

# The Islamic Jewish Calendar

## *How the Pilgrimage of the 9th of Av became the Hajj of the 9th of Dhu'al-Hijjah.*

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### **Abstract:**

The Islamic or *Hijra* calendar is made up of 12 lunar months. Traces of Jewish holidays like Rosh Hashanah<sup>1</sup>, Yom Kippur<sup>2</sup>, *Pesach* (Passover)<sup>3</sup> and *Shavout* (Pentacost) are still evident in this calendar. However, because of structural changes in the Islamic calendar, the Jewish and Islamic "celebration" of those holidays coincides only once in about 33 years. It is known that the Jews of Arabia felt that they were the "true mourners of Zion" and carried customs of mourning for the destruction of the Temple to extremes not matched by Jews elsewhere<sup>4</sup>. And we can assume that the mourning for the Temple influenced pre-Islamic culture to some extent. But even so, it is surprising to find one of the most holy days of the Islamic calendar -- the 9<sup>th</sup> of *Dhu al Hijja*, the Day of Arafat, the height of the Hajj pilgrimage -- corresponding to the the Jewish fast day of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av (which commemorates the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE). And the fast of Ramadan to be based on the Jewish *Sefirat haOmer*<sup>5</sup> which among other things is a time of mourning for the hundreds of thousands killed after Bar Kochba's failed revolt in 135 CE.

### The Modern Islamic calendar

The Islamic calendar is made up of twelve lunar months. The Hijra year is therefore 354.3667 days long. This means that any given month will migrate throughout the solar year. Each Islamic year starts about 11 days earlier each (Gregorian solar) year. The Islamic year is considered to have started at sunset of Thursday, July 15, 622 in the Julian calendar.

The Arithmetic Islamic Calendar has twelve months of alternately 29 and 30 days, the last month having 30 days only in leap years:

	Month	Days
1	Muharram	30
2	Safar	29
3	Rabi' I	30
4	Rabi' II	29
5	Jumada I	30
6	Jumada II	29
7	Rajab	30
8	Sha'ban	29
9	Ramadan	30
10	Shawwal	29
11	Dhu al Qa'da	30
12	Dhu al Hijja	29/30

The leap year occurs in the 2nd, 5th, 7th, 10th, 13th, 16th, 18th, 21st, 24th, 26th and 29th years of a 30 year cycle. A leap year allows the calculated monthly cycle to remain in synch with the appearance of New Moons.

### *Quick facts:*

The Gregorian Calendar, the most common one in use today, measures the time it takes for the Earth to rotate completely around the Sun, 365.2422 days. It is usually abbreviated CE (or AD) and BCE (or BC). Since 1582 CE, most countries have used the Gregorian Calendar.

The Julian Calendar, made official by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE, measures the time it takes for the Earth be under exactly the same constellations, 365.25 days. (It actually takes 365.256 days). In 1582 CE it was 10 days short and abandoned by edict of Pope Gregory XIII, and replaced by the Gregorian calendar above.

Lunar Calendars, including Islamic and Jewish calendars, measure the time it takes for the Moon to orbit the Earth 12 times, 354.3667 days. The lunar calendar falls short of the solar calendar by 11 days a year. This deficiency can be made up by occasionally inserting a 13<sup>th</sup> month, in a method called "intercalation".

The Islamic (Hijri) Calendar is usually abbreviated AH in Western languages from the Latinized *Anno Hejirae* "In the year of the Hijra." The Jewish Calendar is abbreviated AM from the Latinized *Anno Mundi* "Year of [the creation of] the World".

However, the arithmetic Islamic Calendar is not acceptable according to Islamic Law. The beginning of a new month requires physical observation by religious authorities of the new moon. Thus the calculated dates may be off by a day or two and may even vary from country to country. In practice this is most important for the beginning and end of *Ramadan*, the month of fasting and for the feast of '*Eid al Adha*.

### Jewish roots

There have been several attempts to trace the roots of Jewish aspects of the Islamic Calendar. The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam says: "The starting-point for a comparison between the Islamic and the Jewish Calendar is the optional fast-day Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram, which is an Islamic continuation of the Day of Atonement".<sup>6</sup> G. Widengren says: "If Muharram is comparable with Tishri, then the month of Ramadhan is comparable to the Jewish month of Sivan, the month of the Jewish Feast of Weeks. Islamic tradition lays down that that it was on the nights of Ramadhan, ... *Lailat Al-Kadr* ... that Muhammed received the revelation of the Koran. ... there is a clear parallel between the circumstances in which Moses received the Torah and those in which Muhammed received the Koran".<sup>7</sup>

In order to trace the roots of Jewish aspects of the Islamic Calendar it is necessary to trace the history of the Jewish Calendar from Temple times (1<sup>st</sup> Century CE) until the time of Caliph 'Umar 639 CE.

### The Temple Calendar and the Sanhedrin

The Temple Calendar regulated the exact dates of the three Biblical Pilgrimages: *Succoth* (Tabernacles), *Pesach* (Passover) and *Shavuoth* (Pentacost) holidays, see Table 1. During the Second Temple period, there would be an *aliyat regel* or pilgrimage of hundreds of thousands of Jews and non-Jewish Temple sympathizers from Israel, Rome, Persia and Arabia to the Temple Mount for sacrifices and festive meals on these holidays.

Table 1, Original Second Temple Calendar With Three Biblical Pilgrimages

7. Tishrei (SUCCOTH)
8. Cheshvan
9. Kislev
10. Tevet
11. Shevat
12. Adar
1. Nisan (PESACH)
2. Iyyar
3. Sivan (SHAVUOTH)
4. Tammuz
5. Av
6. Elul

The beginning of the new month was determined by visual sighting of the crescent moon, as cross-examined by the High Priest or his emissaries. It was at the High Priests discretion that an additional month was inserted to keep the calendar from drifting over the solar year. A month called *Adar Sheni* or Adar II was added during leap years which occurred roughly every third year. In addition, other changes were made every 19th year.

Based on the lunar sightings an ordinary (non-leap) year may contain 353, 354, or 355 days. A leap year with an additional month may contain 383, 384, or 385 days. The three lengths of the years are termed, "deficient", "regular", and "complete", respectively. A deficient month *chodesh chaser* has 29 days. Full month *chodesh maleh* has 30 days. If clouds did not hinder the sighting of new moon then the deficient and full months alternated in order.

In the second century BCE, when Israel was under Egyptian Ptolemaic rule, this function was taken over from the High Priest by the President or *Nasi* of the Sanhedrin. Upon the death of High Priest Shimon HaTzaddik, his brother Elazar became High Priest. The spiritual or Rabbinic leadership, including the declaration of new months and additional months, was inherited by Shimon's disciple, Antigonus of Socho.

## The Destruction of the Temple, 9<sup>th</sup> Av, 70 CE – a new pilgrimage

In 70 CE, Titus son of Vespasian, led Roman and auxiliary forces against the first Jewish revolt. Tiberius Alexander, nephew of Jewish philosopher Philo was appointed Chief of Staff of invading Roman forces. Jerusalem and the Temple were captured and destroyed after five-month siege and the revolt was crushed. The Temple was destroyed and the Holiday pilgrimages ceased. The Jewish historian Josephus gives indications of more than three million Jews in all of Judea and Galilee and estimated that more than a million died in the siege of Jerusalem. The Roman historian Tacitus estimated 600,000 deaths. Tens of thousands were sold into slavery and many taken to Rome. A special Roman tax was levied on all Jews in the Roman Empire since, according to the Romans, Jupiter Capitolinus (god of Rome) had defeated the God of Jerusalem. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai, who fled during siege, re-established the Jewish Sanhedrin council for national leadership in Yavneh (Jamnia).

Table 2. Post Second Temple Calendar With Fourth Extra-Biblical Pilgrimage

7. Tishrei (SUCCOT)
8. Cheshvan
9. Kislev
10. Tevet
11. Shevat
12. Adar
1. Nisan (PESACH)
2. Iyyar
3. Sivan (SHAVUOT)
4. Tammuz
5. Av (9 <sup>TH</sup> AV)
6. Elul

In 118 CE Hadrian ascended the Roman throne. In the second year of his reign, he at length overcame Bar Kocheba's second Jewish revolt, through means of his general Julius Severus, who had been previously stationed in Britain (England). He captured the uncommonly large and strong city of Bither, and caused such wasting and destruction in Palestine that they exceeded the misery produced by Titus. He destroyed 50 strong places and 985 towns and villages, and there fell 580,000 Jews by the sword, besides the large numbers who were carried off by famine, fire, and the pestilence, and not counting those who were dragged away into foreign lands, and sold as slaves. Near Hebron, four slaves were sold for one seah, about a peck of barley. Near Beitar lay the dead, in a stretch of 18 mills (13½ English miles), for years without interment, till the reign of the succeeding emperor; because Hadrian would not permit the slain to be buried.<sup>8</sup>

Roman Emperor Hadrian also caused a wall to be built around Jerusalem, and allowed no Jews to come even within the environs of the city.<sup>9</sup> It was only at a later period that they were permitted to go to the surrounding mountains, probably the Mount of Olives, to cast a mournful, sorrowing look towards the seat of their ancient glory. Later yet, they purchased from the Greek and Roman garrison the permission to enter its precincts once a year, on the day of its destruction, the 9th of Av (August), in order to weep there for their mournful fate, and the fall and dispersion of Israel.<sup>10</sup> This became the fourth Extra-Biblical Pilgrimage, see Table 2 above.

## The Disbanding of the Sanhedrin, 358 CE

Around 200 CE, Yehudah ha-Nasi (the Prince) compiled the *Mishna* from the various interpretative efforts and judicial compilations of the Rabbinic schools of the first and second centuries. The Roman government regarded Yehudah as their own paid government official with the status of Prefect, yet the government become increasingly antagonistic to the Jewish leadership. The government repeatedly attacked the Jewish calendar as a symbol of Jewish nationalism. Eventually the fixing of the Jewish calendar by observation of the New Moon was supplanted by a 'secret' method of astronomical calculation (the 19 year Babylonian cycle).<sup>11</sup>

In 358 CE, Emperor Theodosius forbade the Sanhedrin to assemble in reaction to previous Emperor Julian's pro-Jewish stance. An Arithmetic Jewish Calendar was adopted at

clandestine and perhaps the Sanhedrin's last meeting. Growing disunity over fixing of the Jewish calendar between the Jews of Syrian Antioch and of Palestine compelled *Nasi* Rabbi Hillel II to publish the astronomical (calculations) principles for regulation of the Jewish calendar.<sup>12</sup> The Jews of Arabia did not accept this ruling. They continued to require human sighting of moon and stars, later leading to use of crescent as an identifying political symbol.

In 425 CE, Rabbi Gamliel VI, the last patriarch or *Nasi* passed away. Rabbi Gamliel was a descendant of the *Tanna*, Hillel I (d. 10 C.E.), who was a descendant of King David. Rabbi Gamliel was a renowned physician and respected by the Emperor Theodosius II. This did not prevent Theodosius II from abolishing the position of *Nasi* when Gamliel died without a male heir, thus ending the last semblance of Jewish national organization in Israel.<sup>13</sup>

### The Pre-Islamic Calendar

The Jewish pilgrimages of *Succot*, *Pesach* and *Shavuot* were a time of truce. On these occasions all male Jews, or at least community representatives, were required to come to Jerusalem "to appear before the Lord" (Deut. 27:7; Neh. 8:9-12). The promise that God would protect their homes while the males were absent was relied upon (Ex. 34:23, 24). Easton's Bible Dictionary says "We never read of an enemy invading the land at the time of the three festivals [until 66 CE]"<sup>14</sup> These periods of truce, lacking their focus as a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, became sacred months where war was proscribed, see Table 3.

Table 3. Original Non-Intercalated, Non-Commuted Pre-Islamic Calendar  
With Four Sacred Months

1. Safar al-Muzaffar	7. Tishrei
2. Rabi al-Awal	8. Cheshvan
3. Rabi al-Thaani	9. Kislev
4. Jumaada al-Awal	10. Tevet
5. Jumaada al-Thaani	11. Shevat
6. Rajab al-Murajjab	12. Adar
7. Shabaan al-Muazzam	1. Nisan
8. Ramadhaan al-Mubarak	2. Iyyar
9. Shawwaal al-Mukarram	3. Sivan
10. Dhu al-Qa'dah	4. Tammuz
11. Dhu al-Hijjah	5. Av
12. Muharram al-Haraam	6. Elul

Note that some of the names of the pre-Islamic months appear to be related to their Jewish counterparts, for example *Safar* is related etymologically to *Shofar* -- the trumpet blown during the holidays in *Tishrei*; *Shawwaal* related etymologically to *Sivan*; and *Dhu al-Hijjah* related to *Hag* or Holiday Pilgrimage.

The lack of a Sanhedrin or *Nasi* to decide when to insert extra months into the Calendar (to keep it from drifting) created confusion and perhaps incited defiance against Rome<sup>15</sup>. The historian M. de Sacy's held that parts of Arabia practiced a purely lunar calculation and other parts practiced a form of intercalation with their own *Nasi*.<sup>16</sup> Hakim Muhammad Said relates that the Arabs had two calendars: one was with intercalation, the other without it. The custom of *kabisa*, intercalation, was current among the Bedouins but not among the townsmen.<sup>17</sup>

It appears that in practice because the *Ka'aba* became the central focus for Pilgrimages, one common system or calculation was accepted over the whole Peninsula. The time of the annual pilgrimage was then coordinated by generally accepted practice, sometimes according to the lunar calendar and sometimes according to the lunar-solar calendar.<sup>18</sup> Originally, the

year of the Elephant (570 CE) was used by the Arabs for counting the first year of their era<sup>19</sup>. Afterwards, the lunar calendar of the Muslims began with the Hijra of the Prophet (622 CE). The previous lunar calendar of the Arabs was totally abrogated in the 10th year of the Hijra on the occasion of the Prophet's address at the *Hajjat al-Wada'*. The strictly lunar calendar became accepted, and it didn't allow for any addition or modification.

### The Pre-Islamic Week

According to Islamic tradition, a "day" goes from twilight to twilight when color can no longer be distinguished in thread. It appears that this has been Arab custom for hundreds of years. It also agrees with Jewish custom. The Jewish system of threads was required for distinguishing the *Tzitzit*, Biblically commanded blue threads worn on prayer shawls. This has led more than one historian to propose that early Muslims wore prayer shawls.

Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (vol. iii, p. 127) says that the Muslims have borrowed the concept of the week and the festivals from the Jews. The concept of the week in Islam derives from spiritual purgation and self-reform, while the name of the last day, al-Jum'a, is Qur'anic. The days have been serially named and continue to correspond to Jewish custom even today. There continues to be agreement as to the *Shabat* or Sabbath day.

Table 4, Correspondence of Islamic and Jewish Weekdays

Islamic	Jewish	English
yawm al-a'had	yom rishon (yom echad)	First day (day one)
yawm al-athnayn	yom sheni (yom shnayim)	Second day (day two)
yawm al-thalatha	yom shaleshi (yom shalosh)	Third day (day three)
yawm al-arba'a	yom rivi'i (yom arba'a)	Fourth day (day four)
yawm al-khamis	yom khameshi (yom khamesh)	Fifth day
yawm al-jum'a QUR'ANIC	yom shishi	Sixth day
yawm al-sabt	yom shabat	Shabbat (day of rest)

### The Arab-Jewish Sanhedrin, 412 CE

Islamic historians give a series of those who held the post of *Nasi*; or officer charged with the duty of intercalation and commutation. Intercalation is the privilege of adding an additional month. Commutation is the privilege of exchanging a sacred month for a regular month.

The first of these was Sarir, of a stock related to the Qureish, whose genealogy would make him sixty or seventy years of age at the close of the fourth century; so that (if we trust to this tradition) the origin of intercalation may be placed about the close of the fourth, or early in the fifth, century M.C. de Perceval calculates the intercalation from 412 A.D. He encloses a detailed table at the close of his first volume.<sup>20</sup> Alternatively, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* reports that in pre-Hadithic times, intercalation was carried out by the Fuqaim, who were a clan of the Qinana.<sup>21</sup>

The responsibility for announcing the date of the Hajj was entrusted to a man from Banu Qinana named Qalammas<sup>22</sup>. He announced on the occasion of the Hajj when the next pilgrimage was to be performed, and which month the thirteenth month was to follow. The first Qalammas was an individual, but then the name became specific to the office. We thus see a sizeable number of the Qalammasa. The Qalammasi calendar was based upon lunar computation, and another link in the historical chain is provided by the fact that among the Arabs the months of Rajab, Dhu'l-Qa'da, Dhu'l-Hijja, and Muharram were regarded as the months of peace and sanctity. But, with this calendar, these months also began to undergo changes, and it was one of the responsibilities of the Qalammasa to announce as to what months would be the sacred months in the following year. They are called *al-Nasi'* in Arabic.<sup>23</sup>

The traditional explanation for intercalation of an extra month is that the Arabs were seized by the malady of idolatry three hundred years before the advent of the Prophet. The Hajj for them was nothing more than a big festival. Because their calendar being lunar, this feast was sometimes held in seasons when the crops had not been harvested and were not yet ready for sale. They, therefore, devised the method of *kabzsa*, according to which a year sometimes consisted of 13 months. However, this spontaneous derivation of an intercalated month seems improbable. We see not only the term *Nasi* appropriated for Arab use, but at least until 541 CE, the Jewish and Arab calendars coincided.

Belisarius' encounter with the Hajj, eighty years before the rise of Islam, 541 CE

In the year 541 CE. Belisarius summoned a council of war against Persia. Two Roman officers in command of Syrian garrisons declined to follow the army to Nisibis, on the plea that their absence would leave Syria and Phenicia exposed to the attacks of Mundzir. Belisarius argued that as the summer solstice was at hand, when the Arabs devoted two months to the rites of their religion without resorting to arms, there was no cause for apprehension; and he promised to let them go when that period was expired. These were the months of Meccan pilgrimage: and hence we learn that Mundzir and the majority of his Arabs followed the religion of the Hejaz.<sup>24</sup>

The summer solstice June 21, 541 CE would have fallen on 10th of Jumaada al-Thaani according to the strictly Lunar Calendar now in Islamic use, six months too early for the Hajj pilgrimage. This means that intercalation must have been in use in the years before the Prophet. If we assume the Jewish intercalation currently used, the solstice would have fallen on Dhu al-Qa'dah (Tammuz) – the first of the "two months". If we assume a simple 3 year intercalation the solstice would have fallen on 10<sup>th</sup> of Dhu al-Hijjah, the correct date.

We also see from this that the third sacred month had been commutated, that is, Shawwaal had been exchanged with Dhu al-Qa'daha. This allowed for a convenient contiguous period of cessation of hostilities, see Table 5 below.

Table 5. Pre-Islamic Calendar after Commutation of Third Sacred Month (Dhu al-Qa'dah for Shawwaal)

1. Safar al-Muzaffar	7. Tishrei
2. Rabi al-Awal	8. Cheshvan
3. Rabi al-Thaani	9. Kislev
4. Jumaada al-Awal	10. Tevet
5. Jumaada al-Thaani	11. Shevat
6. Rajab al-Murajjab	12. Adar
7. Shabaan al-Muazzam	1. Nisan
8. Ramadhaan al-Mubarak	2. Iyyar
9. Shawwaal al-Mukarram	3. Sivan
10. Dhu al-Qa'dah	4. Tammuz
11. Dhu al-Hijjah	5. Av
12. Muharram al-Haraam	6. Elul

Intercalation, adding an extra month

The Islamic historians are not agreed upon the nature of the intercalation practiced at Mecca. Some say seven months were interposed every nineteen years; others nine months every twenty-four years. But according to Muir: "both systems are evidently suppositions, being formed on a calculation of the true solar year; the first of these systems we know to have been introduced by the Jews only about the end of the fourth century, and it is not probable

that it would be so immediately adopted at Mecca; and neither system would answer the requirement or bringing the month of pilgrimage in two centuries from Autumn back to Spring, at which season we find it in the time of the Prophet. Other Islamic writers say that the practice was to interpose a month at the close of every third year: and this is the system recognized, apparently on good grounds, by M.C. de Perceval."<sup>25</sup>

Table 6. Intercalated Calendar "Leap Year"  
Based On Babylonian Method

1. Safar al-Muzaffar	7. Tishrei
2. Rabi al-Awal	8. Cheshvan
3. Rabi al-Thaani	9. Kislev
4. Jumaada al-Awal	10. Tevet
5. Jumaada al-Thaani	11. Shevat
6. Rajab al-Murajjab	12. Adar I
Rajab al-Thaani?	13. Adar II
7. Shabaan al-Muazzam	1. Nisan
8. Ramadhaan al-Mubarak	2. Iyyar
9. Shawwaal al-Mukarram	3. Sivan
10. Dhu al-Qa'dah	4. Tammuz
11. Dhu al-Hijjah	5. Av
12. Muharram al-Haraam	6. Elul

Hakim Muhammad Said, as mentioned above, relates that the Arabs had two calendars: one with intercalation, the other without. The custom of *kabisa*, intercalation, was current among the Bedouins but not among the townsmen (including Quraish).<sup>26</sup> The uncontested acceptance of the strictly lunar calendar by 'Umar in 639 CE suggests that a strictly lunar calendar was in continual use by a minority of people in Arabia.

According to M.C. de Perceval's theory, there were three calendars: Strictly lunar, Jewish lunar-solar (19 year), and Quraish's lunar-solar (3 year) innovation. The calendar in use by the Quraish originally was strictly lunar. Around 412 CE, the Quraish appointed their first *Nasi*, Sarir, who in approximation of the Jews interjected of a month at the close of every third year *Nasa*.<sup>27</sup> This change appears to be intended to make the season of pilgrimage correspond with the autumn, when a supply of food for the vast number of pilgrims would be easily procurable. But this intention would be defeated by the slight imperfection of the calculation. A solar year was still shorter by one day and a fraction than this lunar-solar year, and in time the pilgrimage began to drift slightly forward each year. After two centuries, when the Prophet Muhammad prohibited intercalation (approx. 631 CE), the days of pilgrimage had moved from October gradually backward to March.<sup>28</sup>

According to a theory that the author would like to propose, there were only two calendars: Strictly lunar and Jewish lunar-solar (19 year). The calendar in use by the Quraish nobles in Mecca and other townspeople became strictly lunar after the abolishment of the Sanhedrin (see Table 9, below). The Jews of Yatrib (Medina) practiced a form of intercalation based either on an arithmetic method, some locally appointed *Nasi*, or in conjunction with the Babylonian academies. The farmers and Bedouin began to adopt Medina's lunar-solar calendar, as it was more useful for agricultural and livestock purposes. By 541 CE the Jewish lunar-solar calendar was almost universally adopted, even the Prophet himself adopted it upon his migration to Medina in 622 CE (see Ashura below). Due to various reasons the Prophet rejected the Jewish lunar-solar calendar in 631 CE and (re-)established precedence for the strictly lunar calendar of Quraish.

Commutation of a sacred for a secular month.

Coupled with this, and styled by the same name *Nasa*, was the privilege of commuting the last of the three continuous sacred months, for the one succeeding it (Safar), in which case Muharram became secular, and Safar sacred. It is probable that this innovation was introduced by Qussai, who wished, by abridging the long three months' cessation of hostilities, to facilitate meaningful warfare, and to obtain for himself the power of holding Muharram either sacred or secular, as might best suit his purpose. See Table 5 above and Table 7 below.

The first who, besides the regular intercalation, also commuted a sacred for a secular month, was according to tradition Hodzeifa, the second successor of Sarir (the first who held the office of Intercalator). This serves to bring the origin of the system of commutation within the era of Qussai, as supposed by M.C. de Perceval.

Table 7. Pre-Islamic Calendar After Commutation of First Sacred Month (Muharam for Safar)

1. Muharram al-Haraam	7. Tishrei
2. Safar al-Muzaffar	8. Cheshvan
3. Rabi al-Awal	9. Kislev
4. Rabi al-Thaani	10. Tevet
5. Jumaada al-Awal	11. Shevat
6. Jumaada al-Thaani	12. Adar I
7. Rajab al-Murajjab	13. Adar II
8. Shabaan al-Muazzam	1. Nisan
9. Ramadhaan al-Mubarak	2. Iyyar
10. Shawwaal al-Mukarram	3. Sivan
11. Dhu al-Qa'dah	4. Tammuz
12. Dhu al-Hijjah	5-6. Av-Elul

Besides exchanging Muharram for Safar (which months are hence sometimes called the "two Safars,") some traditions say that the power also existed of commuting the isolated sacred month (Rajab) for the one succeeding it, i.e. Shaban; whence they were called the "two Shabans." When this was done, it became lawful to war in Mohurram or Rajab; and Safar or Shaban acquired the sacredness of the months for which they were substituted.<sup>29</sup> Muir is inclined to think that the system of commutation was older than that of intercalation; but it had perhaps fallen out of use, Qussai may have restored it to practice more prominently than before.

Table 8. Pre-Islamic Calendar After Commutation of Second Sacred Month (Rajab for Shabaan)

1. Muharram al-Haraam	7. Tishrei
2. Safar al-Muzaffar	8. Cheshvan
3. Rabi al-Awal	9. Kislev
4. Rabi al-Thaani	10. Tevet
5. Jumaada al-Awal	11. Shevat
6. Jumaada al-Thaani	12. Adar I
7. Rajab al-Murajjab	13. Adar II
8. Shabaan al-Muazzam	1. Nisan
9. Ramadhaan al-Mubarak	2. Iyyar
10. Shawwaal al-Mukarram	3. Sivan
11. Dhu al-Qa'dah	4. Tammuz
12. Dhu al-Hijjah	5-6. Av-Elul

## The Prophet's Encounter with Yom Kippur (Ashura), 622 CE

There are traditions found in Sunni books to the effect that the Prophet on migrating to Medina found the Jews fasting on the 10th of Muharram.<sup>30</sup> He asked them why, and was told: "It is an auspicious day; it is the day when God delivered the children of Israel from their enemy; and, therefore, Moses fasted on that day [because of the broken tablets]." The Prophet said, "I am worthier of Moses [more 'Jewish'] than you are." Thereupon, he fasted on that day and ordered [the Muslims] to fast. The importance of this fast to the Prophet may be judged from another tradition narrated in al-Sahih of al-Bukhari: "The Prophet ordered a man from the [tribe of] Aslam: Announce to the people that whoever has eaten should fast the rest of the day, and whoever has not eaten should fast [the whole day], because today is the 'Ashura [10th day of Muharram]." In another hadith 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr said: "Al-Muharram is the month of God. It is the beginning of the year. It is used as the beginning of the era. In al-Muharram, the Ka'bah is clothed, and money is coined. There is one day in al-Muharram on which repenting sinners are forgiven." This "day of forgiveness" on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the first month of the year was apparently *Yom Kippur*.

If the Jews had their own calendar and month names as they do now, the "10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram" would not have been used to describe that day unless Arab Muharram and the Jewish Tishrei were equivalent. But while there seems to be some disagreement as to whether the Prophet kept the Sabbath or not<sup>31</sup>, it is clear that he was not keeping Yom Kippur when he passed by the Jews of Medina who were fasting that day. The Prophet is described as if he were unaware of the fast, yet quite willing to accept it. One possibility is the Prophet was simply unaware of Jewish customs, yet immediately willing to adopt them. This seems improbable. Another possibility is that the Jews and the Prophet were keeping different, yet related calendars (one lunar the other lunar-solar).

The commentator of *Mishkatul-Masabih* notes that "it was in the second year [623 CE], because in the first year the Prophet had arrived at Medina after *Ashura*, in Rabi al-awal." This is an important observation, because it assumes the Prophet kept the same strictly lunar calendar that is in use today. If the Prophet arrived in Rabi al-Awal, he arrived two months after Muharram, the month containing *Ashura*, and would have to wait until the next year for the above event to take place.

However in that year the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei fell on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Rabi al-awal. So another interpretation of the event, one that agrees more readily with the *hadith*, would be the first day of the Prophet's arrival in Media was Yom Kippur. This would mean that the Prophet's declaration "today is the 'Ashura", amounted to an adoption of the 19 year lunar-solar calendar.

## Intercalation and Commutation prohibited by the Qur'an, 631 CE

If the Prophet adopted the 19 year lunar-solar cycle, it was soon canceled. Al-Tabari in his *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l Muluk* gives the following exposition:

*The Prophet on the occasion of the Hajjat al Wada' said: O people! Time after undergoing a full revolution has returned to its original state; the day Allah created the heavens and the earth. (vol. iii, p.150, Cairo 1969).<sup>32</sup>*

The Qur'an Chapter 9, refers to twelve (12) months, and prohibits the manipulation of the Calendar. Sura at-Taubah 9: 36 and 37, specifically deals with the manipulation of the Calendar by the Jewish system by intercalation:

*Surely the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah's ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred; that is the right reckoning; therefore be not unjust to yourselves regarding them, and fight the*

*polytheists all together as they fight you all together; and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil). (9:36)*

*Postponing (of the sacred month) is only an addition in unbelief, wherewith those who disbelieve are led astray, violating it one year and keeping it sacred another, that they may agree in the number (of months) that Allah has made sacred, and thus violate what Allah has made sacred; the evil of their doings is made fair-seeming to them; and Allah does not guide the unbelieving people. (9:37)*

*He it is who appointed the sun a splendor and the moon a light and measured for her stages, that ye might know the number of the years, and the reckoning. (10:5)*

The purport of these Qur'anic verses is that we must take the moon to be the source of the calendar, and any other system that would be unnatural will not succeed, being non-natural and, therefore, it is that the Islamic calendar is based on the strictly lunar system. Its beginnings can be traced to the Prophet, but, as a regular feature, it came into its own during the time of the second Caliph 'Umar I.

Caliph 'Umar, Started the Muslim Calendar, 639 CE

In 639 CE, Caliph 'Umar I started the Muslim calendar counting it from the lunar month, Muharram, in the year of the Prophet's migration to Medina, 16 July in 622 CE.

Sheikh Abdel-Rahman El-Gabarti (d. 1825), the greatest known chronicler of late 18th- and early 19th-century Egypt, recounted that Umar Ibn Al-Khattab was the first "setter of dates" of the Islamic era. According to his account, Abu Moussa Al-Ash'ari wrote to Umar Ibn Al-Khattab in distress: "Letters have reached us from the Commander of the Faithful, but we do not know which to obey. We read a document dated [the month of] Sha'ban, but we do not know which of the Sha'ban is meant: is it the month that has passed, or that which is to come?" Umar is then said to have gathered the Companions of the Prophet and told them: "Money is flowing in, and what we have apportioned bears no date. How are we to reach a way of regulating this matter?"<sup>33</sup>

Al-Hurmuzan -- taken as a prisoner of war when the Muslims conquered Persia, and converted to Islam at Umar's hands -- then replied: "The Persians have a system of tabulation known as mah ruz, and they base it on the victories of their kings." According to Al-Hurmuzan, "the word was thereafter Arabised as 'murakh', of which the root is 'tarikh' (history)." Umar then requested that the assembled notables "create a history for the people, that they may carry out their transactions by it, and that their dealings be accurately timed." Some of those who had gathered were Jewish converts to Islam, and they told him: "We have a system of tabulation like him, which is based on Alexander [the Great]." The others, however, were not satisfied, finding this system too lengthy [too far back]; one group suggested that the Persian history be followed. Others argued: "Their dates are not based on any specific beginning; whenever one of them became king, their history began again, and they discounted what had gone before." The assembly eventually agreed that Islamic history would begin with the Prophet's Flight, because none of those present disagreed on the date of that event, whereas that of the Prophet's birth, and when exactly he had received the first Divine message, aroused some controversy<sup>34</sup>.

There are no such differences of opinion with regard to the date of the Hijra as there are with regard to the time when the call first came to Muhammad and with regard to the day and year of his birth. And although the date of his death is fixed, it is no pleasant thought to use (such a sad event) as the beginning of the era. The Hijra, moreover, coincided in time with the success of the religion (millah) of Islam, the frequent arrival of embassies, and the Muslim ascent to Power. It is a time of blessings and a very impressive (historical) event. The Hijra took place on Tuesday, Rabi 1, 8th. The first of that year -that is, al-Muharram-fell on a Thursday according to the average (calculation). After this had become generally known, it was considered (the correct date). However, according to observation (of the new moon) and

astronomical(?) calculation, the day fell on a Friday. The author of the Nihayat al-idrak said that (the Hijra) was used, and for all future times the era was counted from it. Agreement on this matter was reached in the year 17 of the Hijra, the fourth year of the caliphate of 'Umar. Until then, each year (after the Hijra) was called after its main event, and this was used for dating purposes. The first year of the Prophet's residence in Medina was thus called: 'The permission to travel'. The second year was called: 'The year of the command to fight'. The third year: 'The year of the test', and so on. Afterwards, the custom of naming the year after the main events was abandoned.

When the need for toning up the administration of the Caliphate arose during the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and it became necessary to have a calendar so as to fix the dates. The Caliph, who was so well aware of the sunna of the Prophet and of his temperament, instead of fixing the standard from the birth of the Prophet, which heralded an entirely new chapter in the history of man or his death which had placed such a heavy responsibility upon the shoulders of the Caliphs or some other event, he ordered the adoption of the Hijra as the basic date for the Islamic calendar .

Al-Hakim narrates the tradition on the authority of Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri that when the Prophet came to Medina, he ordered the introduction of the Muslim era, but this tradition has been held to be weak in authority by the Muhaddithun. The authoritative tradition, according to them, says that the custom of imprinting dates upon deeds, documents and epistles was given currency to during the time of the second Caliph according to the instructions left by the Prophet himself. (F. Rosenthal, A History of Muslim Historiography, Leiden 1952, p.309 .).

Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sakhawi (d. 902) in his al-I'lan bi'l-Tawbikh li-man dhamma ahl al-tawrikh gives the following details about the origin of the Islamic calendar: "A report on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas states that there existed no era in Medina when the Prophet arrived there. People came to use an era a month or two after his arrival. This continued until Muhammad's death. Then, the use of an era was discontinued, and there was none during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and the first four years of the caliphate of 'Umar. Then, the (Muslim) era was established." Umar is reported to have said to the assembled dignitaries among the men around Muhammad: "The income is considerable. What we have distributed has been without fixed dates. How can we remedy that?" One answer came from al-Hurmuzan. He had been king of alAhwaz. After his capture during the conquest of Persia, he had been brought to 'Umar and had become a Muslim. He said: "The Persians have a (method of) calculation which they call mahroz and which they ascribe to their Sassanid rulers. The word mahroz was arabicized as mu'arrakh, and the infinitive ta'rikh was formed from it.

'Umar chose the strictly lunar calendar as the official calendar, and no intercalation is permitted. This calendar had been kept by a minority of Arabs and had been in progress according to the lunar cycle since 358 CE, see Table 9.

Table 9. Showing base of Islamic Calendar selected by 'Umar to be 358 CE.  
When the Islamic Calendar matches Jewish Intercalculated Calendar

Lunar-Solar and Lunar calendars correspond	Historical Event
4-2 BCE	
29-31 CE	
62-4 CE	70 CE, Temple Destroyed
5-6 CE	
:	
127-9 CE	135 CE, Bar Kochba
160-1 CE	
:	
323-4 CE	

355-7 CE	358 CE, Hillel's fixes Jewish Calendar
388-9 CE	
420-2 CE	438 CE, Empress Eudokia allows prayer on Temple Mount on days other than 9 <sup>th</sup> Av.
453-5 CE	
486-7 CE	
518-20 CE	525 CE, Dionysius Exigus fixes Christian calendar
551-2 CE	
583-5 CE	
616-7 CE	622 CE, The Hegira
	639 CE, Caliph 'Umar I starts the Muslim calendar
648-50 CE	
681-3 CE	
:	
1984-5 CE	
2016-8 CE	

The religious observances, thus perpetuated by Qussai, were in substance the same as in the time of the Prophet, and with some modifications by 'Umar are the same as we still find practiced at the present day. The grand centre of the religion was the Ka'aba; to visit which, to kiss the black stone, and to make seven circuits round the sacred edifice, was at all times regarded as a holy privilege. The result is essentially the same Islamic Calendar that is in use today.

#### Religious observances of the Kaaba

##### Omra or lesser pilgrimage

The lesser pilgrimage (Omra or Hajj at Asghar), which includes these acts and the rite of hastily passing to and fro seven times between the little hills of Safa and Marwa close by the Kaaba, may be performed with merit at any season of the year, but especially in the sacred month of Rajab which forms a break in the middle of the eight secular months. Before entering the sacred territory, the votary assumes the pilgrim garb (ihram), and at the conclusion of the ceremonies shaves his head, and pares his nails.

##### Hajj or greater pilgrimage

The greater pilgrimage (Hajj al Akbar) involves all the ceremonies of the lesser, but can be performed only in the holy month pilgrimage Dzul Hijja. It requires the additional rite of pilgrimage to Arafat, a small eminence composed of granite rocks in a valley within the mountainous tract ten or twelve miles east of Mecca. The pilgrims start from Mecca on the 8th of the month, spend the 9th at Arafat, and the same evening hurry back three or four miles to a spot named Muzdalifa. Next morning they proceed about half way to Mecca, and spend at Mina the two or three succeeding days. Small stones are repeatedly cast by all the pilgrims at certain objects in the Miuft valley, and the pilgrimage is concluded by the sacrifice of a victim.

Perhaps these customs are derived from Jewish sources, where Omra referred to the local offering of the "Omer" Barley offering, and the Hajj to the "Chag" Holiday pilgrimage. Alternatively they could refer to a difference of opinions about the calendar.

## Correspondence between Islamic Calendar and its Jewish Counterpart

Although the Islamic Calendar has undergone two distinct changes (discontinued intercalation and frozen commutation), is still possible to align the Islamic Calendar to its Jewish counterpart (see Table 10 below).

The holidays of Ras as Sana (Rosh Hashanah) and Roz e Ashura (Yom Kippur) can be found in Muharram, even though Safar was originally the Sacred Month. Minor events such as the Creation of Adam and ritual bath of Erev Yom Kippur can perhaps be found in altered form. The deletion of the month of Elul and the commutation of Safar and Muharram could also explain a shift of Dahwul Arz from 25 of Elul to 25 of Dhu al Qa'dah.

It is significant that the Jewish Holidays of Succot (Feast of Tabernacles), Purim and Chanuka cannot be found in their corresponding place. Purim and Chanuka are post-Biblical so they could have been dropped as is the Karaites custom today. What is interesting is that In place of Succot we find the traditional date of the changing of the Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Holy Kaaba. The changing of the Qiblah marks a conscious, deliberate changing of traditional Jewish practice. Other possible dates of the "changing of Quiblah" are the 15 of Rajab and the 15 of Shabaan, corresponding to Purim and Pessach (Passover), the former not being found and the latter being deprived of all Jewish traditional practice. "Chanuka" if kept by Arabian Jews would have been eventually overshadowed by Milaad-Un-Nabi (Prophet Mohammed's Birthday), and any 'correspondence' with the 25<sup>th</sup> of December and the Birth of Jesus would be pure speculation.

Before the deletion of Elul, the month of Cheshvan would have corresponded with Rabi al-Awal. It is tradition Jewish practice to pray for Rain, record the passing of the Flood, and pray if there is a drought during this month. Rabi al-Awal too is etymologically related to "first rains".

The correspondence between Lailat al Baraat (Night of Emancipation) and *Pesach* (Passover) has been mentioned above. The *Sefirah* mourning period consists of 49 days from *Pesach* to *Shavuot* (Pentecost), however there are differing customs as to the degrees of mourning during that period. Many oriental Jews observe heightened mourning during the month of Iyyar which corresponds to Ramadhan. There is a similarity even in the *Sefirah* custom of counting the 49 days of the "Omer". In Jewish tradition each day must be counted distinctly and individually. Similar to this most of Islamic jurists think that the intention "I will fast for this approaching month of Ramadan" is not legally enough, since the intention to fast must be formulated each night for the following day, i.e. "I will fast for Ramadan during this day".

The 18<sup>th</sup> of Iyyar is very interesting because until now we have assumed that the Jewish holidays were transformed into Islamic holidays because of the historical record attesting to the observance of these holidays hundreds of years prior the advent of Islam. But Lag BeOmer (the Revelation of the Zohar), if it corresponds to Lailat-el-Qadr (Revelation of the Qur'an) would indicate the reverse. The Zohar was not known publicly until several hundred years *after* the advent of Islam.

There seems to be a correspondence between *Shavout* (Pentacost) and Eid al Fitr, both marking the end of the mourning period. Lastly, for hundreds of years after the destruction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple, the only Jewish pilgrimage consisted of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av pilgrimage to the Mount of Olives to mourn over the ruins of Jerusalem. Previous to this, the Pilgrimage to Jerusalem had always been for the "Chag" Holidays of *Succot* (Tabernacles), *Pesach* (Passover) and *Shavuot* (Pentacost). It appears that due to some specific reason this "Chag" pilgrimage to Jerusalem was changed to the "Hajj" pilgrimage to Mecca.

Table 10 contains a correspondence between the Islamic Calendar and its Jewish counterpart.

Legend

Major Holiday

Minor Holiday

*Traditional Event*

Proposed correspondence, not indented

Table 10. The Islamic Calendar and its Jewish Counterpart

<p>1. Muharram al-Haraam (means sacred, c.f. <i>Cherem</i>) SACRED MONTH</p> <p>1 Ras as Sana (Hijri New Year) <i>1 The Prophet Idris lifted to heaven</i></p> <p><i>3 Joseph saved from well</i></p> <p><i>5 Moses crossed the Red sea</i></p> <p><i>7 Revelation to Moses on mountain</i></p> <p><i>9 Yonah came from whale</i> <i>9 Moses, John and Mary were born</i></p> <p>10 Roz e Ashura (Fast of the Tenth) <i>10 Adam was created</i> <i>10 Noah's ark rested on Mount Ararat</i> <i>10 The fire became cool and safe for Abraham,</i> <i>10 Jesus ascended to the heaven</i> <i>10 Imam Husain A.S and family was killed</i> <i>10 This is the day on which the Qiyaamah (doomsday) will take place.</i> <i>10 Whoever takes bath in the day of 'Ashura' will never get ill.</i></p> <p><i>15 Capture of Khaibar (or 24 Rajab), 7 A.H.</i> 16 Qiblah direction faced in prayers changed from Jerusalem to the Holy Kaabah (or 15 Rajab, or 15 Shabaan) <i>17 Punishment on on the people of Elephant (soldiers of Abraha)</i></p>	<p>Tishrei</p> <p>1 Rosh Hashanah <i>1 Adam was created</i> 2 Rosh Hashanah (2<sup>nd</sup> Day) 3 Fast of Gedaliah</p> <p><i>9 Erev Yom Kippur (ritual bath)</i> 10 Yom Kippur <i>10 Future 'Day of Judgment'</i></p> <p>15-21 Succoth (Feast of Tabernacles)</p> <p><i>17 Noah's ark rested on Mount Ararat</i></p>
<p>2. Safar al-Muzaffar (whistling of the wind, c.f. <i>Shofar</i>)</p> <p>28 Wafat Prophet of Islam s.a.w.</p>	<p>Cheshvan</p> <p><i>7 Prayer for Rain</i></p> <p><i>17 Beginning of the great Flood</i> <i>17 Prayer for Drought</i></p>
<p>3. Rabi al-Awal (first rains)</p> <p><i>1 Medina Migration</i></p> <p>9 Eid e Zehra</p>	<p>Kislev</p>

<p>(Killers of Imam Husain A.S were punished)</p> <p>12 <i>The Prophet received in Medina</i></p> <p>15 <i>Building of First Mosque</i></p> <p>16 <i>Night Journey (or 17 Ramadhan, or 7 Rajab)</i></p> <p>17 Milaad-Un-Nabi (Prophet Mohammed's Birthday)</p> <p>22 <i>Battle against Bani An-Nadhir</i></p>	<p>25-02 Chanuka</p>
<p>4. Rabi al-Thaani (second rains)</p>	<p>Tevet</p> <p>8 <i>Fast of Translation of the Bible into Greek</i></p> <p>9 <i>death of Ezra</i></p> <p>10 <i>Fast of Tevet</i></p>
<p>5. Jumaada al-Awal (dry, 1<sup>st</sup> month of summer)</p> <p>6 <i>The battle of Bani Salim</i></p> <p>10 <i>The battle of Camel</i></p>	<p>Shevat</p> <p>15 Tu bi-Shevat (New Year for Trees)</p>
<p>6. Jumaada al-Thaani (dry, 2<sup>nd</sup> month of summer)</p> <p>1 <i>First Revelation (Cave Of Hira)</i></p> <p>15 <i>Hajaj Destroyed Kaaba</i></p>	<p>Adar</p>
<p>7. Rajab al Murajjab (means majestic, great, honored, valuable) SACRED MONTH</p> <p>1 <i>Boarding of Noah's Ark</i></p> <p>7 <i>Imam Musa Kazim Day</i> 7 <i>Night Journey (or 16 Rabi al-Awal, or 17 Ramadhaan)</i></p> <p><i>[15 Qiblah direction faced in prayers changed from Jerusalem to the Holy Kaabah (or 16 Muharram, or 15 Shabaan)]</i></p>	<p>Adar II</p> <p><i>[1 Death of Moses, according to Josephus]</i></p> <p>3 <i>Second Temple was dedicated.</i></p> <p>7 <i>Birth and Death of Moses</i></p> <p>9 <i>Fast for arguments of schools of Hillel and Shammai</i></p> <p>13 <i>Fast of Esther (originally a festival called Nicanor Day)</i></p> <p>14 <i>Purim</i></p> <p>15 <i>Shusham Purim</i></p> <p>16 <i>Nehemiah (5th BCE) Feast of rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem</i></p> <p>20 <i>Fast of Honi ha-Me'aggel (1<sup>st</sup> BCE)</i></p>

<p>23 <i>Imam Al-Hasan bun Ali (PBUH) killed by poisoned dagger</i></p> <p>24 <i>Victory of Khaybar</i></p> <p>27 <i>Lailat al-Ma'raj (Ladder)</i> <i>Roz-e-Besat (Ascent of the Prophet)</i></p>	<p><i>miraculously evoked the rain</i></p>
<p>8. <i>Shabaan al Muazzam (means branch)</i></p> <p><i>8 Starting Of Ghaibat-E-Sugra</i></p> <p>14 <i>Shab e Baraat</i> <i>Lailat al Baraat (Night of Emancipation)</i> <i>[15 Qiblah direction faced in prayers changed from Jerusalem to the Holy Kaabah (or 16 Muharram, or 15 Rajab)]</i></p> <p><i>19 Battle of Banil Mustalaq between the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Khuza'a</i></p>	<p>Nisan</p> <p><i>1 Deaths of Nadab and Abihu</i></p> <p><i>10 Death of Miriam the sister of Moses</i></p> <p><i>14 Fast of Firstborns</i></p> <p>15-21 <i>Pesach (Passover)</i></p> <p>16 <i>Sefirat Ha'omer</i></p>
<p>9. <i>Ramadhaan al Mubarak (means heat)</i></p> <p>1 <i>Start of Month Long Fast</i></p> <p><i>6 The Torah was sent down to Moses</i></p> <p><i>10 Mecca was conquered</i></p> <p><i>13 The Evangel was sent down to Jesus</i></p> <p><i>17 Night Journey (or 16 Rabi al-Awal, or 7 Rajab)</i></p> <p><i>17 Angle descended on the Holy Prophet (PBUH) at cave of Hira.</i></p> <p><i>17 Nuzul Al-Qur'an Battle of Badr, 2 A.H.</i></p> <p><i>18 The Psalms was sent down to David</i></p> <p><i>21 Jesus was lifted up to the sky</i></p> <p><i>21 Moses died on this date</i></p> <p><i>21 Joshua died on this date</i></p> <p>23 <i>Lailat-el-Qadr / Shab-e-Qadr (Qur'an began to be revealed, one of the qader nights, in last ten days of ramadhaan)</i></p>	<p>Iyyar</p> <p>1 <i>Start of Sefirah Mourning Period</i></p> <p>18 <i>Lag Ba'omer</i> <i>Revelation Of Zohar</i></p> <p><i>26 Nisan, Death of Joshua</i></p>
<p>10. <i>Shawwaal al-Mukarram</i></p> <p>1 <i>Eid al Fitr</i></p> <p>2 <i>Eid al Fitr (2st Day)</i></p> <p>3 <i>Eid al Fitr (3st Day)</i></p>	<p>Sivan</p> <p><i>3-5 Sheloshet Yemei Hagbalah, preparation for Mount Sinai</i></p>

<p>1 Revealed to the bee in making honey.</p> <p>6 The Holy Prophet (PBUH) conquered Mecca in the eighth year A.H</p> <p>8 Yawm al Gham</p> <p>15 Battle of Uhud, 3<sup>rd</sup> A.H  16 Battle of Hamraa Al-Asad, 3<sup>rd</sup> A.H  17 Battle of the Ditch (Al-Ahzaab), 5<sup>th</sup> A.H.</p> <p>30 Allah destroyed people of Aad.</p>	<p>6 Shavuot</p>
<p>11. Dhu al Qa'dah  (means to sit)  SACRED MONTH</p> <p>1 God promised Moses (peace be upon him) after thirty nights</p> <p>5 Abraham and Ismail (PBUH) carried up the pillars of the Baitul Haraam</p> <p>25 Dahwul Arz  Earth was sent into orbit  Abraham the Friend (PBUH) was born.  Jesus son of Mary (PBUH) was born</p> <p>29 God sent down the Ka'aba, 25 A.H.?</p>	<p>Tammuz</p> <p>17 Fast of Tamuz  Moses smashed the first tablets  2<sup>nd</sup> Temple sacrifices ended  Romans set up an idol in Temple</p> <p>25 Elul, Creation of world</p>
<p>12. Dhu al Hijjah  (means pilgrimage, c.f. Chagg)  SACRED MONTH</p> <p>3 Allah Accepted Adam's Dua</p> <p>7 Musa obtained victory upon magicians.</p> <p>8 Yaum at-tarwiya, the 'Day of Watering',  The pilgrim prepares his own water store for the succeeding days of the</p> <p>9 Imam Husain departed Mecca to Karbala</p> <p>9 Roz e Arafat  9 Ibrahim was rescued from fire of Namrud  9 Musa made his successor Yushau  9 Isa made his successor Sham'un As-Safa  9 Sulaiman appointed Aasif bun Barkhiya</p> <p>10 Eid al Hajj  (Day of Hajj / Pilgrimage)  deep, meaningful connection among Muslims. Strengthen unity and seek solutions</p>	<p>Av+Elul</p> <p>1 Death of Aaron, brother of Moses.</p> <p>9 Fast of Av</p>

<p><i>come to know the enemies of Islam and of Muslims. Ramyeh Jamareh ceremony: throwing stones at the devil)</i></p> <p>11 Eid al Adha (2nd Day)</p> <p>12 Eid al Adha (3rd Day)</p> <p>18 Eid al Ghadeer <i>(Carvan parting near spring/ghadir of Khum)</i></p> <p>18 Shiite claim Prophet appointed Ali successor</p> <p>24 Eid al Mubahila <i>24 Prophet's invocation curse with Christians of Najran</i></p> <p>25 Nuzool e Surah Hal Ataa <i>(Gave charity to needy people)</i></p>	<p>15 Wood Offering</p> <p>15 Tu Bi-Av <i>(Marriage Festival)</i></p> <p>15 Tribes first permitted to intermarry</p> <p>15 Dead of the battle at Betar buried</p> <p>18 Fast when western light in Temple Menorah went out in the days of king Ahaz</p>
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## Conclusion

Muhammad Ilyes quotes Nadvi who wrote: "It (the advent of the 15th century) is indeed, a unique occasion to ponder that the Islamic Era did not start with the victories of Islamic wars, nor with the birth or death of the Prophet (PBUH), nor with the Revelation itself. It starts with Hijra, or the sacrifice for the cause of Truth and for the preservation of the Revelation. It was a divinely inspired selection. God wanted to teach man that struggle between Truth and Evil is eternal. The Islamic year reminds Muslims every year not of the pomp and glory of Islam but of its sacrifice and prepares them to do the same."

With modern scholarship, we are beginning to understand that the Islamic calendar is full of meaning – meaning not just to Muslims, but to Jews. And by the same logic, the Jewish calendar is full of meaning not just to Jews, but to Muslims.

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<sup>1</sup> A tradition regarding "the first month of the year being al-Muharram," ascribed to Muhammad appears in ad-Daylamis Firdaws. Ad-Daylami's son reported the same tradition on the authority of 'Ali without the indication of a chain of transmitters." (F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden 1952, pp. 312-313).

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<sup>2</sup> 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr said: "Al-Muharram is the month of God. It is the beginning of the year. It is used as the beginning of the era. In al-Muharram, the Ka'bah is clothed, and money is coined. There is one day in al-Muharram on which repenting sinners are forgiven."

<sup>3</sup> It was mentioned in Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi's article, "Martyrdom of Imam Husayn and the Muslim and the Jewish Calendars" (Alserat, Vol.VI, No's 3 & 4; Muharram 1401 Nov.1980) that the first month of the Jews (Abib, later named Nisan) coincided with Rajab of the Arabs. W.O.E. Oesterley and Theodore H. Robinson have written that in Arabia "the most important of all the new-moon festivals was that which fell in the month of Ragab (sic), equivalent to the Hebrew month 'Abib, for this was the time when the ancient Arabs celebrated the Spring festival." (Hebrew Religion; S.P.C.K., London; 1955; p.128)

<sup>4</sup> Yemenite customs reportedly once included of year round avoidance any musical instrument except drums, sitting on the floor, fasting during Sefirat haOmer.

<sup>5</sup> There is an additional similarity between *Ramadan* and *Sefirat HaOmer*. Most of Islamic jurists think that the intention "I will fast for this approaching month of *Ramadan*" is not legally enough, since the intention to fast must be formulated each night for the following day, i.e. "I will fast for Ramadan during this day", like the Jewish counting of the 49 day Omer period, Shaykh Prof. Abdul Hadi Palazzi.

<sup>6</sup> Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, s.v. Ashura

<sup>7</sup> Reference in the foot note- G. Widengren, The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book, King and Saviour III", Uppsala Univ.

<sup>8</sup> Yerushalmi Taanith, 4

<sup>9</sup> Lamentations *Eicha*. 5:2

<sup>10</sup> A Short History of Palestine, Rabbi Joseph Schwarz. jewish-history.com

<sup>11</sup> Israel Time-Line, Lloyd Thomas

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>14</sup> Easton's Bible Dictionary, s.v. Festivals

<sup>15</sup> The regulation of the calendar had always been a sign of national sovereignty and was a point of friction with the Roman government. In earlier centuries, announcements of new months were transmitted from community to community by hill top fires. In 135 CE, during Bar Kochba's revolt, one of the first acts of defiance against Rome was to light unauthorized bonfires throughout Israel. This custom continues even today in the Lag BeOmer celebration on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Iyyar.

<sup>16</sup> Memoire sur divers ?v?nemens de l'histoire des Arabes avant Mahomet, M. Silvestre de de Sacy's. pp. 123-143

<sup>17</sup> The History of the Islamic Calendar in the Light of the Hijra, Hakim Muhammad Said, Vol X No. 1 , Spring 1984

<sup>18</sup> Memoire sur divers ?v?nemens de l'histoire des Arabes avant Mahomet, M. Silvestre de de Sacy's. pp. 123-143

<sup>19</sup> Abraha, after reconciliation with the king of Abyssinia, took rulership over Yemen and, later on, deployed his soldiers to demolish Al-Ka'bah, and, hence, he and his soldiers came to be known as the "Men of the Elephant". After the "Elephant" incident, the people of Yemen, under the leadership of Ma'dikarib bin Saif Dhu Yazin Al-Himyari, and through Persian assistance, revolted against the Abyssinian (Ethiopian) invaders, restored independence and appointed Ma'dikarib as their king. However, Ma'dikarib was assassinated by an Abyssinian (Ethiopian) he used to have him around for service and protection. The family of Dhu Yazin was thus deprived of royalty forever. Kisra, the Persian

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king, appointed a Persian ruler over San'a and thus made Yemen a Persian colony. Persian rulers maintained rulership of Yemen.

<sup>20</sup> See Sirah, pp. 29-30; cf. Surah ix: 37; Jami' al-Bayan, vol. x, pp 90-92. See also Axel Moberg, "Al-Nasi' in der Islamischen Tradition" in Acta Universitatis Lundensis (Nova Series), vol.27 (1931), pp. 1-54.

<sup>21</sup> Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (vol. iii, p. 127)

<sup>22</sup> Kalonymos. (Greek, "good name"; cf. Shem Tov). Notably, Kalonymos was also the name of a son of the great and illustrious R. Todros a known and documented descendant of King David. He is mentioned as living in Narbonne by Benjamin of Tudela in 1173 CE.

<sup>23</sup> The History of the Islamic Calendar in the Light of the Hijra, Hakim Muhammad Said, Vol X No. 1 , Spring 1984

<sup>24</sup> The Lift of Mahomet, William Muir, Esq., Smith, Elder, & Co., London, 1861, Chapter III, Section 4.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid 23, For (1) it exactly corresponds with the condition just noticed of making the month of pilgrimage retrocede from autumn to spring in two centuries, as is clearly shown in the chronological table attached to his first volume; and it also corresponds with the fact of that month having in 541 A.D. fallen at the summer solstice, when Belisarius on that account refused to let his Syrian allies leave him. (2.) It was the system previously tried by the Jews, who intercalated similarly a month called Ve-adar or the second Adar, at the close of every third year; and there is a priori every likelihood that the practice was borrowed from the Jews. (3.) The tradition in favor of this system is more likely than the others to be correct, because it does not produce an accurate solar cycle, and is not therefore likely to have originated in any astronomical calculation. (4.) Although it eventually changed the months to different seasons from those at which they were originally fixed, yet the change would be so slow that the months might meanwhile readily acquire and retain names derived from the seasons. Such nomenclature probably arose on the months first becoming comparatively fixed, i.e. in the beginning of the fifth century, and thus the names Rabi, Jumada, Ramadhan, signifying respectively rain and verdure, the cessation of rain, and heat, clung by the months long after they had shifted to other seasons.

<sup>26</sup> The History of the Islamic Calendar in the Light of the Hijra, Hakim Muhammad Said, Vol X No. 1 , Spring 1984

<sup>27</sup> The question has been well discussed by M. C. de Perceval, vol. i. p.242 et seq.; and in the Journal Asiatique, Avril 1843, p. 342, where the author has given a "Memoire sur le Calendrier Arabe avant l'islamisme."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid 23.

<sup>29</sup> Sprenger, p. 7; M. C. de Perceval, vol. i. p. 249; Journal Asiatique, Avril 1843, p. 350

<sup>30</sup> Sahih Bukhari Volume 3, Book 31, Number 222; Mishkatul-Masabih, Delhi ed., 1307 A.H.; p. 172

<sup>31</sup> Qu'ran An-Nahl 16.124 "The Sabbath was ordained only for those who made a distinction about it..."; Sahih Muslim Book 7, Number 3230 "'Abdullah b. 'Umar reported that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) used to come to Quba', i.e. [he came] on every Sabbath, and he used to come riding or on foot. Ibn Dinar [another narrator] said that Ibn Umar used to do like this. This hadith has been narrated on the authority of Ibn Dinar, but he made no mention of '[riding?] every Sabbath.' "; See also Sahih Bukhari Volume 2, Book 21, Number 284; Sunan Abu-Sawud, Book 13, Number 2415

<sup>32</sup> Ibid 24.

<sup>33</sup> The Clash of the Calendars, Pascal Ghazaleh in Al-Ahram weekly, 5 Jan, 2000.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

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