

2016 AVIV Barley Report, the Leap Year and God’s Annual Holy Days

Nehemia Gordon of the Karaites has reported that this year’s Official Aviv Barley Search showed that the state of the barley in Israel was NOT YET “AVIV” as of March 9, 10, and therefore a 13th month, “Adar 2” will be added. The new moon seen on Thursday evening, March 10, began “Adar 2”.

Because the New Moons of “ABIB” and “TISHRI” are certain this year, the Holy Days are therefore as follows:

NEW MOON ADAR 2	Friday, 11 th March.
NEW MOON ABIB	Sabbath, 9 th April.
PESACH SEDER (Passover)	Friday Evening, 22 nd April.
PESACH (1 st Day Unleavened Bread)	Sabbath, 23 rd April.
PESACH (7 th Day Unleavened Bread)	Friday, 29 th April.
SHAVUOT (Pentecost)	Sunday, 12 th June.
YOM TERUAH (Trumpets)	Monday, 3 rd October.
YOM KIPPUR (Atonement)	Wednesday, 12 th October.
SUKKOT (1 st Day Tabernacles)	Monday, 17 th October.
SHEMINI ATZERET (8 th Day)	Monday, 24 th October.

The really interesting thing about these dates on the “Observed New Moon” calendar is that they coincide exactly with the Rabbinic “Fixed” Jewish calendar dates this year. Have a wonderful, inspiring and uplifting Passover season.

Nehemia Gordon reports:

“Barley not Aviv, 13th New Moon Sighted, Passover April 22”

“After scouring the Land of Israel for Aviv Barley, the Aviv Search Team has concluded beyond any doubt that the time of the Aviv has not yet arrived. We found individual stalks of Aviv barley in the Judean Desert and northern Negev. However, we did not find any fields with substantial quantities of Aviv Barley.

“The answer is clear. The new moon sighted on March 10, 2016 is the beginning of the 13th Hebrew Month. The First Hebrew Month, Chodesh Ha-Aviv, will begin on April 8, 2016 (barring clouds). The festival of Passover (Chag HaMatzot) will begin April 22 at sunset and Shavuot will fall out on Sunday June 12, 2016.

“We sighted the new moon of the 13th Hebrew Month on March 10, 2016 from

Jerusalem. The new moon was first sighted by Keith Johnson followed shortly thereafter by Nehemia Gordon, Yoel Halevi, Devorah Gordon, and Gil Ashendorf.”

In a later report, Nehemia discussed the controversy over this year’s abib state. He declared:

“Abib Barley and the Golden Pandas”

“With the Aviv Search now over, last night I finally got my first good night of sleep in a week! The intensity of the Aviv Search had me going on adrenalin, coffee and prayers. This year’s Aviv Search has been a true cliffhanger. This morning I prayed about it and read over the ‘other’ Aviv reports that are making their way around the internet. It was clear to me that we looked through the very fields where some have claimed to find Aviv. We even shared some of this process as we were doing it in the podcast Proclaiming a Hebrew Leap Year of Faith. I can understand how someone who already decided it was turning into a New Year before his very eyes based on the vineyards, goat utters, and other factors (or is that utter factors?) could climb up one of the hills in that area and be convinced that he is looking at fields of Aviv Barley. On Tuesday March 8 we spent at least 1.5 hours driving through the back roads of those fields with the aid of a new (and very costly) GPS app that provides near-military grade maps, basically the highest you can get without being on an active IDF combat mission. As much as I was expecting to find Aviv, especially based on the exterior appearance of the barley, it just wasn’t Aviv yet. We returned to the same area on Thursday March 10, just to give the barley the maximum amount of time to turn Aviv before entering into a new Hebrew month. And it still was not Aviv.

“Reading over the ‘other’ reports has removed all doubts I could have possibly had. I didn’t really have doubts to begin with, but you know how Ha-Satan works, going to and fro in the Earth, planting his seeds which turn into doubt. Through prayer and study and quite literally fear and trembling in the presence of Yehovah, that seed has now been uprooted and cast out for me. I was in those very same fields and know for certain that it is not Aviv. Yet my heart truly aches for those who weren’t with us who may have genuine doubts. Please join me in praying that they too are led to work this out for themselves in fear and trembling with prayer and study before our heavenly Father. When the Temple is rebuilt the High Priest will figure all this stuff out for us. Until then we need to do the best we can with what we have available to us, asking our heavenly Father always to guide us. In the past few years I have been taught humility and come to daily pray:

“Trust in Yehovah with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear Yehovah and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.”

-- Proverbs 3:5-8

“When I say I was quite literally in fear and trembling, that is because I consider the Aviv Search to be an awesome and truly frightening responsibility. It is a responsibility I never asked for and never wanted. I was out looking at Aviv fields in the early 1990s when it was just me and a handful of Karaite Jews. And nobody knew or cared what we were doing. Now there are a half-dozen different groups out there looking for barley every year, some with different understandings of the term ‘Aviv.’ Many are also being guided by what I believe to be non-Torah considerations such as the equinox, wheat, blooming flowers, and even migrating birds! I will never forget one man who spent years working out the calendar with the help of a very complex calculation that he created. When he learned about the Aviv Barley he was so excited, because he was sure it would confirm his life's work. He ended up coming on two or three Aviv Searches and then set out on his own.

“One year I was in our beloved ‘Pomelo Field’ just south of Beth Shean. He proclaimed that he found Aviv in that very field, an hour after we had examined it and found that it was not Aviv. But he already knew it was Aviv from his calculations and that is what he saw in the field. This has become a familiar story. In some ways it is very frustrating. In other ways, I look at it as a blessing that so many of God's people are yearning to rediscover His truth.

“In my recent audio study Aviv Barley and the Spirit of Constantine, I quoted the 9th century quasi-Karaite Mishawayh al Ukbari, who famously said:

“All money is a convenience, so cleave to the counterfeit money in hand.”

“Mishawayh's point in the 9th century was that there were several different competing calendars, which was just leading to disunity and confusion. From his perspective, without the Temple, any calendar is just a remembrance of what God commanded, so why not use the easiest one. By which, of course, he meant the Hillel II calendar used by most Jews. There was a time when I would have mocked and judged Mishawayh and his followers, but then God humbled me. Today, I say that every one of us needs to work this out through prayer and study in fear and trembling. If that process leads you to follow Hillel II and Mishawayh, then that is between you and the Creator of the universe.

“Yesterday morning before Keith left for the airport we were sitting in my living room in Jerusalem discussing Mishawayh and his ancient coin parable. I told Keith that I don't believe the Feasts of Yehovah are just a convenience or that *all* calendars are counterfeit. There are true appointed times that Yehovah has hard-wired into Creation. We just need to figure out what they are by going out and doing what the ancient Israelites did: looking for the new moon and the Aviv Barley in the Land of Israel.

“Now this year something unusual happened that got me thinking about Mishawayh in a whole new light and this is what I was sharing with Keith as he prepared to leave for the airport. The night before, we were standing around in a Jerusalem park, perched on a hillside, looking for the new moon. An Orthodox Jewish couple walked by and were

curious why we were staring at the horizon with cameras set up on tripods. They followed the direction that our cameras were pointed and got very excited when they saw the new moon. The man told us that for years his wife had said how wonderful it would be to see the new moon on Rosh Chodesh-the beginning of the Hebrew month. He meant the day that rabbinical Jews observe Rosh Chodesh. This Orthodox Jewish man explained that they never saw the new moon on Rosh Chodesh, and now finally after years of hoping and praying there it was hanging low in the sky over the Israel Museum. What really moved me about this Orthodox Jewish couple is that they were as authentic as can be in their genuine desire to walk in fellowship with the Creator of the universe.

“So back to Mishawayh and his counterfeit coin analogy. A few years ago I started researching gold coins. This was when the word on the street was that the US dollar was about to collapse and we all needed to take every last dime and buy physical gold and silver. Back then I learned about the Gold Panda, a coin produced by the government of China. These troy ounces of gold were in high demand, but there was a major problem. On a hunch, one collector sawed open his Gold Pandas and found out some were counterfeit! On the outside they were made of gold, but on the inside he found a cheap metal. What all came together for me as Keith was fixing to leave for the airport, was that our desire to know the true times of the Biblical feasts was like sitting there with a pile of Gold Pandas with the knowledge that some are fake. For years we have been spending all this immense effort to determine which Gold Pandas are real and which are counterfeit. Often this results in intense debates and arguments. In some groups and communities it causes pain and division. What encountering the Orthodox Jewish man and his wife made me realize is that determining which Gold Pandas are real and which are not, should never be an end in itself. The purpose is so that we can use those Gold Pandas to buy bread when the US dollar collapses.

“Similarly, the purpose of the Aviv Search, New Moon Sightings, and observance of the Appointed Times of Yehovah is not an end in itself. The purpose is to attain that spiritual bread and walk out our covenant relationship with Yehovah the best we can. If that leads to conflict with others who are genuinely trying their best to walk with our heavenly Father, then we need to push aside our pile of Gold Pandas and get back to praying for humility in dealing with our neighbors and the sojourners in our gates.

“My prayer is that the Appointed Times of Yehovah will not be a source of doubt and division, but a healing to the souls of those who want to walk in fellowship with Avinu SheBashamayim. I pray that Yehovah grant me the wisdom to trust in Him with all my heart, to not lean on my own understanding, to acknowledge Him in all my ways, so that He may make my paths straight!”

-- Nehemia Gordon, Jerusalem, Israel