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THE RULES OF POSTPONEMENT OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR

There are four different rules. They are carefully spelled out by Maimonides in his writings. These rules are as follows:

Rule #1: The Day of Trumpets (wrongly called "Rosh Hashanah") may not fall on a Sunday, Friday or Wednesday.

THIS RULE OF POSTPONEMENT HAS THE GREATEST IMPACT! The other three rules are built around this one, and without this rule the other three would not exist.

Two reasons are given for this rule. The first reason is a desire to not have the Day of Atonement fall on either a Friday (i.e. before a weekly Sabbath) or on a Sunday (i.e. immediately after a weekly Sabbath). Not permitting Trumpets to fall on a Wednesday or on a Friday prevents Atonement falling on a Friday or on a Sunday. The second reason is a desire to not have the 7th Day of Tabernacles fall on a Saturday, which would then be followed on Sunday by the Last Great Day. Not permitting Trumpets to fall on a Sunday prevents this from happening.

Therefore when the Molad of Tishri falls on one of these three forbidden days, then the Day of Trumpets is postponed by one day, making the previous year one day longer.

THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS RULE IS EXTREMELY FLIMSY AND ARTIFICIAL, AND WITHOUT ANY KIND OF BIBLICAL SUPPORT!

Rule #2: If the molad of Tishri is at noon or later (i.e. 18 Hours or later), then Trumpets must be postponed by one day. However, if such a postponement causes Trumpets to then fall on a Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, THEN it must be postponed by one more day, causing a total postponement of two days after the calculated molad. However, since the molad calculation is not really linked to the REAL time of the new moon conjunction, this rule is not really justifiable either.

Because of rule #1 two more rules are needed. They are to prevent the years from becoming too long or too short as a result of the compulsory postponements due to rule #1.

Rule #3: If the molad in an ordinary year (i.e. one with only 12 months) falls on Day 3, Hours 9, Parts 204 or later (later than 3:11:20 a.m. on a Tuesday), then Trumpets must be postponed two days to the Thursday (as Wednesday is not permitted). The reason given is as follows:

If the molad for Tishri is D3 H9 P204 in a common year, then the molad for Tishri the next year will fall D7 H18 P0. This is a simple matter of adding 12 lunations to the known molad. But the next year's molad falls at 18 Hours (i.e. at noon) and therefore Trumpets must be postponed from Day 7 to Day 1. But Day 1 is a Sunday, and therefore it must then be postponed still further to Day 2.

Now the reasoning is that the following year will have to be postponed one way or the other, because the molad falls at 18 Hours or later on a Saturday. Thus it is established that the next year will not start until a Monday. BUT if the current year then starts on a Tuesday anyway, it will have 356 days (from a Tuesday to a Sunday inclusive is 1 day short of 51 weeks, and the next year then starts on a Monday), and that is 1 more day than is deemed permissible.

12 lunations take 354,36 days, and so a year length of 353, 354 or 355 days is permitted. Those are the values on both sides of the actual value. To permit a year to contain 356 days, would be to depart too far from the theoretical new moons (i.e. the molads). Therefore this rule #3 was enacted to contain the year within what is considered to be "acceptable limits".

So when the Day of Trumpets is postponed from Tuesday 9 Hours 204 Parts to the Thursday, then the following year will only be 354 days long. This rule does not cause a similar problem for the previous year; it will still be within acceptable limits. Also, this rule does not apply in leap years because the molad after a leap year which started with Day 3 Hour 9 Parts 204 will lead to the next molad falling on a Monday. This means the year will end on a Sunday. So if the year starts on a Tuesday and ends on a Sunday, then it will be 1 day short of 55 weeks long, which is 384 days, and that is deemed to be perfectly acceptable.

Rule #4: If in a common year immediately after a leap year the molad falls on Day 2 Hours 15 Parts 588 or later (Monday 9:32:43 a.m.), then the Day of Trumpets is postponed to Tuesday. The reason given is as follows:

If the calculation is made backwards for 13 lunations, then the previous molad of Tishri will have been on a Tuesday at 18 Hours (i.e. 12 noon). Therefore the previous year had been postponed by two days to a Thursday. But if the previous year started on a Thursday and then ends on a Sunday (with Monday being the start of the next year), then that year would only have 54 weeks and 4 days = 382 days, which is one day too short for a leap year. Therefore a postponement from the Monday to the Tuesday lengthens the previous year by one day to 383 days, which is considered to be the acceptable minimum.

Notice that rule #3 and rule #4 are specifically needed because of the compulsory postponements required by rule #1.

ARE THESE RULES OF POSTPONEMENT REALLY VALID?

The justification given for rule #1 is as follows:

Friday is designated by God as the preparation day for the Sabbath. Therefore it would be A HARDSHIP to have the Day of Atonement on a Friday, preventing any preparation for the Sabbath. Similarly, it is considered inappropriate to have the Day of Atonement immediately AFTER a Sabbath.

THIS LINE OF REASONING IS NOTHING BUT CARNAL NONSENSE! SOMETHING THE PHARISEES WERE EXPERTS AT!

Similarly, it is not considered appropriate to have the 7th day of Tabernacles fall on a Saturday, and thus be followed by the Last Great Day on a Sunday. Once again there is supposedly no preparation day available for this Last Great Day. Also, since then both, the Day of Trumpets and the First Day of Tabernacles would also fall on a Sunday, difficulties in travelling to the Feast are cited as "legitimate objections" to the Feast starting on a Saturday evening.

AGAIN, THIS LINE OF REASONING IS NOT REALLY VALID!

The Encyclopedia Judaica, Volume 5, article "CALENDAR", page 44, states quite openly that the postponement rule #1 (they are called 'dehiyyot' in Hebrew) is:

"(1) MAINLY in order to prevent the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10) from falling on Friday or Sunday, and Hoshana Rabba (the seventh day of Sukkot; Tishri 21) from falling on Saturday."

Consider the following things:

1) God Himself planned it so that PENTECOST always falls on a Sunday! That makes it difficult to travel to Pentecost sites, and it makes it difficult to prepare for Pentecost. (In biblical times people would obviously have had to travel to Jerusalem BEFORE this double Sabbath; they didn't have cars, etc..)

2) The 1ST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD can and does fall on a Sunday (e.g. 1974). Again, here God permits a double Sabbath. It is obviously just as difficult to prepare for a Sunday 1st Day of Unleavened Bread as it is for a Sunday Last Great Day. It doesn't make sense to claim that God accepts the 1st Day of U.B. on a Sunday, but that God "INSPIRED" a rule so that the Last Great Day and the Day of Trumpets will never fall on a Sunday.

3) The 7TH DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD can and does fall on a Friday (e.g. 1971), again creating a double Sabbath. It should be obvious that it will be just as difficult to prepare for the weekly Sabbath when the 7th Day of U.B. falls on a Friday, as it is to prepare for the weekly Sabbath when the Day of Atonement falls on a Friday. So if it is not appropriate for the Day of Atonement to fall on a Friday, why should it be any more permissible to have the 7th Day of U.B. fall on a Friday?

4) There is no biblical evidence anywhere for permission to postpone a year because certain days would be considered to be "INCONVENIENT"! These postponements represent nothing more than carnal reasoning.

Nowhere does the Bible in any way state or imply approval for the idea of "postponing" the start of the year in order to avoid "inconvenient days" for the Holy Days.

5) These rules of postponement having nothing at all to do with supposed "astronomical requirements", as is readily conceded by many Jewish experts on the calendar. People in the Church of God, motivated by their desire to defend the Jewish calendar, will come up with such fanciful suggestions, but they can easily be shown to be totally without substance.

6) There is also no evidence that these postponements were ever used in the first century A.D. or earlier. All the available evidence actually opposes such rules having existed at that time. Arguments about the supposed year of Jesus Christ's crucifixion having required a postponement are totally lacking in logic, and easily disproved.

7) These Jewish postponement rules are to be rejected in their totality! There is not the slightest indication anywhere that God would approve of "postponing" a new moon (assuming that the molad calculations would arrive at correct new moon times, which they do not) in order to have the Holy Days fall on "more convenient days of the week".

Can we not see that the Jews have SHIFTED Pentecost to Sivan 6, that they have SHIFTED Passover to Nisan 15, and that they have SHIFTED Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles and the Last Great Day by postponing the whole calendar when it would otherwise be "inconvenient" to them?

QUESTION: Is there actually something that they HAVEN'T SHIFTED? Is it any wonder that God says:

YOUR NEW MOONS and YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS my soul HATETH: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. (Isaiah 1:14 AV)

The Hebrew word translated "new moons" is "chodesh", and it is the only Old Testament Hebrew word that could possibly be used by God to say "CALENDAR". And the Hebrew word translated as "appointed

feasts" is "mow'ed" and this word means "HOLY DAYS".

In this verse, which is addressed to Judah (Isaiah 1:1), God is saying in the plainest possible terms:

"I HATE YOUR CALENDAR AND YOUR HOLY DAYS; THEY ARE A TROUBLE TO ME, AND I AM TIRED OF PUTTING UP WITH THEM!"

I have yet to come across a person who supports the Jewish calendar, and who will face up to God's devastating indictment here in Isaiah 1:14! They just avoid acknowledging the existence of this verse!

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