year that includes an additional month. The extra month that is added is always Adar, and thus the year contains two Adarim: the first Adar and the second Adar. Why is this month added? Because of the season of spring, so that Pesach will fall then, as [implied by Deuteronomy 16:1]: "Take heed the month of spring" [This command can be interpreted to mean, "Take heed] that this month falls in the spring season. Were the month [of Adar] not to be added [from time to time], there are times when Pesach would fall in the summer, and times [when it would fall] in the rainy season.
2. [An extra month is added,] making the year full, because of three factors: a) the vernal [spring] equinox; b) the ripening [of the barley crop], and c) the blooming of the fruit trees. What is implied? When the court calculates and determines that the vernal equinox will fall on the sixteenth of Nisan or later, the year is made full. The month that would have been Nisan is made the second Adar, and thus Pesach will fall in the spring. This factor [alone] is sufficient for the court to make the year full; other factors need not be considered.
3. Similarly, if the court sees that [the barley crop] has not ripened, but that it is late in sprouting, or that the fruit trees that usually bloom at the time of the Pesach holiday have not bloomed, these two factors are sufficient, and the year is made full, even though the vernal equinox will fall before the sixteenth of Nisan. [The reason the year is] made full [because of these factors] is so that there will be [an abundant quantity] of ripened [barley] accessible, so that the wave offering of the omer can be brought from it on the sixteenth of Nisan, and so that the fruits will bloom, as they always do in the spring.

B] THE FIXED CALENDAR

B1] EARLY INDICATIONS

- The empirical Jewish calendar continued beyond the Churban in 70CE and into the Mishnaic Period¹.
- Nevertheless, as we saw above, although the Sanhedrin based the calendar on testimony, they also calculated it independently and those calculations often took precedence.
- As the Sanhedrin came under increasing oppression in Eretz Yisrael there was more focus on being able to create a fixed calendar.

4. אמר שמואל: יכילנא לתקוני לכולה גולה. אמר ליה אבא אבוה דרבי שמלאי לשמואל: ידע מר האי מילתא דתניא בסוד העיבור: נולד קודם חצות או נולד אחר חצות? - אמר ליה: לא. - אמר ליה: מדהא לא ידע מר - איכא מילי אחרנייתא דלא ידע מר. כי סליק רבי זירא שלח להו: צריך שיהא לילה ויום מן החדש, וזו שאמר אבא אבוה דרבי שמלאי; מחשבין את תולדתו, נולד קודם חצות - בידוע שנראה סמוך לשקיעת החמה, לא נולד קודם חצות - בידוע שלא נראה סמוך לשקיעת החמה.

ראש השנה כ:

Shmuel (early 3C Bavel) claimed to be able to calculate the entire calendar without the need for witness testimony. However, as can be seen from this example, issues concerning the fixing of the new moon are extremely complex!

1. Mishna Rosh Hashana recounts a number of stories concerning the Tannaim and their acceptance of testimony concerning the new moon.

Here, the rabbis are discussing the timing of the molad - that point in the month when the new moon occurs. R. Zeira proposes that: (i) that the day of the molad must contain a full night and day i.e. 24 hour period; and (ii) if the molad occurs on or before noon, the new moon 'must appear by sunset'.²

5. מתני' כיצד? חל להיות בשני כפרים ועיירות גדולות קורין בו ביום
גמ' א"ר יוסה לית כאן 'חל להיות בשני' ולית כאן 'חל להיות בשבת'. חל להיות בשני צומא רבא בחד בשובא, חל להיות בשבת צומא רבא בערובתא.

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת מגילה פרק א הלכה ב

Rabbi Yosa (4C Eretz Yisrael) already had certain fixed rules that Purim could not fall on a Monday or Shabbat so as to prevent Yom Kippur falling on Sunday or Friday³.

6. ר' סימון מפקד לאילין דמחשבין - יהבון דעתכון דלא תעבדין לא תקיעתה בשבת ולא ערבתא בשבתא. ואין אדחקון עבדון תקיעתה ולא תעבדון ערבתא. (קרבן העדה: - מוטב לקצוץ ר"ה צצצת מלקצוץ יום ערצב צצצת. דתקיעות אפשר לקיים צי"ט שני. א"נ תקיעה דאורייתא ולא לריך חיזוק, ערצב דברי קבלה ולריכא חיזוק).

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת סוכה פרק ד הלכה א

Rabbi Simon instructed those calculating the calendar to ensure that Rosh Hashana should preferably not fall on Shabbat and Hoshana Rabba should never fall on Shabbat.

7. אמר ליה רב ספרא לרבי אבא: כגון אנן דידיעין בקביעא דירחא ביישוב לא עבידנא - מפני שינוי המחלוקת. במדבר מאי? - אמר ליה, הכי אמר רב אמי: ביישוב - אסור, במדבר - מותר.

פסחים נא:

Rav Safra (early 4C Bavel) asked his Rav, Rabbi Abba, what to do about 2nd day Yom Tov⁴ in chu'l since they actually knew how to calculate the calendar and which day would be Chag! His answer was that they needed to keep second day Yom Tov in a Jewish community, but not if they stayed outside a community.

8. והשתא דידיעין בקביעא דירחא מאי טעמא עבדין תרי יומי? - משום דשלחו מתם: הזהרו במנהג אבותיכם בידיכם, זמנין דגזרו שמדא ואתי לאקלקולי (רשי' - שלא יתעסקו צתורה, וישתכח סוד הטיצור מכס ותעצדו נמי חד יומא ואתי לקלקולי ולעשות חסר מלא ומלא חסר, ותאכלו חמץ צפסמ).

ביצה ד:

Later⁵, the Rabbis issues a fixed decree to keep 2nd day Yom Tov everywhere in chu'l, even though there was some kind of fixed calendar, in case local decrees against Jewish practice caused the calendar to be lost.

B2] THE TRADITIONAL VIEW ON THE FIXED CALENDAR

• R. Avraham bar Chiya in Sefer ha-Ibbur (1123CE) states that in 992CE R. Hai Gaon⁶ claimed that the calendar was created in Eretz Yisrael under the leadership of Hillel II in 358/9CE.

9. ומאימתי התחילו כל ישראל לחשב בחשבון זה? מסוף חכמי תלמוד בעת שחרבה ארץ ישראל ולא נשאר שם בית דין קבוע. אבל בימי חכמי משנה וכן בימי חכמי תלמוד עד ימי אביי ורבא על קביעת ארץ ישראל היו סומכין.

רמב"ם הלכות קידוש החודש פרק ה הלכה ג

The Rambam dates the fixed calendar to the time of Abaye and Rava, when the Sanhedrin was abolished.⁷

- This is one of the sources which is quoted concerning the possible location of the Halachic Date Line. The Ba'al Hameor, and the Kuzari, as understood by the Chazon Ish (Kuntres Yud Chet Sha'ot), learn that R. Zeira is stating the following: the molad must appear such that there will be a full 24 hour period of night and day immediately afterwards. Further, the latest that the molad can appear is a time which will be just before sunset somewhere in the world. This will be 12 noon in Jerusalem. Thus Jerusalem is 18 hours ahead of the latest sunset in the world. This means that the HDL, according to the Ba'al Hameor, is 270° West (i.e. 90° East) of Jerusalem i.e. 125° 14' E. This line runs through Siberia, North Korea, the eastern Philippines, Indonesia and Western Australia. Consequently, Siberia, Western Australia, Japan and New Zealand are on the eastern side of the HDL and will therefore be a day behind. They will be required to keep Shabbat on Sunday. For detailed shiurim on the Halachic Date Line see <https://rabbimanning.com/index.php/audio-shiurim/cji/>.
- The months of the calendar between Adar and Tishrei are predictable yearly (Cheshvan and Kislev are the variable months) so if one knows the date of Purim, this will predict the date of Yom Kippur. This indicated a strong element of fixing of the calendar by that time
- This was before the fixed decree for all Jews in chu'l to keep second day Yom Tov - see below.
- The expression 'שלחו מתם' is always attributed to R' Elazar ben Pedat (Sanhedrin 17b) who was a second generation Amora - student of R' Yochanan - and lived in Eretz Yisrael in the late 3C. As such, it seems that the statement to follow מנהג אבותינו which came from Eretz Yisrael in the 3C was later applied by Chazal in the Gemara (5C) to the need to keep Yom Tov Sheni. It seems from the statement itself ואתי לאקלקולי that it evolved in two parts. Perhaps the first part (in Hebrew) came from R' Elazar b. Pedat in Eretz Yisrael. The second part (starting ... ומנין) (in Aramaic) is the application of this by Chazal to Yom Tov Sheni.
- We do not have a copy of R. Hai Gaon's cited work and the earliest confirmed existence of our calendar dates to the 12th century.
- The dating of the abolition of the Sanhedrin is often connected to the traditional date for the fixing of the calendar - 358 CE. However, in the introduction to the Mishne Torah, the

10. ולכן בטלה הראייה אצלנו היום בהעדר בית דין הגדול כמו שבטלה הקרבת הקרבנות בהעדר המקדש. וזה שהיונתו היום בחוצה לארץ מונים במלאכת העבור שבידינו ואומרים שזה היום ראש חדש וזה היום יום טוב לא מפני חשבוננו נקבעהו יום טוב בשום פנים אלא מפני שבית דין (הגדול) שבארץ ישראל (כבר) קבעוהו זה היום ראש חודש או יום טוב. ומפני אמרם שזה היום ראש חדש או יום טוב יהיה ראש חדש או יום טוב, בין שהיתה פעולתם זאת בחשבון או בראיה.

ספר המצוות לרמב"ם מצות עשה קנג

In the Sefer Hamitzvot the Rambam appears⁸ to learn that our fixed calendar today is due to the original fixing of the calendar in the final days of the Sanhedrin.

- However this is NOT the only Rabbinic tradition and it is not clear precisely when the calendar emerged⁹.
- It is possible that the 4C Amoraim were in fact working with some form of fixed calendar.

C] KEY FEATURES OF THE FIXED CALENDAR

THE MOLAD:

- The traditional length of each month is 29d 12h 793p (chalakim)
- These are calculated from very the first molad - the conjunction of the sun and moon at the creation of the world on 1 Tishrei year 1 (see below).
- Each molad is 1d 12h 793p ahead of the next (ie 4 weeks plus this difference).

COMMON/LEAP YEARS:

- There are 7 leap years in every 19 year cycle (machzor) - 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19.
- One can work out if it is a leap year by dividing the year by 19 and finding the remainder. $5782/19 = 304$ r. 6. This year is 6 in the machzor and IS a leap year.

ROSH HASHANA¹⁰:

- Cannot fall on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday.¹¹

LENGTH OF YEAR:

- There are 6 possibilities for the length of the year:
 354 days - 12 months with alternative 29 and 30 day months
 353 days - 12 months with alternative 29 and 30 day months but 29 days in Kislev instead of 30
 355 days - 12 months with alternative 29 and 30 day months but 30 days in Cheshvan instead of 29
 384 days - 12 months with alternative 29 and 30 day months PLUS an additional Adar of 30 days
 383 days - 12 months with alternative 29 and 30 day months but 29 days in Kislev instead of 30 PLUS an additional Adar of 30 days
 385 days - 12 months with alternative 29 and 30 day months but 30 days in Cheshvan instead of 29 PLUS an additional Adar of 30 days

Rambam dates Rabbi Yochanan and the Talmud Yerushalmi at 300 years after the Churban (ie around 370 CE). Abaye and Rava were around 70 years after this - c. 440 CE, which is a little later than R. Hai Gaon's date. Astronomical evidence concerning the dating of the spring equinox may point more towards the 358 CE date, but this is open to interpretation. See Sacha Stern - *Calendar and Community*, 2001, OUP, pp197-200 who concludes that "any date between the fourth and eighth centuries could equally be considered" as a starting date for the calendar. See also *The Beginning of the Jewish Calendar*, Bernard Dickman, Hakira 8 (2009) p223 - available at <https://hakirah.org/Vol%208%20Dickman.pdf> n.4. Curiously, we have no other evidence of the existence of Hillel II; he is not mentioned in the Gemara or later writings of the Geonim which discuss the calendar.

8. The words *hagadol* and *kvar* appear in many texts of the Sefer Hamitzvot, but are omitted by Rav Kapach in his version. See R. Chaim Heller's Sefer Hamitzvot, Mitzva 153 n. 13. Rabbi Heller includes them although in Ramban's text of Sefer Hamitzvot both of these words are also lacking. Some suggest (see Shu't Avnei Nezer OC 310-311) that since according to R. Heller's reading, smicha is necessary for the sanctification of the moon, the Rambam's position is that the whole world today grants a temporary smicha to a regular Beit Din in Eretz Yisrael for the sole purpose of sanctifying the month. Such an agreement to confer a full-fledged smicha can be found in Rambam Sanhedrin 4:11-12.
9. Some external evidence casts doubt on this date. For instance, there are number of documents and tombstones that reference dates that would have not been possible if our current fixed calendar was in place at that time. See *The Beginning of the Jewish Calendar* p228. Another way to calculate the possible start date of our calendar is to work out the drift of the current calendar against the astronomical date. On average, every Jewish year is longer than the actual solar year by 6 minutes and 39 seconds. On that basis, the Jewish calendar (with all its adjustments) is inaccurate by around 1 day in 216 years. The current Jewish calendar drift relative to the vernal equinox is around 5.5 days according to some calculations, setting the start date of the calendar at around 829CE. According to other calculations, the drift is 7.2 days, giving a start date of around 458 CE. Stern also brings evidence from the Exilarch Letter of 835CE (discovered in the Cairo Genieza) which was written by Babylonian Exilarch David b. Yehuda and sets Pesach that year on a Tuesday. According to our fixed calendar, Pesach should have fallen that year on a Thursday and Stern brings this as evidence that the calendar was not yet fully fixed at that time. Another interesting and unusual book on the topic is *Sod Halbur* by Richard K. Fiedler (2014). It is not an academic work, but puts forward an argument that the calendar was effectively fixed MUCH earlier - during the time of the First Temple, and certainly by Ezra. Using mathematical data concerning the molad, he points out that the molad can veer as much as 3 days from the calendrical date of Rosh Chodesh. His thesis links many important milestones in the history of the calendar - (i) the famous dispute between Rabban Gamliel and R. Yehoshua concerning the new moon (Mishna Rosh Hashana Chap 2); (ii) the year 358CE which is often given as the fixing of the calendar (which he disputes); (iii) the year 835CE of the Exilarch Letter; and (iv) the dispute concerning the calendar in 922CE between R. Saadia Gaon in Bavel and R. Aharon b. Meir, the Nasi in Eretz Yisrael.
10. There are a number of other *dechiyot* (postponements) which push Rosh Hashana to the following day: (i) If the Molad Tishrei occurs at noon (18h) or later; (ii) If the Molad Tishrei of a common year falls on Tuesday later than 204 chalakim after 3am - ie 3d 9h 204p; and (iii) If the Molad Tishrei of a leap year falls on Monday later than 589 chalakim after 9am - ie 2d 15h 589p.
11. This is to ensure that Yom Kippur never falls on a Sunday or Friday and Hoshana Rabba never falls on a Shabbat.

- 353/383 = DEFECTIVE YEAR (Chasera) = ח
- 354/384 = REGULAR YEAR (Kesidra) = כ
- 355/385 = EXCESSIVE YEAR (Shelema) = ש

- DAY OF ROSH HASHANA/PESACH:
- In a Defective Common Year Pesach falls 1 weekday after RH
 - In a Regular Common Year Pesach falls 2 weekdays after RH
 - In an Excessive Common Year Pesach falls 3 weekdays after RH
 - In a Defective Leap Year Pesach falls 3 weekdays after RH
 - In a Regular Leap Year Pesach falls 4 weekdays after RH
 - In an Excessive Leap Year Pesach falls 5 weekdays after RH

- CODING THE YEARS:
- Each year in the 19 year cycle is given a 3 letter code
 - FIRST LETTER = weekday of RH
 - SECOND LETTER = ח or כ or ש for the length of year
 - THIRD LETTER = weekday of first day Pesach

קביעות KEBIOTH YEAR TYPES	COMMON YEARS	A בחג	B זחא	C גכה	D הכז	E בשה	F השא	G זשג
	LEAP YEARS EMBOLISTIC INTERCALATED	H בחה	I החא	J זחג	K גכז	L בשז	M השג	N זשה

- This year (5782) is גכז (K in the list above)

D] THE JEWISH YEAR COUNT

- As we all know (or think we know) the current Jewish year is 5782. But there have been many other ways of traditional Jewish year numbering, and even the number 5782 is more complicated that it seems!

11. כבר אמרנו שאלו הדרכים שאנו מבארים בהלכות אלו אינו אלא לחשבון ראית הירח בלבד. לפיכך עשינו העקר שממנו מתחילין לעולם לחשבון זה מתחלת ליל המישי שיומו יום שלישי לחודש ניסן משנה זו שהיא שנת י"ז ממחזור ר"ס. שהיא שנת תתקל"ח וארבעת אלפים ליצירה. שהיא שנת תפ"ט ואף לשטרות. שהיא שנת ק"ט ואף לחרבן בית שני. וזו היא שאנו קוראים אותה שנת העקר בחשבון זה.

רמב"ם הלכות קידוש החודש פרק יא הלכה טז

The Rambam includes a number of year dates in his Mishne Torah which fix the points at which he was writing the relevant halachot. Here, he writes the date in three different ways: 4938 since Creation; 1489 for minyan shetarot; and 1109 since the Churban. In secular dating, this is 1178 CE.

D1] ANNO MUNDI - THE 'YEAR OF THE WORLD'

- This is now the standard system of Jewish dating (and one of the two official dating systems in the State of Israel.)
- It has been in standard use since the early Middle Ages.¹²
- It takes two forms - with the thousands - לפרט גדול (לפ"ג) and without the thousands - לפרט קטן (לפ"ק) and התשפב
- It is based on the calculation of Seder Olam Rabba¹³. This charts the dates back to the creation of Adam which was 1 Tishrei in Year AM 2^{14 15}.

12. As the center of Jewish life moved from Babylonia to Europe during the 8th and 9th centuries CE, calculations from the Seleucid era became less relevant. Over those centuries, it was replaced by that of the Anno Mundi era of the Seder Olam. From the 11th century, Anno Mundi dating became dominant throughout most of the world's Jewish communities.

13. Attributed to R. Yose bar Chalafta in around 160 CE.

14. According to this, the creation of the universe began on 25 Elul Year AM 1. Year 1 is therefore a virtual year (shnat tohu) which began on the molad tohu - 5h 204p on 1 Tishrei AM1. This is equivalent to 7 October 3761 BCE in the proleptic Julian calendar (ie the Julian calendar extended back before 8 CE when it was established). The Byzantine Church also used a system of Anno Mundi which placed the creation much earlier - around 5509 BCE. A large part of this discrepancy is due to the ages of the generations from Shem through to Terach (Bereishit Chap 11) being much older in the Septuagint than in the Tanach and the Vulgate. The LXX generally has them giving birth 100 years later and this is also recorded by Josephus in his Antiquities. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogies_of_Genesis for a comparison of genealogies in Tanach vs the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX. The Byzantine Anno Mundi era was the official calendar of the Eastern Orthodox Church until 1728 and was used as the civil calendar by the Byzantine Empire from until 1453 and by Russia until 1700.

15. In fact, this was originally the custom of Eretz Yisrael. In Bavel the custom was to date the year from the creation of Adam as Year 1 (not 2). As such, the Bavli dates states that the

12. תנא דבי אליהו: ששת אלפים שנה הוי העולם, שני אלפים תוהו, שני אלפים תורה, שני אלפים ימות המשיח אמר רב פפא: אי טעי תנא ולא ידע פרטיה כמה הוי, לישייליה לספרא כמה כתיב וניטפי עליהו ארבעין ותמני, ומשכח ליה לחומריה במתניתא תנא: אחר ארבעת אלפים ומאתים ושלושים ואחת שנה לבריאת עולם, אם יאמר לך אדם קח לך שדה שוה אלף דינרים בדינר אחד - אל תקח! (רש"י - שכיח קץ הגאולה ותקצן להר הקודש לנחלת אבותיך ולמח תפסיד דינר?)

עבודה זרה ט.

The Gemara discusses 'conversion' between the AM system and Minyan Shetarot (see below)¹⁶.

D2] ANNO GRAECORUM - MINYAN SHETAROT - THE 'YEAR OF DOCUMENTS'

13. אמר רב נחמן: בגולה אין מונין אלא למלכי יונים בלבד.

עבודה זרה י.

Chazal state that the preferred system for dating in chu'l is the count of the Greeks.

- This system of dating starts from Seleucus I Nicator's re-conquest of Babylon in 312/11 BCE, considered by Seleucus and his court to mark the founding of the Seleucid Empire¹⁷.
- According to Jewish tradition, it was started during the sixth year of Alexander's reign¹⁸.
- Minyan Shetarot was used until the Middle Ages¹⁹. Yemenite Jews used it up to modern times when they left Yemen for Israel.

14. אמר עולא: מפני מה תקינו מלכות בגיטין? משום שלום מלכות.

גיטין פ.

Gittin were often dated by reference to the reign of the local king to preserve good relationships with the government.

15. מפני מה תקנו מלכות בגיטין - וא"ת והא אמרינן צפ"ק דמסכת ע"ז (י:) וזגולה אין מונין אלא למלכות יון זלזד, אלמא לא היישינן לשלום מלכות. ואור"י דדוקא בגיטין יש לחוש לשלום מלכות שמקפידין לפי שהוא דבר גדול שמפרידין איש מאשתו.

תוספות גיטין פ.

Tosafot explain that this applied only to divorce documents. Other documents used the Minyan Shetarot.

D3] COUNTING FROM YETZIAT MITZRAYIM

16. וַיְהִי בְשִׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה לְצֵאת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבִיעִית בְּחֹדֶשׁ זֹה הָיָא הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי לְמִלְכָּה שְׁלֵמָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹן הַבַּיִת לָהּ.

מלכים א'ו:

The Tanach itself counts the years from the Exodus.

17. ממאי דלמלכות יונים מנינן? דלמא ליציאת מצרים מנינן, ושביקיה לאלפא קמא ונקטיה אלפא בתרא:

עבודה זרה י.

Chazal also note that the beginning of the Minyan Shetarot is exactly 1000 years from the Exodus. So anyone who is dating a document using the Minyan Shetarot may be dating from Yetziat Mitzrayim²⁰, but just leaving off the thousand!

18. In the last two weeks we presented Seder Olam Rabbah and its chronology. We showed how its approach to texts and history reveals a consistent methodology, if it does not match conventional dating. With all that we mentioned above, there still must be a reason why Seder Olam skipped so much. While it is a minimalist work, there still should be justification for this course of action. Several suggestions are given, and we will present two that seem to be the most compelling.

churban was in 3829 although the Eretz Yisrael system called that 3830. Both these are 70CE. Eventually, the Eretz Yisrael system became dominant, which means that we often have to add one year on to dates mentioned in the Bavli.

16. It also discusses dating systems using the Shemita and Yovel cycles.

17. Confusingly, there were also two different variations of the Seleucid years - one where the year started in Nissan and another where it starts in Tishrei. The Jewish calendar used the Tishrei variant but the differences in the beginning of the year means that dates differ by one if they fall between spring and autumn. For instance, 1 Maccabees generally uses the Tishrei version (see 1 Maccabees 6:20, 1 Maccabees 7:1, 9:3, 10:1). However, 2 Maccabees exclusively uses the Nisan version!

18. This may be a reference to Alexander the Great's infant son, Alexander IV of Macedon.

19. It fell into disuse among most Jewish communities following R. David ben Zimra's cancellation of the practice when he served as Chief Rabbi of Egypt in the 16th century.

20. This would mean using the Nissan version of Minyan Shetarot.

The first answer has to do with Minyan Shetarot, also known as the Seleucid era or the *Anno Graecorum* ("Greek year"). This is the dating system that Jews accepted in the latter half of the Second Temple period. This count began in what we today refer to as 312 BCE. During this year was fought the Battle of Gaza, leading to Seleucus's successful conquering of Babylonia. The Greeks decided that this year would be "Year One." Along with the Seleucid Empire and other Hellenistic civilizations, the Jews adopted the system. Throughout the Talmud there is evidence of documents being dated with respect to this year.

At first glance the year 312 BCE is not especially significant for Jewish history. The Vilna Gaon points out, though, that as per the Seder Olam calculation, 313 BCE (the effective "Year Zero") is found to be exactly 1,000 years after Yetziat Mitzrayim (2448)! Because of Seder Olam, the Seleucid year was effectively sanctified. A document dated with this count to the 45th year, for example, suddenly became synonymous with 1,045 years since Yetziat Mitzrayim. Support for this can be found in the line at the end of Seder Olam, 'UveGolah Kotevin BiShtarot LeMinyan Yevanim Alfa' - 'and in the exile they write on Shetarot of the Greek count (Minyan Shetarot) - One Thousand'

<http://sabbahillel.blogspot.co.il/2015/05/rabbi-leibtag-shiurim-hebrew-calendar.html>²¹

- According to this suggestion, the perplexing issue of the missing years²² in the Jewish calendar may be linked to the 'sanctification' of Minyan Shetarot.
- R. Ya'akov Meidan dates his source sheets from Yetziat Mitzrayim!

D4] COUNTING FROM THE CHURBAN

- As we saw in the Rambam above, it was also common to date from the destruction of the Second Temple.

E] IS IT PERMITTED TO USE THE SECULAR CALENDAR?

- Is it permitted to say that today is Wednesday June 15 2022 or 6/15/2022? What could be the issues?
 - Wednesday is based on the name of a pagan god. It also prevents numbering the day of the week to reference Shabbat.
 - June is the name of a Roman God.
 - Numbering June as the 6th month may be a breach of the mitzva to number the months from Nissan.
 - The year 2022 is (at least in theory) counted from the birth of Jesus!

E1] REFERENCING AVODA ZARA

19. וּבְכָל אֲשֶׁר-אָמַרְתִּי אֵלֵיכֶם תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְשֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרַיִם לֹא תִזְכְּרוּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע עַל-פִּיךָ.

שמות כג:יג

The Torah includes a mitzva not to mention the names of any pagan god.

20. דַּתְנִינָא: וְשֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרַיִם לֹא תִזְכְּרוּ - שְׁלֵא יֵאמֵר אָדָם לְחַבְרֵי שְׁמוֹר לִי בְצַד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה פְלוֹנִית.

סנהדרין סג:

Chazal state that one may not even use the name of avoda zara as a landmark since it is using that name!

21. לֹא יֵאמֵר אָדָם לְחַבְרֵי שְׁמוֹר לִי בְצַד עֲבוּדָת כּוֹכְבִים פְלוֹנִית וְכוּיָצָא בָהּ. וְכָל עֲבוּדָת כּוֹכְבִים הַכְּתוּבָה בְּכַתְבֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מוֹתֵר לְהִזְכִּיר שְׁמָה כְּגוֹן פְּעוּר וּבֵל וּנְבוּ וְגַד וְכוּיָצָא בָהֶן. וְאִסוּר לְגָרוּם לְאַחֲרַיִם שִׁדְרוּ וּשְׂקִימּוֹ בְּשֵׁם עֲבוּדָת כּוֹכְבִים. וְאִינוּ לּוֹקָה אֲלָא הַנּוֹדֵר בְּשֵׁמָה וְהַמְקִיִּים בְּשֵׁמָה וְהוּא הַנִּשְׁבַּע בְּשֵׁמָה.

רמב"ם הלכות עבודה זרה פרק ה הלכה יא

*The Rambam rules this. However, it is permitted to say the name of any avoda zara which is mentioned in Tanach.*²³

22. הַנּוֹדֵר אוֹ נִשְׁבַּע אוֹ נִשְׁבַּע בְּשֵׁם עֲבוּדָת כּוֹכְבִים הֲרִי זֶה לּוֹקָה. וְאִסוּר לְהִזְכִּירָהּ בְּשֵׁמָה, בֵּין לְצוּרָהּ בֵּין שְׁלֵא לְצוּרָהּ.

שולחן ערוך יורה דעה הלכות עבודה זרה סימן קמו סעיף א

*This is also ruled in Shulchan Aruch, who rules that the prohibition of mentioning the name of avoda zara applies whether or not there is a need*²⁴.

21. Note that this is a version of Rabbi Leibtag's shiur written up by students. The specific wording is not approved by Rabbi Leibtag and thus may not fully reflect his intentions.

22. See two shiurim specifically on the topic of the 'missing 164 years' at <https://rabbimanning.com/index.php/audio-shiurim/cji/>

23. Some authorities suggest that the reason is that this avoda zara was *batei* by the time of the Gemara. It is, however, difficult to state this definitively.

24. See Taz YD 147:1 who explains that one might have thought that mentioning it for an important need was prohibited but for a trivial matter was permitted. Or one may have thought

- The Maharam Schick²⁵ was asked about writing the secular date on a tombstone. He argues very strongly that this is a Torah prohibition²⁶ and was also prohibited by his Rav, the Chatam Sofer. However, their arguments are different.
- The Maharam Schick argues that anything that reminds a person of the avoda zara is forbidden to mention. Since the secular year dates from the birth of Jesus, this is totally prohibited.
- However, the Chatam Sofer²⁷ argues that counting from Creation reinforces that God is the Creator of the world and decreed that the Jewish people should have Eretz Yisrael. Using the secular date undermines this. Also, he rules that it is prohibited to number the months according to the secular numbering - see below.
- Some poskim²⁸ argue that using the non-Jewish dating is in breach of the prohibition of chukat hagoyim.

E2] LENIENT POSITIONS

23. נשאלתי אודות הכותבים אגרות ומכתבים לחבריהם, וכותבים התאריך למנין הנוצרים, אם יש למחות בידיהם משום ובחוקותיהם לא תלכו. או אין בזה איסור גמור מן הדין.

(א) ... אין הדבר ברור כלל שמנין הנוצרים הוא ללידת ישוע הנוצרי יש"י²⁹. שהרי לפי מ"ש רז"ל בסוטה (מו) ובסנהדרין (ק), יש"ו היה חי בזמנו של יהושע בן פרחיה, אשר דחאו בשתי ידיים. [ואם כי הושמטו דרז"ל אלו מהש"ס מאימת הצנזורה, נדפסו בשלימות בספר קבוצת ההשמטות (קראקא תר"ד). ע"ש]. ותלמידי יהושע בן פרחיה הם יהודה בן טבאי ושמעון בן שטח. ותלמידיהם שמעיה ואבטליון. ותלמידיהם הלל ושמיאי (פ"ק דאבות וחגיגה טז) והלל נהג נשיאותו לפני חורבן הבית ק' שנה. (שבת טו).... נמצא שהרבה שנים לפני תחלת מספרם כבר מת יש"ו! וכ"כ הראב"ד בס' הקבלה (עמוד ג).... וכ"כ בס' האשכול (עמוד יח) שאותו האיש יש"ו נצלב קל"ה שנה קודם החרבן. ע"ש. והר"י אברבנאל בס' מעיני הישועה כ', שאין אמת במה שאומרים שישו הנוצרי מת מ"ב שנה קודם החרבן. שהרי מצינו בש"ס שיש"ו היה תלמיד ר"י בן פרחיה, אלא קודם החרבן קנ"א שנה יצא מעולמו. והנוצרים אומרים שמת מ"ב שנה קודם החרבן כדי לתלות החרבן בעון הריגתו. ע"כ. ודלא כמ"ש ג"כ הגאון יעב"ץ בהגהותיו לע"ז (י) דתרי הוו. וע"ש. גם צ"ע מההיא דשבת (קד) בעל סטדא בועל פנדירא. בעל פפוס בן יהודה הוא. אמו מרים מגדלא שער נשיא היא.... ומכאן סמך להאומרים ששני יש"ו היו.... ועכ"פ ראיתי לכותבי היסטוריא החילוניים הנמשכים אחר סופרי חכמי אור"ע שכתבו שישו הנוצרי נולד ד' שנים לפני מנין הנוצרים. וכ"כ באוצר ישראל ח"ה (ערך ישו עמוד רעז). וכ' ומוזה ראייה כי מספר השנים שנוהגים הנוצרים אינו למספר שנת לידת ישו הנוצרי. וכ"כ עוד שם (ערך כרונולוגיא עמוד רצא). שמנין הנוצרים הוא למלכות הרומיים ולא ללידת ישו. ע"ש.

(ג) איברא דחזי הוית להגאון מהר"ם שיק (חי"ד סי' קעא), שנשאל אודות מי שחקק על מצבה בלעז, וכתב פרט השנה כמו שאוה"ע מונים להנוצרי. וע"ז יצא במחאה נמרצה שהרי בית הקברות הוא כחצר השותפים, ואין רשאי להעמיד שם דבר שחבירו מקפיד עליו. ואיך העיזו להעמיד שם מצבה כזו, בלא רצון הגבאים הח"ק. וכ"ז על עצם הדבר ששנו לשון המצבה ללעז, אבל מה שהוסיפו לכתוב מספר השנים כדרך החדשים ג"כ בלשון לעז, זוהי עבירה כפולה ומכופלת שמספר החדשים שלהם אינם מכוונים למספר בני ישראל. גם מה שסיימו במספר השנים למספר הנוצרי, לדעתי זהו איסור דאורייתא דכתיב ושם אלהים אחרים לא תזכירו, ואחז"ל דמכאן שאסור לומר לחבירו המתן לי בצד ע"ז פלונית. וה"נ המונה למספרם עובר על איסור זה, כיון שע"י המנין עולה על זכרוננו מחשבת איסור. ע"ש.

אולם לפמ"ש"כ לעיל שאין חשבון זה מכוון ללידתו של אותו האיש, לפ"ד רז"ל, נראה שאין בזה גם משום ושם אלהים אחרים לא תזכירו. ובלא"ה יש להעיר לפמ"ש הר"א ממיץ בס' יראים (סי' עה) וז"ל, ונ"ל שאינו אסור להזכיר אלא שם הניתן לאליל לשם אלהות, שנתנו לו שם דמשמע אלהות.... וכיו"ב כ' המרדכי (ספ"ק דע"ז) בשם ראבי"ה, דדוקא בימיהם ששם ע"ז משמע לשון שררות ואלהות, אבל היכא שהקדשים שלהם נקראים בשמות של בני"א אין קפידא בהזכרתם.... ולפ"ז הדבר ברור שאין כל איסור בספירת התאריך הלועזי, משום ושם אלהים אחרים לא תזכירו, אף אם היה אמת שהוא קשור עם לידתו של אותו האיש....

(ה) ... ולעומתו ראיתי בס' כל בו הל' אבילות בח"א (עמוד שפא) שהעלה להקל בזה. והביא שהרמ"א בתשו' (סי' טא) כ', בשנת אלף ותקמ"ו בחדש דצמבר למספרם. וכ"כ בשו"ת חות יאיר (סי' קפד) בתוך דבריו אלף תכ"ח למספרם. וכן מהר"י יוזפא בס' יוסף אומץ כ', אלף ותקפ"ג למספרם. וכן הגרעק"א באיגרות סופרים כ', חמש ספטמבר אלף שמונה מאות שלושים ואחת למספרם. וכן בשו"ת חת"ס ח"א מאה"ע (סי' מג) כ' כן כמה פעמים. ע"כ.... וגם אנכי הרואה בכמה מעשה ב"ד שבחור"ל שכותבים התאריך הלועזי המתאים ליום וחדש ושנת התאריך העברי. ולכן העיקר לדינא שאין בזה שום איסור מן הדין. והמקילים בזה יש להם ע"מ שיסמוכו. אולם מהיות טוב אל תקרי רע, וכל שאין צורך גדול, יש לכתוב החדשים והשנים למספר בני ישראל. ובפרט פה בארצנו הקדושה. וכשיש צורך בדבר טוב לכתוב מלבד למספרם גם לבריאת עולם....

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that an unnecessary reference was prohibited but where there was a practical need (eg to give directions). and it is clearly not for pagan purposes, it would be permitted. The halacha therefore clarifies that ALL such cases are prohibited!

25. YD 171. R. Moshe Schick (d.1879, Hungary)

26. Similarly stringent rulings are issued by other poskim - see Sefer Get Pashut 127:30, Hillel Omer YD 62, Yayin Hatov OC 8, Be'er Moshe 8:18, Pri Hasade 1:3, Sharei Tzedek YD 199, Az Nedberu 12:38.

27. Derashot Chatam Sofer II p315.

28. See Chemdat Tzvi 4:33. However, R. Ovadia Yosef (below) rejects this on the basis that most poskim rule that *chukat hagoyim* does not apply if there is a logical reason why the non-Jews have a certain practice. Since there is a reason why the non-Jews count the years the way they do, Jews would not be restricted from doing so.

29. It is not clear that Yeshu is actually his real name, which may have been Yeshua (as the Rambam writes in Hilchot Melachim 11:4) or Yehoshua. יש"ו could be an acronym for *yemach shemo vezichrono* or a gematria (316) of ויריק or עירם. Maharil also writes that *notzri* is also a reference to his being created not divine.

R. Ovadia Yosef rules that it is permitted to write the secular year, although preferable to use the Jewish calendar especially in Israel. Among his arguments are: (i) The 'real' Jesus lived 150 years earlier than the Christian Jesus³⁰ (or maybe there were two)³¹; (ii) even the birth of the Christian Jesus was 4 BCE so the count is not really from his birth.

- R. Yosef's argument that the secular day is actually unconnected with Yeshu HaNotzri is rejected by some other poskim³². They rule that the prohibition is to make people think of the avoda zara, even if the connection is indirect, and the secular year does this.
- R. Eliezer Waldenberg³³ rejects this stringency and explains that the prohibition is to mention the name of the avoda zara, not to cause others to think of it³⁴. One is not responsible, in this context, for the thoughts of others and as long as one does not mention the avoda zara, or something related to it, there is no prohibition. Additionally, most people are not reminded of Yeshu Hanotzri when told the secular date.
- R. Waldenberg also distinguishes between using secular dates in the context of business and using them in the ritual context of a tombstone. In a cemetery our behavior should unite the Jewish people and focus on the spiritual, so the Maharam Schick was opposed to using secular dates. In business, however, where there is room for the mundane, we may use secular dates. Even so, he suggests that when dealing with internal matters (letters between Jews) we should be careful to use the Jewish date. Furthermore, he suggests, even when writing documents that require the secular date, one should try to also include the Jewish date.
- Another leniency quote above by R. Yosef is the position of the Yere'im³⁵. He rules that the prohibition to mention avoda zara is only when the name is used to suggest divinity. A personal or secular name which does not suggest lordship or divinity is permitted. According to the Yere'im one may say the name Jesus since this does not imply any divine character.³⁶

24. (ג) שם חגים בו. ז"ל הג"מ ספ"ה כתב ר"מ שאין חסור חלל שם שניתן לה לשם חלקות אבל שם הדיוטות חף על פי שעשהו חלוה. כיון שזכר השם חין זו חלכות וחדנות וגם לא ניתן לו לשם כך מותר דכתיב ושם חללים כו' בשם חלכות הקפיד הכתוב. וכן תנן (ע"י ה) אלו כו' קלנדא סטרורא וקרטסים שאלו שמות הדיוטות הן. וכמא מקומות הוזכר אותו האיש ותלמידיו בש"ס כו' וכ"כ במרדכי.

באור הגר"א יורה דעה סימן קמ"ג

This position is ruled by the Gra - any name which was used of idolatry but is now secularized is permitted³⁷.

30. See R. Aryeh Lebowitz - <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/735743/rabbi-aryeh-lebowitz/using-the-secular-calendar/>. He writes that Ravad (*Sefer Hakabala* p53) notes the contradiction between the historical and Talmudic account, and strongly stands by the accuracy of the Talmudic tradition. Abaranel (*Sefer Ma'yanei Hayeshua*) suggests that the Christians falsified the true dates in order to make it appear as if the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash* occurred soon after Jesus' death, thereby implying that the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash was a punishment for killing Jesus.
31. R. Lebowitz writes as follows concerning the "second Jesus" theory. *Seder Hadorot* suggests that there were two people named Jesus who were both killed. The Talmudic account mentioned above refers to a different Jesus than the one who has been deified by so many people. Rabbi Ya'akov Emden (commentary to Avoda Zara 17a) also believes that there must have been a second Jesus. In fact, there are a number of sources that point to the possibility of a second Jesus: (i) Tosafot Sanhedrin 37b point out that the Sanhedrin had stopped judging cases involving capital punishment forty years before the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, except when it was absolutely necessary "like that [well known] incident". Presumably, Tosafot are referring to the execution of Jesus. The underlying assumption of Tosafot is that Jesus was killed within the last forty years prior to the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. Tosafot do not raise the issue of the strong Talmudic evidence that Jesus was killed many years earlier, presumably because they assume that there were two men named Jesus, both of whom were killed. The Gemara (*chesronot hashas*) very clearly states that the Jewish *Sanhedrin* killed Jesus. If this *gemara* refers to the same Jesus, it is most curious that all historical accounts of the death of Jesus claim that the Romans in fact killed him. If the non-Jews changed the date of his death in historical accounts to incriminate the Jews, why would they claim that the Romans killed him, and not the Jews? It would therefore seem that there must have been another Jesus, many years before his more famous namesake, who was killed by the Jews.
32. See Beer Moshe ibid. This is also the view of R. Nosson Gestetner printed in Tzitz Eliezer 9:14)
33. Tzitz Eliezer 13:14.
34. Not all poskim agree - see Shu't Beit Yitzchak YD 1:152 who rules that the prohibition of 'zechira' for avoda zara includes thoughts.
35. Yere'im 75 by R. Eliezer of Metz (12C Germany).
36. R. Ezriel Hildersheimer (Shu't YD 180) writes, that according to the Yere'im, one would not be able to say 'Christ', since this definitely suggests a "divine status." The word christos does not actually mean god but simply 'anointed one'. R. Herschel Schachter recommends not to say it. See also Hagahot Maimoniot Avodat Kochavim 5:3; Chavot Yair Teshuva 1:1 Hasaga 11-12; Biur Hagra 147:3; Mishne Halachot 9:169. According to many poskim this also applied to saying the word Christmas or even Xmas (where the X is known as the Labarum" or "Chi-Rho", from the Greek letter Chi, representing Christ). On this basis, it may be worse to use the word X-mas since it has specific religious meaning, while the word Christmas is now secular. Chazal repeatedly use the name 'Jesus' - see uncensored versions of Sanhedrin 43, 67, 105, 107, Avoda Zara 27, Yerushalmi Berachot 5:1. See also Rambam Hilchot Melachim Chap 11. However, R. Hildersheimer argues that no proof can be brought from these since there was never any prohibition to write the names, rather to say them. This is also the position of the Minchat Chinuch (86). R. Hildersheimer and other poskim rule that, even though it is halachically permitted to say Jesus, the minhag is to use a nickname, such as Oto Ish, Yoshke, or Yoshke Pandere etc. (Chazal (Avoda Zara 45a) rule that one may make a mockery of avoda zara, especially of its name.) There are also authorities who rule that it is permissible to mention the name of a foreign deity when it is for a constructive purpose - see Meiri to Sanhedrin 63b.
37. On that basis one can refer to any previously religious name which is now in common parlance eg 'the Apollo program', 'San Diego', 'Santa Monica' (although some people apparently call it Simcha Monica!). This would also apply to names of days, months etc. What about the town (or the college) Christchurch? (The story is told that when the newly elected Rav's postcard reached his family back home in Poland, with his greetings from his new community in Christchurch, they all sat shivah!). Mumbai is named for a Hindu god, and many people there are more likely to connect this to the religious idea than in New Zealand. In fact the city was renamed a short time ago specifically to relate to the avoda zara and there is a temple in the city with this avoda zara in it! As such, it may indeed be problematic to say the name Mumbai. There is a myth that the town Satmar was named for Saint Mary. Actually, 'Satmar' is a combination of the Latin word *sattu*, meaning village, and the Romanian word *mare* meaning large. Nevertheless, the Satmar Rebbe never pronounced the name Satmar, since it is associated with avoda zara. Instead he would say 'Sakmar'. This is also a similar issue concerning the pronunciation of Sans/Tzanz. See: [http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/729907/Rabbi_Aryeh_Lebowitz/'Mumbai'_-_May_We_Say_the_Word\)and](http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/729907/Rabbi_Aryeh_Lebowitz/'Mumbai'_-_May_We_Say_the_Word)and) <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/869637>. <https://seforimblog.com/2011/05/satmar-from-as-seen-by-insider-review/#:~:text=He%20writes%3A%20E%20%9CThe%20Rebbe%20never,%E2%80%9CSakmar%E2%80%9D%20is%20used%20instead.> See also <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/869637>

- R. Yosef also suggests that the Chatam Sofer's objection to using secular dates applies to those are trying to assimilate into non-Jewish culture and use the secular date as another form of being like the other nations. However, if somebody uses the secular date for purely practical purposes, such as business dealings where others would not recognize the Jewish date, even the Chatam Sofer would rule leniently. He points out that the Chatam Sofer himself concluded a letter that was addressed to political leaders with the date 'November 8 1821'. As such, R. Yosef rules that, when necessary, (i.e. writing checks, contracts etc.), especially outside of Israel (where nobody is aware of the Jewish date), it is permissible to use the secular date. When practical (i.e. letters to friends, personal notes etc.), however, one should attempt to use the Jewish date. Furthermore, using both dates together indicates that the Jewish date is meaningful, and that one is only using the secular date for practical reasons.
- Some poskim recommend writing only the last digits of the year - ie '22.

E3] DAYS

- As we saw in the previous shiur, using the number of the day to Shabbat is (accordingly to some Rishonim) a fulfillment³⁸ of the Torah mitzva to remember Shabbat.
- This does not mean that it is specifically prohibited to say 'Sunday'³⁹, but it may miss the opportunity to perform a mitzva.

E4] MONTHS

25. (ד) אך יש להעיר להם שלא יקראו את החודש ינואר החודש הראשון, או פברואר השני. וכו' וכן בכתיבה. אלא יש לבחור הרע במיעוטו שיקראום בשמותם המפורשים. וכמ"ש הרמב"ן (פר' בא) וז"ל. וטעם החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים, שימננהו ישראל חודש הראשון. וכן ממנו ימנו כל החדשים שאחריו 'שני' ו'שלישי' עד תשלום השנה בי"ב חדש וכו'. ע"ש. וכן ראיתי בשו"ת גנוי יוסף (סי' קו) שהעתיק דברי רב אחד וסיים ואיככה מזכיר איש ישראל היום והחדש למספר העמים? ובפרט מספר השנים למספר העמים?

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R. Ovadia Yosef rules that one should not use the number of the secular months since there is a mitzva⁴⁰ to number the months from Nissan in order to remember Yetziat Mitzrayim, Matan Torah etc. In his view, it is preferable to use the pagan names of the months⁴¹. Even though this is not ideal, it is the lesser of two evils!

- R. Eliezer Waldenberg rules the opposite way⁴². He understand that there is a greater halachic prohibition in saying the name of the secular month since this is pagan. It is therefore better to use the number⁴³. He suggests that earlier poskim who used the names of the secular months did not appreciate their pagan origins.
- R. Lebowitz suggests a compromise position:
January, March, May and June are named for pagan gods. So it may be better to use the number⁴⁴.
July and August were named for emperors and September through December are just numbers. So it may be better to use the name.
February (purification) and April (growth) are names for religious times but not gods so, again, the name may be preferable⁴⁵.
- R. Moshe Feinstein is reported to have been lenient with writing the secular date on a check. R. Ya'akov Kamenetsky⁴⁶ and the Satmar Rov⁴⁷ are reported to have been stringent. In Israel, many poskim⁴⁸ are strict since there is less reason to write the secular date.

In Part 3 we will be'H address the tricky issue of beginning *Ve'ten Tal U'matar* on Dec 4/5.

38. Presumably, this would require kavana to fulfil this mitzva when using the numbering, since we rule that *mitzvot tzerichot kavana* for Torah mitzvot. On the issue of numbering, not naming, the days see see Ramban Shemot 20:8, Mechilta Yitro ibid, Ritva Rosh Hashana 3b, Shulchan Aruch EH 126:3, Charedim 9:33, Chai Adam Shabbat 1:1, Kaf Hachaim 132:26, Aruch Hashulchan OC 242:1-2, Sharei Halacha U'minhag OC 88, Divrei Yoel OC 15, Kovetz Beit Aron V'Yisroel 71:pages 119-134.

39. See above as to whether this is mentioning the name of idolatry.

40. This mitzva is not however brought by the *monai hamitzvat* - see Minchat Chinuch 311:5

41. This is also the position of the Kotev commentary on Ein Yaakov.

42. See Tzitz Eliezer 8:8, 9:14, 20:13:4. R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Shalmei Simcha p 687) ruled that one should not use the numbers for the secular months. However, R. Moshe Stembuch (Teshuvot V'Hanhagot 1:830) rules that it is permitted to use the numbers. R. Hershel Schachter and R. Noach Oelbaum rule that it is preferable to use the names rather than the number - see <https://outorah.org/p/27236/>. R. Stembuch gives an additional reason to be lenient in writing the non-Jewish month since the non-Jews use a solar calendar while we use a lunar calendar. As such, when one writes the secular month one is not counting 'months' at all! The issue of counting Nissan as the first month only applies when we count according to the moon, not according to the sun.

43. Sefer Halkarim writes the mitzva to count the months from Nissan was abolished by Yirmiyahu, who moved the months over to the Babylonian names. Binyan Shlomo OC 22 rules that there is no longer any mitzva to count the months from Nissan since this only applied when the mitzva of kiddush hachodesh was performed.

44. Some recommend an abbreviated form eg Mar.

45. The non Jewish month October, November and February are mentioned explicitly by the Beit Yosef 117:1 in connection with the laws of saying Veten Tal U'matar.

46. Meor Yehoshua 36. Kinyan Torah 1:55:4.

47. Divrei Yoel OC 15:pages 89-90.

48. R. Chaim Kanievsky ruled that one should avoid writing the secular date on a check - see Orchot Rabbeinu 1:page 347