

The Shofar

Fall 1997

A Journal of Jewish Culture, History and Genealogy from a Latter-day Saint Prospective

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The Shofar is a publication of the B'nai Shalom.

The Shofar is published quarterly and donations are solicited to cover printing and mailing.

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1217 North 685 West
Orem, Utah 84057

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If you have any comments, please write us. You can also contact us via e-mail at bnai@inconnect.com. We would like to hear your comments and suggestions.

Announcements:

Fall Meeting Announce:

Our fall conference get together will be held on Friday evening Oct 3rd beginning at 7:30 pm. It will be at the chapel on 200 North Center Street in Lehi.

The speaker will be Monte Nyman a retired professor of religion from BYU. He taught for thirty seven years which included nine semesters at the BYU Jerusalem Center. He is the father of eight children and seventeen grandchildren.

His topic will be "turn the hearts of the Jews unto the prophets and the prophets unto the Jews," from D&C 98:16-17.

Afterwards we'll have our usual social and food tasting time. It is requested that if you are coming as a single that you bring a fruit juice type drink. All others, we would like if you could bring a Jewish dish that you know or maybe is a family favorite.

Correction to B'nai Shalom's Web Site:

The address of the web site has been changed to correct some confusion. It is www.inconnect.com/bnai. You can reach our e-mail at bnai@inconnect.com. Love to hear from you.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We do well to abide by the council of our prophets. They are chosen by the Lord. Abraham gained great insight in the whole process of selecting leadership. We read:

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. (Abraham 3:22-23)

Undoubtedly this being the case, Joseph Smith was selected to open this dispensation. I would like to refer to two quotes by Wilford Woodruff in a conference of April 1837: (Continued on page 3)

Jewish Genealogy Research

This article is a continuation from the last issue of *The Shofar* of what Jewish records are known to exist in various countries and which ones are in the possession of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

BRITAIN.....

The modern Jewish community in England dates from 1656. London had congregations of both Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, but Portuguese Sephardic Jews predominated until the nineteenth century.

Synagogue records date from the end of the seventeenth century. These were written in Portuguese or Yiddish.

Marriage records seem to be complete, but many births were not recorded.

Civil registration of all births, deaths, and marriages was introduced in 1837. The Family History Library has microfilmed some synagogue records and the index to the civil registration. The actual civil registers, however, are available only in England.

The library also has a collection of pedigrees and indexes of Jews in England from the mid-1800s and earlier, compiled by I. Mordy. See microfilm 1279240 through 1279250.

FRANCE.....

The government of the French Republic introduced civil registration of all births, marriages, and deaths in France, including Jews, in 1792. French civil registration records of births, deaths, and marriages have

been microfilmed by the Family History Library for some departments (counties) of France. For those areas not yet microfilmed, you may write to the local departmental archive and hire a researcher.

GREECE.....

In the 1300s Ashkenazic Jews immigrated to Thessalonika from Poland, France, and Italy. But after the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 the main influx was of Sephardic Jews, attracted by the religious tolerance offered under Turkish rule. The library has microfilmed the civil registers of Thessalonika (1870-1941) which includes the Jewish inhabitants.

NETHERLANDS.....

Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal were forced to convert to Christianity during the Spanish Inquisition. Many of them settled in the Netherlands in the 1500s and 1600s, and reconverted to Judaism. These Spanish and Portuguese Jews were later joined by Ashkenazic Jews fleeing anti-Semitism in less tolerant nations of western and eastern Europe.

Genealogies have been compiled for many Jewish families in the Netherlands. The following organizations have many such genealogies and will answer correspondence:

Netherlands Joods
Familienarchief
Amsteldijk 67
1074 HZ Amsterdam
THE NETHERLANDS

Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie
Prins Willem-Alexanderhof 22

2595 BE s'Gravenhage
THE NETHERLANDS

Valuable historical and genealogical articles are published in *Studia Rosenthaliana: Journal for Jewish Literature and History in the Netherlands*, published by the University Library of Amsterdam. It is indexed in the *International Index of Periodicals* found in most libraries.

After 1811, Jewish births, marriages, and deaths in the Netherlands were included with other religious groups in local civil registers. Prior to this, each congregation was responsible for its own records. The Family History Library has filmed all civil registers up to 1882 and some as late as 1912. Many early congregational records have also been filmed.

Jews in the Netherlands were required to adopt fixed surnames in 1811-1812. The registration of these name adoptions often include the names and ages of all male family members, original names and the new fixed name. Although not available for all places, these names adoption records [*Naamaannemingsregisters*] are often grouped with the civil registration records of the specific town. They may also be listed in the Family History Library Catalog under (Town) — Names, Personal.

ROMANIA.....

Modern Romania consists of territories with varied historical backgrounds. The old Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were under Turkish domination until the mid 1800s. The area of Transylvania was under Austro-Hungarian rule until 1918.

Civil registration of births,

marriages, and deaths was introduced in the Romanian principalities in the 1830s, but it is not clear when Jewish communities began keeping records. In the former Hungarian area of Transylvania, Jewish registers began in the 1830s and 1840s.

The Family History Library has no Jewish records from Romania. If preserved, such records may now be in the Romanian State Archives. Write to the archives in Romanian or French. The address follows:

Arhivelor Statului din Republica
Romania
Bucuresti, Sect. 5
Bdul Kogalniceanu nr. 29
ROMANIA

Some records may be in Israel or some other Jewish collection outside Romania.

OTHER COUNTRIES.....

The Family History Library has Jewish vital records from some localities in Western Europe not noted above. The Family History Library Catalog lists specific holdings for each country and is available at the Family History Library and at family history centers.

MEMORIAL BOOKS.....

A memorial (*yizkor*) book is a history of a particular Jewish community in Europe. These books

often give interesting details about these communities including maps, photographs, local histories, the fate of the town and residents during the Holocaust, and often a list of these who perished in the Holocaust. The books are written primarily in Yiddish and Hebrew.

Over seven hundred memorial books have been published, mostly for towns in Poland and Russia. The Family History Library has not collected these works. The New York Public Library has an excellent collection, as does the YIVO Institute, Yad Vashem, University of California at Los Angeles, and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City.

President's Message Continued

The Prophet Joseph Smith then arose and address the congregation for the space of three hours, clothed with the power, spirit and image of God. He presented many things of vast importance to the Elders of Israel. O! that the record could be written as with an iron pen of the light, principles and virtue that came forth out of the mouth and heart of the Prophet Joseph whose soul like Enoch's seems wide as eternity. That the day showed strikingly that he is in very deed a Prophet of God raised up for the deliverance of Israel.

President Woodruff's report of the same conference also noted:

Joseph then arose and like the lion of the Tribe of Judah poured out his soul in the midst of the congregation of Saints. While listening I thought "Who can find

language to write his words and teachings as with an iron pen in a rock, that they might stand for future generation to look upon!" He seemed a fountain of knowledge from whose mouth streams of eternal wisdom flowed; and as he stood before the people he showed that the authority of God was upon him."

Later President Woodruff made two more comments of Joseph Smith indicating the scope as well as the powerful impression Joseph made upon him.

His mind was opened by the visions of the Almighty, and the Lord taught him many things by vision and revelation that were never taught publicly in his day; for the people could not bear the flood of intelligence which God poured into his mind."

There is not so great a man as Joseph standing in this generation. The gentiles look upon him and he is like a bed a gold concealed from human view. They know not his principles, his spirit, his wisdom, his virtues, his philanthropy, nor his calling. His mind, like Enoch's expands as eternity, and only God can comprehend his soul.

Let us ponder the conclusion; the leadership of the Church under the direction of the Prophet President Gordon B. Hinkley is not by chance. Rather he is here because God wants him here, now!

May we abide by his council. We also are here now to fulfil our mission. May the Lord bless us with strength to be valiant and have joy when we report home.

Albert Ostraff

The World of Jewish Books

For centuries the Jews have been known as "The People of the Book." The phrase refers to the Bible, the Book of Books as the Jews refer to it, but it indicates the great love the Jews have for books in general. Books have been one of the dearest possessions of the Jews.

When we use the word "book", we mean a printed volume, made up of a number of sheets printed on both sides and bound together and provided with a cover.

In ancient times, however, "book" meant any single work. It was only after the introduction of printing, in the fifteenth century that the word "book" came to mean a printed volume. In the middle of the fifteenth century, movable type was invented. This is the dividing line in the history of books. Before this time all books were in manuscript (which means hand-written); after this time all books were printed.

Two Manuscript Periods

The manuscript period is also divided up into two: 1) the period when such forms as clay tablets and papyrus rolls were used, and 2) the period when manuscripts began to look like modern books.

Earliest Jewish records do not tell of clay tablet "books" or of papyrus rolls such as other nations used. Instead they speak of scrolls written on the skins of animals. These hides were not bound together like books of

today but were laid end-to-end and rolled up into a scroll--looking very much like the Torah Scrolls that are seen in synagogues today.

Since each scroll had to be written by hand, books were extremely scarce, and most of the early books were either read aloud or recited from memory to whole groups of people by wandering story-tellers. A book in ancient time was to be "heard" rather than to be read silently to oneself.

Thus the Bible tells us that King Josiah of Judah called "all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord."

Later, when the Jews returned to Israel from their exile in Babylon, Ezra, read them the book of the law.

As time went on, however, more and more books were written and circulated among the common people. We know, for example, that messages from the Prophets and government proclamations were recopied by hand and distributed among the people.

And of course the Torah, which became more and more important in the synagogue service, was constantly copied and recopied. To this day, the Torah Scrolls found in synagogues must be written by hand on animal skins according to a rule made by the Rabbis in the Talmud.

Changes Are Made

In time, wooden rollers were placed on the ends of some of the larger scrolls to make them easier to handle. The Torah usually a large bulky scroll, has wooden rollers (each is called an *Etz Hayyim*, or "tree of life").

Soon, other changes came into use. Paper replaced parchment as

writing material and then someone came up with the idea of putting pages of a manuscript one on top of the other and binding them together in book form instead of rolling them up into a scroll.

By the Middle Ages most Jewish books were in modern form, and only those used in the synagogue service were still in scrolls.

The early manuscripts in modern book form were extremely large as compared with our present-day books. Some of them were so big, in fact, that it took two people to handle them. The reason for this was that books were still scarce, and, by making them large, a whole group of people could read them at the same time.

Illustrations in Books

Since books were written by hand, many of the early books were works of art as well as literature. The scribes who copied the books would often illustrate them richly and in many colors. Since the rabbis forbade any illustration of the Torah, scribes would save some of their richest illustrations for the Passover Haggadah. This practice has lived on to this day and the Haggadah that is used for the Passover is probably full of such rich illustration.

The Invention of Printing

Late in the fifteenth century the invention of printing changed the form of the Jewish book for all time.

The first Jewish book to come off the printing press was an edition of Rashi's commentary on the Bible, printed in Italy in 1475. From Italy, the art of Hebrew printing spread to Spain and Portugal. After the Spanish Inquisition in 1492, the art moved, along with the Spanish Jews, to all the countries of the world in which Jews lived.

The introduction of printing had a powerful effect on Jewish life. Although books were still scarce, there were more of them than before. They came down in price, and very soon, many persons could have a book. After a while, everyone could have a prayer book of his own. Now a copy of the Bible could be found not only among the rich but in practically every Jewish home.

More and more Jewish books were printed every year, and the quality of the printing, which had been poor at first, became better as the years went by. By the nineteenth century, Jewish books written in Hebrew, Yiddish, or other languages, were published and distributed on a world-wide scale.

The Greatest Jewish Books

The three greatest books of the Jewish people are the *Bible*, the *Talmud* and the *Siddur*.

The Bible we all know, the Talmud is a vast collection of commentary on Jewish laws and the Siddur is the Jewish Prayer book.

The Talmud

The Talmud (from the Hebrew *loomed* or study) has often been called "a sea of learning." This is apt comparison: like a sea, it has boundaries which can be measured and yet, like a sea, it has depths which have never been completely plumbed.

When the Jewish lived in Babylonia, they had the Torah which they had brought with them from Jerusalem. The Torah was the Law. Although the Jewish people were able to return to Palestine, many stayed on in Babylon where they built flourishing communities. The Torah remained their Law, but as generations passed, explanations of biblical law developed. This wealth

of material, plus oral traditions that had been handed down from the time of the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, was called *Torah she 'be 'al peh*, the Oral Law. In the course of time the Oral Law, written in many volumes, was to become known as the Talmud.

The Talmud consists of two separate parts. One part is the Mishnah, which comes from *shanah*, to repeat, or study. The Mishnah contains all the Jewish laws that had been handed down since the time of the Bible. The other part is the Gemara, from the Aramaic *gemar*, meaning study or teaching, which is an explanation of the Mishnah.

The Mishnah

The Mishnah was written down in Hebrew by its editor and compiler, Rabbi Judah the Prince (Yehudah ha-Nasi) about 1800 years ago, and comprised the first Jewish code of laws since the Torah. A very compact work, it is divided into six parts, dealing with such matters as agricultural laws, fasts and festivals, ceremonial and ritual laws, marriage and criminal laws.

It tries to explain many passages in the Torah in the light of daily problems of living. However the compact style of the Mishnah needed interpretation and expansion. That task was undertaken by the Gemara.

The Gemara

There are two Gemaras. One was completed about 1,500 years ago by Jewish scholars in Babylonia, the other a hundred years earlier by scholars in Palestine.

The Mishnah plus the Babylonian Gemara is called the Babylonian Talmud (the *Talmud Bavli*); the Mishnah with the Palestine Gemara is known as the Palestine Talmud (the *Talmud Yerushalmi*).

The Palestine Talmud is about

one third the length of the other. From the beginning, it was never used as much as the Babylonian Talmud. That is chiefly because Babylonia was the real center of Jewish life at the time and it lasted as such much longer than the community in Palestine.

The men who created the Talmud were not professional scholars solely, like most university professors today. They came instead from every walk of life. Rabbi Meir was a writer of scrolls. Samuel was a well known astronomer. Huna was a field laborer. Yokhanan Ha-Sandlar was called that because he was a cobbler, or sandal maker. These men became experts in special fields. For example, those who worked on the Jewish calendar learned astronomy. Other specialized in medicine, geology, and biology. According to tradition, the scholar Ashi, who died in 427 A.D. began the tremendous task of writing down all that had been said. Rabina bar Huna filled in the gaps, and when he died in 499 A.D. the great Talmud was closed.

The Aggadah

The men who compiled the Talmud were reporting the minutes of important legal discussions. As the day progressed and minds wearied, one of the rabbis might tell an anecdote to lighten the atmosphere, or to illustrate a point. These anecdotes and stories were written into the Talmud.

One such anecdote was told by Honi ha-Meaggel who once saw an old man planting a carob tree. He asked him when he thought the tree would bear fruit. "After seventy years," replied the old man.

"Do you expect to live seventy years and eat the fruit of your labor?"

"I did not find the world empty when I entered it," the old man

returned, "and as my fathers planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who will come after me."

Thus the dry matter of law, which is called Halakhah, was broken up with history, traditions, and legends; with proverbs and sayings; with mathematics, astronomy, and psychology. This material is called "Aggadah;" the Aggadah makes up about one-third of the entire Talmud.

The forty-one volumes of the Talmud contain no punctuation. One word may express the meaning of a whole sentence. There are no question marks to guide the pupil. The Talmud has remained an open

book to the studios because of the commentaries on its text.

All of the--the Mishnah, the Gemara and the commentaries--make up the Talmud as it is known today. The two million five hundred thousand words of the Babylonian Talmud is considered by the Jews one of its greatest achievements. Its 6,000 pages, containing the contributions of over 2,000 scholars, form an encyclopedia of Jewish culture.

The Siddur

The Jewish prayer book, or Siddur, is also like the Talmud in that it is an accumulation of material from various sources over the years.

Over time the Siddur has become a rich collection of Jewish literature. Its passages show the development of Jewish life--the Shema Yisrael of the Bible, the Hallel from King David's Psalms, the Ani Ma'amin of Maimonides. The Siddur also contains the religious poetry and prayers of known and unknown authors. For over 1,000 years, the Siddur has graced Jewish homes in every corner of the globe.

In the next issue of the Shofar, we will consider other books by such Jewish writers as Maimonides, Rashi, Shulhan Arukh, and others.

Culture

.....they turned to scribes and teachers

When the prophets and apostles of the Christian era no longer ministered among men, religionists turned to uninspired men for guidance; they wrote creeds and devised doctrines; they created new ordinances and changed old ones; and they came up with a new religion called by the old name, which had little resemblance to the primitive pattern. And when, after their return from Babylonian exile, the Jews ran out of prophets and no longer had living oracles to reveal and interpret the mind of Jehovah, they turned to scribes and teachers, to Rabbis and politically appointed high priests to tell them what the Lord meant when he said thus and so to Moses and the prophets.

And thus came the Midrash; the Mishnah, the Gemara, and the Talmud, which had the effect of nullifying true religion and sending a whole nation to spiritual destruction and to temporal banishment in a new Babylon, composed of all the nations of the earth, from which bondage they will not be freed until they hear again the voice of their Messiah, as he calls scattered Israel to return to his fold.

After the Jews came back to Jerusalem and their ancient land holdings in Palestine, through the good offices of Cyrus the Persian; after they no longer walked in that heavenly light which rests only upon those who listen to a prophet's voice and hear the word of God; and feeling the need to apply their ancient law to new conditions -- they developed gradually, over the centuries, a whole

new (and apostate!) system of religious government. Scribes, who once had been keepers of the records and copiers of the scrolls, became interpreters of the law and teachers of the people. And as uninspired men almost never agree on the meaning of scriptural passages, there soon grew up schools and sects and cults, one Rabbi or teacher vying with another, and one voice saying, as it were, Lo here is Christ, and another, Lo there. In the days of Herod the Great, the two most influential rabbinical schools were those of Hillel and Shanniai, who agreed or disagreed on points both great and small as suited their fancies, their prejudices, and their nationalistic leanings.

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, Vol. 1, p. 276 - 277

Everything Starts with a Calendar

Have you ever tried to read a Jewish Calendar? Its months have strange names and it does not appear to correlate with the calendar we are used too! However knowing how to read a Jewish Calendar tells us when the festivals are scheduled and can yields a great deal of information.

In Early Days

How did the Jewish calendar came into existence is a fascinating story and is presented herein.

In the earliest days of Hebrew history, in the days of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the people were shepherds who wandered in search of green pastures for their flocks. They looked to the heavens and the position of the stars in the heavens to keep track of the seasons. They also watched the changes in the moon.

Legend of the Moon

A legend grew up about the moon. In the beginning (says the Talmud) the Lord created the sun and the moon equal in size. But the moon was not satisfied to share her glory with the sun. She complained. To punish her for being jealous, the Almighty shrank the moon down to her present size. But then He took pity on her and promised that some day the Israelites would celebrate the new moon and build their calendar on her movements.

Report to the Sanhedrin

Committees were appointed to watch the moon to see how often these changes happened. Special observers were placed at stations to wait for the appearance of the new moon. As soon as the slightest crescent showed in the sky, the observers rushed to Jerusalem. They presented themselves to the Sanhedrin, the High Court of the Jewish people. "We testify that we have seen the new moon," they swore. They stated the exact moment it had made its appearance.

It was a moment of high excitement. Once the Sanhedrin had proclaimed the new month, runners were dispatched to light fires on the highest hill ringing the capital city. As soon as these signals were seen by the inhabitants of the next town, they in turn lit a fire on their highest hill. At last the signals reached the farthest communities. The new month had officially begun.

But what about the settlements that lay beyond the shimmering oceans? Jews of far-off countries like Persia and Italy and Egypt could not rely on messages which sometime arrived very late. "We will observe the thirtieth day and the day after it as the new month," they decided. "In that way, we will be certain not to go astray."

That is why, according to tradition, those Jews who lived too far from Judea to be reached by signals and messages added an extra day to the Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, and Rosh Hashanah holidays. It meant a great deal to them to keep the customs of their people properly. In that way they were certain to do so.

The Sun and the Moon

Now a new problem arose to

plague these pioneer calendar-makers. From the moon they had arrived at a month of 29 ½ days. Twelve moon-months added up to 354 days. But if they had followed the moon-calendar, they would at times have been celebrating Passover in the winter instead of the spring, and planting seasons would have been utterly confused.

Knowing the sun year was 365 days long, a way had to be devised to keep the moon-year in step with the sun-year.

Leap Year

There is a new moon every twenty-nine or thirty days. Twelve such months make up the normal Jewish year. This method of figuring created differences between the solar, or sun year, of 365 days, and the Jewish, or lunar year of 354 days. To make up for this difference, the Jewish leap year has an additional month after Adar, called Adar Sheni (Second Adar). The second Adar month comes every third, sixth, eleventh, fourteenth, seventeenth, and nineteenth year.

So now was created a calendar arranged in a cycle of nineteen years and seven of the nineteen years are leap years.

This calendar at first was not written down. Word of month and the Sanhedrin kept track of the days.

However, after the Jews were driven from Palestine and no longer had the close communication they had in their homeland, a written calendar became a necessity so that all Jews could keep the holidays and feast days on the same days.

In the year 359 AD, Hillel the Second—so-called to set him apart

from the famed Hillel who lived in the days of the Second Temple--set down the rules from making a calendar.

Knowing that the moon takes 29 days, 12 hours, and 44 minutes to go around the earth, he made some months 29 days and others he made 30 days. In this way all Jews everywhere could determine the calendar for themselves and observe the festivals on the same day. The Jewish calendar has remained unchanged since that time.

Now what is the explanation for the number of the Jewish calendar year being different from our Gregorian calendar year that we used in the United States and is used throughout most of the world. Why is this year's Jewish calendar called 5757 and not 1997? The answer lies in Jewish tradition.

From the beginning of recorded time calendar-makers have used events great and small as a starting point for the date-guides. The Romans, for example, counted time from the founding of their capital city Rome. In the Book of Mormon three changes in the calendar were made. Starting from when Lehi left Jerusalem on their epic journey to the Promised Land, when the Judges were put in charge of the government and when the sign of the birth of Christ was manifested.

The early Christians in Europe and the Middle East also started keeping track from the time of Christ's birth. Our present calendar follows this rule. It is called the Gregorian Calendar, named after Pope Gregory XIII, who inaugurated it in 1582. It was then adopted in England and the American Colonies in 1752.

The Jews, however, number the years from the time of the Creation of the World as accounted in the Bible. So the creation of the world according

to the Jewish Calendar happened 5,757 years ago.

You may wonder about the terms B.C. and A.D. that is used in account for events before and after Christ's birth. B.C. means "Before Christ" and A.D. means "Anno Domini" (the year of our Lord).

The Jews, however, use B.C.E. and C.E., which means "Before the Common Era" and "Common Era."

How Many 'New Years'?

One of the many interesting things about the Jewish year is that it has at least two "New Years." According to the Bible, the Creation took place in the beginning of the month of Tishri. That is the date of *Rosh Hashanah* (In 1997, Rosh Hashanah is October 2nd). It also marked the start of the rainy season in Palestine, an event of great importance to the shepherd and farmers.

Still, even though Tishri is considered *Rosh Hashanah*, or "The Head of the Year" and the first month of the Jewish Calendar, the Bible commands Jews to consider Nisan as the first of the months, since it was in the month of Nisan that the Children of Israel were freed from slavery in Egypt.

Names of the Months

Three month's names have been mentioned so far, that is, Adar, Nisan, and Tishri. Where did these and the other names for the months in Jewish Calendar come from?

Originally, the Israelites used numerals to distinguish one month from another. The month in which the spring season began was the first month; the other months were called accordingly the second, third, and so on.

The Hebrew names of the months as they now appear in the Jewish Calendar were adopted when the Jews

lived in Babylonian exile after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C. The names were derived from the Babylonian calendar, which was itself based on an earlier Sumerian system.

Many authorities believe that the month names refer to ancient Sumerian myths associated with various seasons of the year. For example, *Tamuz* is the month dedicated to the worship of a fruitfulness-spirit of the name.

Tishri, on the other hand, simply means the "opening" month of the year. Other names like Sivan, Nisan, Kislev, and Av, still baffle those who search for their origins.

Only a few of the names of the Hebrew months are mentioned in the Bible. They are: Tevet (*Esther 2:16*); Shevat (*Zechariah 1:7*); Adar (*Esther 3:7, 9:17, 19:21*); Nisan (*Esther 3:7, Nehemiah 2:1*); Sivan (*Esther 8:9*); and Elul (*Nehemiah 6:15*).

It is evident, however, that all the names of the Hebrew months--Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tamuz, Av, Elul, Tishri, Heshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, and Adar--were fully in use by the Jewish people by the fifth century A.D.

Now Read the Calendar

If you have access to a Jewish Calendar (called a *luah* in Hebrew) you will see that it is a guide to Jewish religious observances as well as a date-reminder.

You will notice that the day, in Jewish reckoning, begins at sunset. Saturday, which is the seventh day of the week, begins on Friday evening. That is because the Bible tells us, in the story of the Creation, that "there was evening and there was morning, one day." The very first day, the day of Creation, began not with daybreak but with sunset. All Jewish holidays follow this order, and begin at sunset of the day before.

A detailed Jewish calendar tells when the time when the sun sets on the eve of a Sabbath or holiday; it informs the Jewish Mother that she must light candles a scant half-hour before the sun dips below the horizon.

Looking at a Jewish calendar will also inform you what parts of the Torah and Prophets will be read in the synagogue next Saturday.

When does the new Jewish month begin? The calendar points to the first day of the New Month, called

Rosh Hodesh, and even to the exact second when the new moon is "born." In olden days special celebrations were held throughout Palestine to greet the new month. The custom of "blessing the new month" has come down to the Jews. It is recited in the synagogue on the preceding Sabbath. In the prayer, the Jews ask that they be granted a month of good health and happiness. On *Rosh Hodesh* day, prayers of thanksgiving are read at

services. Many Jews also observe the custom of blessing the new month -- *Kiddush L'vanah*. In this ancient ceremony, Jews gather in groups outdoors. When the moon is visible to all, each says to his neighbor: "Blessed be the Lord, Who reneweth the months. "Shalom Aleichem!" and everyone replies: "Peace be unto you...may this month bring Mazal Tov...good fortune to us and to all mankind!"

Culture

Recipes from the Middle East Jewish Cook Book

HUEVOS HAMINADOS (HARD-BOILED EGGS, SEPHARDIC STYLE)

- 1 doz eggs
- 1/4 c. olive oil
- Water to cover
- 1 tsp. Salt
- outer skins from 6 - 10 brown onions
- 1 tsp. pepper

Place water, onion skins, oil, salt and pepper in a 4 - 6 quart pan. Add eggs carefully. Bring to a boil, cover and cook over lower heat for approximately 1 hour. Place pan in 225 degree oven for 3 - 4 or more hours or overnight.

BURGHUL BI BANADOURA (CRACKED WHEAT WITH TOMATOES)

- 2 cups burghul (cracked wheat)
- 1 1/2 cups ground or minced meat
- 2 cups peel ripe tomatoes

- 1 cup minced onions
- 1 cup samneh (or other shortening)
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1 1/2 tsp. Salt
- 1/2 tsp. Pepper
- 1/4 tsp. Cinnamon

Wash burghul well and drain. Brown onions, meat and pine nuts in samneh or other shortening. Add chopped tomatoes and seasonings. Cook until tender. Add water as necessary to keep from burning. Remove a of this sauce. Add burghul to remainder. Cook over medium flame until burghul has softened. Lower flame to finish cooking. Melt samneh. Mix it carefully into burghul so that it will not become pasty. Add salt. Serve with the sauce. Meatless variation: Saute onions and pine nuts. Add tomatoes and cook into a sauce. Add burghul as above.

Other variations: Substitute olive oil for samneh. Fry onions. Omit tomatoes, but add equal amount of water. Add burghul. Serve tepid. Substitute marrow squash or eggplant for the tomatoes. Especially good for children. Substitute rice for burghul.

Have there been other Masadas?

The reputed wealth of the Jews has subjected them to persecution and torture in many countries, and in different ages: and it is humiliating to reflect that our own history furnishes many illustrations of the damning fact.

During the reign of Henry, III, these proscribed people were subjected to pillage, persecution, and to torture, to gratify the avarice of an extravagant prince, and the hatred of his bigoted and ignorant subjects. An

immoderate zeal for the external rights of Christianity was a distinguishing characteristic of the age, and persecution, or extermination of those who differed from them in religious creed, was deemed virtuous and patriotic amongst our remote ancestors. Treating of the persecutions of the Jews in this reign, one of our popular historians says,

"The Jews, who had been for some time increasing in the kingdom, wing the first who fell a sacrifice to the enthusiastic zeal of the people, and numbers of them were slaughtered by the citizens of London,

upon the very day of the King's coronation. Five hundred of that infatuated people had retired into York Castle, for safety, but finding themselves unable to defend the place, they resolved to perish by killing one another, rather than meet the fury of their persecutors. Having taken this gloomy resolution, they first murdered their wives and children, next threw the dead bodies over the wall against their enemies, who attempted to scale it, and then setting fire to their houses, perished in the flames."

Times and Seasons, Vol.3, p.691

Misc.

How to make a Shofar

How is the shofar made? Usually it is made of a ram's horn, although it may also be made of the horn of any other clean animal except a cow or an ox. The horn is boiled in water until it gets soft. The inside is then

hollowed out and the horn flattened somewhat. But it is not flattened too much for then air could not be blown through it. The mouthpiece is then carefully shaped and the horn is put aside to harden. When the hardening

process is complete, we have a shofar. Sometimes, the shofar has only a slight curve; sometimes, particularly in the lands of the Middle East, the shofar is long and very curved.

Jewish Life

Did you hear the one about.....

Two Jews sat in a coffeehouse, discussing the fate of their people.

"How miserable is our lot," said one. "Pogroms, plagues, quotas, discrimination, Hitler, the Klan....Sometime I think we'd be better off if we'd never been born."

"Sure," said his friend. "But who has that much luck--maybe one in fifty thousand?"

Four friends are sitting in a restaurant in Moscow. For a long time, nobody says a word. Finally, one man groans, "Oy."

"Oy vey," says a second man.

"Nu," says the third.

At this, the fourth man gets up from his chair and says, "Listen, if you fellows don't stop talking politics, I'm leaving!"

Bernstein visits a kosher Chinese restaurant on the Lower East Side, and to his great surprise, the Chinese waiter addresses him in Yiddish.

On the way out, as he is paying the Check, he says to the proprietor, "You run a nice restaurant. And a Chinese waiter who speaks Yiddish--what a wonderful gimmick that is."

"Not so loud," says the proprietor. "He thinks we're teaching him English."

Two immigrants meet on the street.

"How's by you?" asks one.

"Could be worse. And you?"

"Surviving. But I've been sick a lot this year, and it costing me a fortune. In the past five months I've spent over three hundred dollars on doctors and medicine."

"Ack, back home on that kind of money you could be sick for *two years*."

A man goes to consult a famous specialist about his medical problem.

"How much do I owe you?"

"My fee is fifty rubles," replies the physician.

"Fifty rubles? That's impossible.

"In your case," the doctor replies, "I suppose I could adjust my fee to thirty rubles."

"Thirty rubles for one visit? Ridiculous."

"Well, then, can you afford twenty rubles?"

"Who has so much money?"

"Look," replies the doctor, growing irritated. "Just give me five rubles and be gone."

"I can give you two rubles," says the man. "Take it or leave it."

"I don't understand you," says the doctor. "Why did you come to the most expensive doctor in Warsaw?"

"Listen, Doctor," replies the patient. "When it comes to my health, nothing is too expensive!"

Curses:

"May a child be named after you soon."

"May you be known for your hospitality to God's creatures: lice, rats, bedbugs, fleas, worms and maggots."

"May all your teeth fall out--except one, so you can have a toothache."

"May God answer all your prayers--and then may He mistake your worst enemy for you."

"May your bones be broken as often as the Ten Commandments."

A Destitute man went from door to door asking for alms because his house was destroyed in a fire.

"Have you a document from your rabbi affirming that your story is true?" he was asked.

"Oy," he replied. "That, too, was destroyed in the fire!"

A row of houses is destroyed by fire, and the community provides a fund for the victims. As the money is being disbursed, a poor man whose house was untouched by the fire comes for a handout.

"What do you mean by this?" he is asked. "Did you suffer from the fire?"

"Suffer?" he replies. "Believe me, I was sacred to death!"

B'nai Shalom Mission Statement

MEMBERSHIP IN B'NAI SHALOM is open to all members of the Church of JESUS CHRIST of Latter-day Saints interested in promoting the objectives of the Organization, whether or not such persons are of Jewish ancestry.

Objectives of this organization shall be carried on within the framework of existing LDS. programs and as follows:

- A. To promote the faith and activity of Jewish members in the Church
- B. To encourage, assist and promote Jewish genealogical research and Temple work among the House of Israel.
- C. To promote greater understanding of Jewish culture, language, traditions and attitudes through an organized educational program

- D. To offer assistance in all authorized LDS Church programs oriented towards Jewish peoples.
- E. To engage in other activities deemed appropriate in carrying out the objectives of the organization

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