**THE DUAL NATURE OF THE CHAGIM**

**by Menachem Leibtag**

Parshat Emor is famous for its lengthy presentation of the "chagim" (the Jewish holidays). These same holidays are also described in the other books of Chumash: \* in Sefer Shmot: Parshat Mishpatim & Ki-tisa; \* in Sefer Bamidbar: Parshat Pinchas; and \* in Sefer Dvarim: Parshat Re'ay. It would seem logical for ALL the laws concerning the chagim to be presented together in ONE parsha. However, Chumash prefers to separate them, allowing each Sefer to focus on a different thematic aspect of the "chagim". This week's shiur contains two parts. Part One provides a general overview of the Chagim in Chumash. Part Two examines the double nature of the presentation of the chagim in Parshat Emor.

[As the shiur is very textual (more than usual), it is essential that you follow it with a Tanach at hand. Various questions which will arise in the shiur will be dealt with in the further Iyun Section.]

BACKGROUND / A DOUBLE CALENDAR

Before we begin, a quick note regarding the Biblical calendar. The holidays in Chumash are described in terms of BOTH a solar AND a lunar calendar. The solar calendar is based on the 365 day cycle of the sun, and contains the four seasons of the agricultural year ("tkufot ha'shanah"): the spring and fall equinox; the winter and summer solstice. The lunar calendar is based on the monthly cycle of the moon (roughly 29.5 days). However the precise day on which each month begins is determined by "bet-din" (i.e. "kiddush ha'chodesh"). These two calendars are correlated by the periodic addition of an 'extra' month (i.e. "ibur ha'shana"). Chumash employs BOTH the lunar and solar calendars in its description of the chagim.

PART ONE - THE CHAGIM IN CHUMASH

In Chumash, there are two 'sets' of chagim (holidays when work is forbidden): A) The Shalosh R'galim: Chag ha'Matzot, Shavuot, & Succot; (the three pilgrimage holidays). B) Y'mei Hadin: Rosh ha'Shana, Yom Kippur & Shmini Atzeret; (Days of Judgement/ better known as "Chagei Tishrei"). The Shalosh R'galim (A), as a unit, are presented twice in Sefer SHMOT and once in Sefer DVARIM: (1) in Parshat Mishpatim (Shmot 23:14-19) before Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive the first Luchot (tablets); (2) in Parshat Ki-tisa (Shmot 34:18-26) when Moshe Rabeinu ascends Har Sinai to receive the second Luchot; (3) in Parshat Re'ay (Dvarim 16:1-17) while describing the special laws of "ha'makom asher Yivchar Hashem l'shakeyn shmo sham": the site where the Mikdash is to be built.

In each of these three instances, the dates on which these "r'galim" fall are described ONLY by the agricultural time of year in which they are celebrated, i.e. the SOLAR calendar: Chag Ha'Matzot: "b'aviv" - in the spring; Chag Ha'Katzir: the wheat harvest - in the early summer; Chag Ha'Asif: the fruit harvest - in the fall.

In each of these three 'parshiot', the primary mitzvah discussed is the obligation of "aliyah l'Regel" - to make a pilgrimage to the central location where the Mikdash is located (see Shmot 23:17, 34:23-24, Dvarim 16:2,6,11,15,16).

In contrast to Shmot and Dvarim, Sefer VAYIKRA (chapter 23/ Emor) and Sefer BAMIDBAR (chapters 28->29/ Pinchas) describe BOTH the "shalosh r'galim" (A) AND "Chagei Tishrei" (B). Parshat Pinchas presents the chagim in order of the specific month and day when each holiday is to be celebrated, i.e. by the LUNAR calendar. The chagim in Parshat Emor follow the same basic order.

Parshiot Emor and Pinchas actually complement each other. When introducing each holiday, Parshat Emor states: "v'hikravtem ishe l'Hashem" - ["and you shall bring an offering to God"/ see Vayikra 23:8,25,27,36], but does not specify the precise offering. In Parshat Pinchas we find exactly what that offering is to be, i.e. the special additional korban (Musaf) which is to be offered on each holiday. [A more precise title for this parsha would be Korbanot Ha'Tmidim v'ha'Musafim - as it details the korban Tamid and Musaf brought throughout the course of the entire year, including Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh! / We read from this 'parsha' for maftir on every chag, and we quote from it in tfilat Musaf.]

It is only in Parshat Emor (Vayikra 23:1-44) that we find the details of the unique mitzvah of each holiday: Chag Ha'Matzot - the special "omer" offering (barley); Shavuot - the special "shtei ha'lechem" offering (wheat); Rosh Ha'Shana - "Yom Truah" - blowing the shofar; Yom Kippur - fasting; Succot - sitting in the Sucah; and the "arba minim" (lulav and etrog etc.).

Based on this analysis, one could summarize as follows: \* Sifrei Shmot and Dvarim present the shalosh r'galim in relation to their common purpose as a time for "aliyah l'regel" during the critical times of the agricultural (solar) year. \* Parshat Pinchas details the specific korban Musaf of each chag (according to the lunar date of the holidays). \* Parshat Emor describes the unique mitzvah of each chag (using both lunar and solar).

**PART TWO - THE DOUBLE NATURE OF THE CHAGIM IN PARSHAT EMOR**

Parshat Emor, like Pinchas, presents the chagim in order of their LUNAR dates (month/day). Nevertheless, Emor is different. When introducing the special mitzvah to be performed in the Mikdash on each of the SHALOSH R'GALIM, the agricultural season (i.e. the SOLAR date) is mentioned as well: CHAG HA'MATZOT Omer:"When you enter the Land... and YOU HARVEST the fields, you must bring the "omer" the FIRST HARVEST to the Kohen (23:10); SHAVUOT Shtei Ha'lechem: SEVEN WEEKS LATER - "and you shall bring a NEW flour offering..." (23:16); SUCCOT Arba Minim: "On the 15th day of the 7th month WHEN YOU GATHER THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND... and you shall take on the first day a 'hadar' fruit..." (23:39).

DOUBLE DATES As a matter of fact, a careful examination of Parshat Emor shows that the agricultural aspect of each of the "shalosh r'galim" is presented in a manner entirely INDEPENDENT of the lunar date! For example, the mitzvah to bring the korban "ha'omer" and "shtei ha'lechem" is presented in a separate 'dibur' (23:9-22) which makes no mention at all of the lunar date! Similarly, the mitzvah of the "arba minim" (23:39-41) is presented independent of the mitzvah to sit in the succah (23:33-38). [Compare these two parshiot carefully!]

Why must the structure of Emor be so complicated? Why doesn't the Torah employ one standard set of dates? Why are the agricultural mitzvot presented independently?

To answer these questions, we must return to the opening psukim of Vayikra, chapter 23.

A DOUBLE 'HEADER' The first four psukim of chapter 23 form a problematic introduction: "And God told Moshe, tell Bnei Yisrael... 'Moadei Hashem' (fixed times), which YOU shall call 'mikraei kodesh' (a sacred gathering) - These are the 'MOADIM': SIX days work may be done, but the SEVENTH day shall be a SHABBAT SHABBATON 'mikra kodesh'... THESE are the 'MOADEI HASHEM'...: On the 14th day of the first month - Pesach On the 15th day of the first month - chag ha'Matzot... (23:1-6)

Is shabbat to be considered one of the 'moadim'? If yes, why does pasuk 4 repeat the header "ayleh moadei Hashem"? If not, why is it mentioned at all in the first three psukim?

Furthermore, there appear to be two types of 'mikraei kodesh' in Parshat Emor. (1) MOADIM - those that Bnei Yisrael declare: "asher tik'ru otam [that YOU shall call] – mikraei kodesh" (23:2) (2) SHABBAT - which God has set aside to be a 'mikra kodesh' (read 23:3 carefully!). This distinction, and the repetition of the header "ayleh moadei Hashem" in 23:4, indicate the first three psukim can be considered a 'double' header: MO'ADIM / SHABBATONIM.

This 'double header' is reflected in the overall structure of the parsha. First, each chag is presented in Parshat Emor by its lunar date, followed by a statement that this 'moed' should be a mikra kodesh, the prohibition to do work ("kol mlechet avodah lo taasu"), and the mitzvah to offer a korban Musaf ("v'hikravtem ishe l'Hashem").

(1) THE MO'ADIM - MIKRAEI KODESH OPENING PASUK: "AYLEH MOADEI HASHEM... ASHER TIKRU..." (23:4) CHAG HAMATZOT : 23:6-8 SHAVUOT: (Interestingly enough, this holiday lacks a lunar date and the phrase "v'hikravtem...") ROSH HA'SHANA: 23:25 YOM KIPPUR: 23:27-28 SUCCOT & SHMINI ATZERET: 23:33-36 CLOSING PASUK: "AYLEH MOADEI HASHEM ASHER TIKRU OTAM..."

Intertwined in this parsha, we find a second aspect of each chag, one which relates to the concept of SHABBATON- the second header. In relation to the Shalosh R'galim, the SHABBATON aspect always relates to the special agricultural mitzvah! Each time this aspect is mentioned, the concluding phrase: "chukat olam l'doroteichem [b'chol moshvoteichem]" is found (23:14,21,31,41). Therefore, the second header 'SHABBAT' relates to this aspect of the Chagim:

(2) SHABBATON Chag Ha'MATZOT - "mi'mochorat ha'SHABBAT" (23:11) SHAVUOT - "ad mimochorat ha'SHABBAT ha'shviit..." (23:16) ROSH Ha'SHANA - "SHABBATON, zichron truah..." (23:24) YOM KIPPUR - SHABBAT SHABBATON hi lachem..." (23:32) SUCCOT & - ba'yom ha'rishon SHABBATON... SHMINI ATZERET - u'bayom ha'Shmini SHABBATON" (23:39)

Note, that when this aspect is first introduced in relation to Chag Ha'Matzot, it contains a separate 'dibur' and the notating of the agricultural date (23:9-14) "And God spoke to Moshe saying... When you ENTER THE LAND that I am giving you REAP ITS HARVEST, you shall bring the OMER - the first sheaf of your harvest to God. This OMER shall be waived in front of God... on the day after SHABBAT the Kohen shall waive it....

[This analysis could explain Chazal's understanding that here, SHABBAT refers to the first day of chag ha'Matzot as opposed to the tzdukim (Sadducees) who argued that it actually refers to first Shabbat after Pesach. It is now obvious that Chazal's interpretation reflects a much deeper understanding of the entire parsha.] The most explicit example of this pattern is found in the psukim that describe Succot. First, the Torah refers to this holiday as a MIKRA KODESH in relation to its lunar date: "On the 15th day of the 7th month Chag Succot seven days: on the first day there shall be a MIKRA KODESH... and on the eighth day a MIKRA KODESH..." (23:35-36) [As this is the last 'moed', the next pasuk summarizes all of the chagim: "ayleh Moadei Hashem..." (23:37-38)].

Then, in a very abrupt fashion, AFTER summarizing the moadim, the Torah returns to Succot again, but now calls it a SHABBATON: " 'ACH' - on the 15th day of the seventh month, when you GATHER THE HARVEST OF YOUR FIELD, you shall celebrate for seven days, on the first day - a SHABBATON, and on the eighth day - a SHABBATON." (23:39)

To summarize, we have shown that the entire parsha exhibits a double nature, as reflected in its 'double header' and the use of both the solar and lunar calendars in the description of the chagim. What is the meaning of this double structure?

**THE AGRICULTURAL ASPECT**

As mentioned above, Parshat Emor details a special agricultural related mitzvah for each of the shalosh r'galim: Chag ha'Matzot: The Korban Ha'Omer- from the first BARLEY harvest. Shavuot: The Korban Shtei Ha'lechem, from the first WHEAT harvest. Succot: Taking the 'Arba Minim', the four species - [the lulav, etrog, hadas and arava]

These mitzvot relate directly to the agricultural season in Eretz Yisrael in which these holidays fall. In the spring, barley is the first grain crop to become ripe. During the next seven weeks, the wheat crop ripens and is harvested. As this is the only time of the year when wheat grows in Eretz Yisrael, these seven weeks are indeed a critical time, for the grain which is consumed during the entire year is harvested during this short time period. The 'arba minim' which are brought to the Mikdash on Succot, also relate to the agricultural importance of the fruit harvest ("pri eytz hadar v'kapot tmarim") at this time of the year, and the need for water in the forthcoming rainy season ("arvei nachal").

It is specifically when the Torah relates to these agricultural mitzvot that these holidays are referred to as SHABBATONIM. The reason is quite simple. Shabbat relates to the days of the week, and thus, to a natural cycle caused by the sun. So too, the agricultural seasons of the year. They also relate to the natural cycle of the sun (the 365 day cycle of the earth revolving around the sun that causes the seasons). As these holidays are celebrated during the most critical times of the agricultural year, the Torah commands us to gather at this time of the year in the Bet HaMikdash and offer special korbanot from our harvest. Instead of relating these phenomena of nature to a pantheon of gods, as the Canaanim did, we must recognize that it is God's hand behind nature and we must thank Him for our harvest. [ This is the challenge of Judaism, to find God while working and living within the framework of nature. This is reflected in the blessing we make over bread: "ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz". Even though we perform 99% of work in the process of making bread (e.g. sowing, reaping, winnowing, grinding, kneading, baking etc.), we thank God as though He had given us bread directly from the ground!]

**THE HISTORICAL HOLIDAYS**

Even though the agricultural calendar provides sufficient reason to celebrate these holidays, the Torah finds HISTORICAL significance as well to these seasonal holidays: The spring commemorates our redemption from Egypt. The grain harvest coincides with the time of Matan Torah. During the fruit harvest we recall our supernatural existence in the desert under the "annanei kavod" (clouds of God's glory) in the desert. Just as the Torah employs to the 'solar' date of the chagim in relation to the agricultural mitzvot, the Torah employs the lunar date of these chagim in relation to their historical significance. For example, when describing Chag Ha'Matzot which commemorates the historical event of Yetziat Mitzraim, the lunar date of the 15th day of the first month is used (23:6). Similarly, when the Torah refers to Succot as a Mikra Kodesh, it employs solely the lunar date and emphasizes the mitzvah of sitting in the succah, in commemoration of our dwelling in succot during our journey through the desert (see 23:34-35,43).

Specifically, the lunar calendar contains historical significance, for we count the months in commemoration of our Exodus from Egypt, the most momentous event in our national history. This is reflected in the very first mitzvah given to the Jewish nation in Sefer Shmot: "ha'chodesh ha'zeh lachem ROSH CHODASHIM..." This month (in which you are leaving Egypt) will be for you the FIRST month... (see Shmot 12:1-3).

**REDEMPTION IN THE SPRING**

From the repeated emphasis in Chumash that we celebrate our redemption from Egypt in the early spring ("chodesh ha'aviv" /see Shmot 13:2-4 and Dvarim 16:1-2), it would appear that it was not incidental that the Exodus took place at that time. Rather, God desired that our national birth take place at the same time of year when the growth cycle of nature recommences. [For a similar reason, it would appear that Hashem desired that Bnei Yisrael enter the Promised Land in the first month of the spring (see Yehoshua 4:19 & 5:10).] One could suggest that the celebration of our national redemption specifically in the spring emphasizes its proper meaning. Despite its importance, our freedom attained at Yetziyat Mitzraim should be understood as only the INITIAL stage of our national spiritual 'growth', just as the spring marks only the initial stage in the growth process of nature! Just as the blossoming of nature in the spring leads to the grain harvest in the early summer and the fruit harvest in the late summer, so too our national freedom must lead to the achievement of higher goals in our national history. Thus, counting seven weeks from chag ha'matzot until chag ha'shavuot (sfirat ha'omer) emphasizes that Shavuot (commemorating the Giving of the Torah) should be considered the culmination of the process that began at Yetziat Mitzrayim, just as the grain harvest is the culmination of its growth process that began in the spring. By combining the two calendars, the Torah teaches us that during the critical times of the agricultural year we not only thank Hashem for His providence over nature but we also thank Him for His providence over our history. This is an extremely important concept, that not only is Hashem the Force behind nature, but He also guides the history of nations. In a polytheistic society, these various attributes were divided among many gods. In an atheistic society, man fails to see God in either. According to Chumash, man must recognize God's providence in all realms of his daily life; by recognizing His hand in the unfolding of our national history, and through perceiving His greatness in the creation of nature.

shabbat shalom menachem

**FOR FURTHER IYUN**

A. WHY IN VAYIKRA? Why is this parsha that describes the special mitzvot of all the chagim located specifically in Sefer Vayikra? Based on last week's shiur, we can suggest an answer. We explained that the second half of Vayikra 'translates' the concentrated level of the shchina dwelling in the Mishkan to norms of behavior in our daily life in the "aretz" (into the realms of kedushat ha'aretz and kedushat zman, and kedushat Makom). The special agricultural mitzvot of the chagim are a manifestation of how the Kedusha of the Mishkan affects our daily life. By bringing these special korbanot from our harvest, the toils of our daily labor, to the Beit HaMikdash we remind ourselves of God's Hand in nature and in the routine of our daily life.

B. Does the mitzvah of Succah relate to the historical aspect (yitziat mitzraim) or to the agricultural aspect (temporary booths built by the farmers in the field collecting the harvest) - or both? 1. Use the two psukim which describe succot (23:34,42-43) to base your answer. [Relate also to Succah 11b, succah k'neged ananei kavod or succot mamash.] 2. Note also the use of "chukat olam b'chal moshvoteichem" - see 23:14,21,31 in relation to Shabbaton. Note also 23:3! Now note 23:41, based on the above pattern, what word is missing? Now look at pasuk 23:42 - "ba'succot TAY'SHVU..."! Can you explain now why 'that word' is missing in 23:41? 3. Why is the word "ezrach" used in 23:42? Relate to Shmot 12:49! [How does "moshvoteichem" relate to the word "shabbat"?]

C. Chagei Tishrei and agriculture: We noted earlier that Parshat Emor also included chagei Tishrei, and each is referred to as a shabbaton, as well as a mikra kodesh. As explained in our shiur on Rosh HaShana, these three holidays, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, and Shmini Atzeret, relate to the forthcoming year. A new agricultural year is about to begin, and we must recognize that its fate is not a function of chance or the whims of a pantheon of gods, rather a result of our acceptance of God's kingdom and the observance of His mitzvot. [Note from Parshat Pinchas, that these three chagim share a common and unique korban musaf! (1-1-7/1) Note also that Succot stands at the agricultural crossroads of last year's harvest and next year's rainy season. Thus, we say "Hallel" in thanksgiving for the previous year, and say we "Hoshanot" in anticipation of the forthcoming year.]

D. The sun, we explained, relates to the agricultural aspects of chagim, while the moon to its historical aspect. 1. Relate this to the waxing and waning feature of the moon and God's hashagacha over our history. 2. Relate this to the concept of "hester panim" 3. Relate this to the fact that succot and pesach fall out on the 15th day of the lunar month (full moon), while rosh hashana -yom din- falls on the first of the month (b'keseh lyom chageinu) 4. Relate this to the concept and korbanot of Rosh Chodesh. 5. Why do you suppose that the sun serves as a symbol of 'nature'?

E. Note the emphasis on the number 'seven' throughout this parsha. How and why does the number seven relate to the solar calendar, and the agricultural holidays. Relate your answer to the first perek of Sefer Breishit and shabbat!

F. Why are the mitzvot of Aliyah L'regel emphasized in Sefer Shmot? A theme in the second half of Shmot is the function of the Mishkan as a perpetuation of Har Sinai. "Aliyah l'regel", a national gathering at the Mishkan on the holidays, can re-enact certain aspects of Ma'amad Har Sinai.

G. Compare carefully 23:1-4 to Shmot 35:1-4 and notice the amazing parallel! How does this enhance your understanding of this parsha, shabbat, and of the Mishkan?]