

---

## Chag Sukkot Sameach!

NOTE: Sukkot, according to the timing given in the Torah, will start tonight, September 19th, 2005. Do you want to find out why? Then please read on...

This is a rebroadcast of an email I sent earlier this year defending the timing of the year according to the appearance of Aviv barley in the land of Israel, and refuting those who made claims that the calendar should be set otherwise.

One additional claim was made known to me later on in the year, after this original email was sent back in March. The claim goes like this: if we proclaim the first day of the first month prior to the Spring equinox, as happened this year, then the grapes will not be ready for harvest in time for Sukkot. Although I do not wish to lend any credence to the concept that the timing of the year needs to be determined by the grape harvest; nevertheless, I am happy to announce to you that even in this aspect the rest of the events of the year have perfectly lined up with the Aviv-based timing.

First of all, prior to the time that Avi and I left for our North American tour, grapes were available in Israel, but were fairly rare and quite expensive, indicating that they were probably either imported or grown in special climatized hothouses, either condition naturally leading to more expensive grapes. When Avi and I first got back to Israel in late July, the grapes were clearly in season in Israel, being both plentiful and cheap--both signs that the fruit being sold is **LOCALLY** in season.

Furthermore, I submit the following article to you as evidence that at least the major portion of the wine-grape harvest has been completed. [www.m7000.com/harvest.pdf](http://www.m7000.com/harvest.pdf) . This is an interesting article that appeared in last Friday's edition of the Jerusalem Post, about a harvest/wine festival being held September 22-24 in Israel's wine country, coinciding perfectly with the true date for Sukkot this year. So, once again, the timing of the year in accordance with the finding of Aviv in March lines up perfectly with other expected events, although once again, only the Aviv is mentioned in the Torah as an indication of when to begin the year, and other events such as the grape harvest are of only secondary importance.

For your convenience, I have posted below my original letter from March of this year, with the added objection concerning the grape harvest at #59.

\*\*\*\*\*

Shalom all,

Dina, Avi ben Mordechai's wife here. Like most of you, I have been receiving many emails sent by various messianic leaders explaining why we should not set the new year (and thus Pesach and all other holidays) in accordance with the appearance of the Aviv in Israel, and should rather set the year according to the Rabbinic calendar, or some other type of calendar. Although a few of these arguments demonstrate valid points; some of these arguments have descended into base character assassination, whilst others simply demonstrate the ignorance of the person making the claim. As a follower of the Torah, I felt that I could no longer remain silent and had to make my own voice heard. I pray that you have an open mind and that you will weigh the evidence herein carefully, and that whatever decision you make, it will be based upon the Torah, and not simply upon the opinions of men, no matter who they may be. Also, please feel free to forward this email on to anyone who you believe might benefit from it.

This is the second year that my husband and I will be keeping the Biblical holidays in accordance with the appearance of the Aviv, and the first year in which this method of determining the calendar results in holidays that are a month out of synch with the Rabbinic calendar. Therefore, rather than ask you all to blindly follow our example and keep the holidays as we will be doing this year, I feel that I should provide you with a solid basis from Scripture for why the Aviv is so important, and also provide you with answers to the major objections that are being voiced against this method of determining the calendar. Nevertheless, please do not simply take my word for it: search the Scriptures for yourself, and if you can disprove (from the Scriptures) what I am about to say, then please do so.

What is the Aviv, and why is it so important?

According to the Torah (Dt. 16:1, Ex. 13:4, 23:15, 34:18), Pesach (Passover) MUST occur in the month of the Aviv. Furthermore, Ex. 12:2 says that the month in which Pesach occurs is the first month of the year. Therefore, it logically follows that if we don't set the month of Pesach correctly, all of the other Biblical holidays will not be set correctly. This should especially concern us, since the Biblical word for the holidays is "mo'adim," literally, appointments, or appointed times in English. In other words, YHWH has set specific times as appointments for us to follow, so if we claim to follow YHWH, we must do our best to determine when the correct time is for each of these appointments. Fortunately for us, He has not left us guessing; indeed He has given us all the clues that we need in order to determine the proper time.

First of all, Gen. 1:14 says that there would be two great luminaries (the sun and the moon), and that they would determine the

mo'adim. Further, Ps. 104:19 says that the moon was made for the appointed times. In other words, the appointed times must be kept in accordance with the phases of the moon, so, for example, Yom Tru'ah (the Day of Trumpets) occurs on the first of the month, and so it must occur at the new moon; Hag HaMatzot (Unleavened Bread) begins on the 15th of the month, and thus must occur under a full moon. However, the moon alone is not enough, for the solar year is approximately 365.24 days, and a lunar month is approximately 29.5 days, so a year containing 12 lunar months will be only 354 days, thus about 11.24 days less than a full solar year. If we were to follow a strictly lunar calendar, our holidays would keep occurring earlier and earlier with respect to the solar year, just like the Islamic holidays do, and therefore we would be violating Gen. 1:14.

Clearly, then, we must set the calendar so that our holidays do not fall out of synch with the solar year, and thus come in the wrong seasons. It is not enough to simply make the year out of 13 lunar months, because then our calendar would skip ahead of the solar year by about 18 days each year, causing our holidays to also fall in the wrong seasons. What do we do then? The answer is that we keep a year of 12 lunar months, and at the end of that year, we look for specific sign that YHWH has given us to know whether a new year may begin in the next month, or whether we must wait and add another month. Given that according to Gen 1:14, both the sun and the moon set the appointed times, it might seem logical to us that we should look for a certain solar event, such as the Spring equinox, in order to determine the beginning of the year. Indeed, many people these days seem to be doing just that. The problem with this, however, is that there is no commandment whatsoever in the Torah to look for an equinox in order to set the appointed times. Rather, YHWH gave us a sign that is much more down-to-earth and close-to-home: the Aviv!

What is the Aviv? According to Ex 9:31-32, it is a state of near-ripeness of the barley. When Egypt was pelted with the plague of hail, the barley was ripe enough to be destroyed, but the wheat and spelt, which ripen later, were not destroyed. The fact is that barley and wheat are both grasses, and go through a long period of development where they look like any green grass. If these plants are hit with hail at this early stage, they would simply grow back, but once the seeds in the plant have started to ripen, the plant would likely die if hit by a serious hail storm. For more information about the growth stages of barley, please see <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/Cropsystems/DC2548.html> .

So, does barley have to be fully ripe in order to be considered Aviv? If we look at Lev. 2:14, we will get a clear answer to this question. This verse states that the bikkurim (firstfruits) offering can be brought either as Aviv parched in fire, or as crushed Carmel. There is a major clue here, because this verse offers the Israelite two options for bringing the firstfruits of his barley crop. You see, as it develops its grains, the barley plant first fills out each kernel with a watery substance, then gradually places more and more starch into each grain, so that as the grain

ripens, it becomes harder and drier. When grain is fully ripe, it is hard and dry enough that it can be crushed into flour. If the grain is entirely unripe, then nothing but a hull would remain if parched in fire. If it is almost, but not quite ripe, it still has too much moisture content in order to be crushed into flour, and would rot if stored without having been further dried, but it still has enough starch in it that something would remain if the grain were to be parched in fire. No doubt, the Israelite farmer needed something of substance that he could bring as an offering. If his grain was fully ripe, he could simply crush it into flour and bring that. However, if it was not fully ripe, this verse gives him the option of parching it in fire and bringing that as his offering. So this is what the Torah calls Aviv: barley that is ripe enough to be offered as parched in fire, but still too moist to be crushed into flour as is.

Those who seek to set the new year according to the Spring equinox will no doubt object to this, saying that the sun is supposed to be used to set the mo'adim, according to Gen. 1:14, and that the requirement to look for barley came later. Looking for Aviv barley, however, is entirely consistent with Gen 1:14, because after all, the most important factor in determining when the barley will ripen is the amount of heat the plant receives in its late stage. As the winter comes to an end and we draw near to the Spring equinox, the days get longer and warmer, and this is the time that barley is likely to be found in the Aviv state. In fact, it is possible that, barring unusually warm or cold weather, proximity to the Spring equinox may be the most important factor in predicting when Aviv barley is likely to be found. At this time, however, we simply do not have enough data to make that assertion. Furthermore, this is not the same thing as claiming that the Torah requires us to set the new year according to the equinox, for no such commandment exists; the sign we are supposed to look for to determine when the year should start is the Aviv, plain and simple. Having said that, let us now examine the major objections to starting the new year, as the Torah commands, with the Aviv.

The major objections to starting the new year with the Aviv

1. The Aviv was not the only determining factor in determining the start of the year: the equinox was also a factor.

Answer: It is true according to Sanhedrin 11b that at least one sect of Pharisees used the equinox as one of three determining factors--the other two mentioned were the Aviv and the fruits of the trees. But so what? This does not in any way prove that the Pharisees were determining the start of the year according to the way that the Torah says to do it. This is a classic case of circular reasoning: we must accept the Rabbinic/Pharisaic calendar because in the Talmud, it says that the Aviv was not the only determining factor in the Rabbinic/Pharisaic calendar.

2. The Rabbis have faithfully determined the start of the new year, and furthermore, the Aviv was never used to declare an early start of the year; it only became a factor when determining that another month had to be added. This year, the Aviv came early, therefore, it is not a factor.

Answer: Another stellar case of circular reasoning. The person who penned this gem has started out by assuming that the Rabbis have already correctly determined the beginning of the year as next month (in April 2005), therefore according to his logic, the fact that Aviv barley was found this month (in March 2005) means that it must be coming "early" and therefore can be ignored. The truth is, however, that the barley was found in a state of Aviv just prior to the end of the twelfth month, exactly when it is expected!

3. The Hebrew calendar was in existence BEFORE Second Temple Observation and "Barley Hunts" were added!

Answer: Another circular argument. The author of this assumes that the Rabbinic calendar is the correct Hebrew calendar and Observation (of the new moon?) and barley hunts were later innovations. The exact opposite is the truth. As pointed out above, the moon determines the mo'adim according to Ps. 104, and the commandment to observe the month of the Aviv, given in Ex. 12:2, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18 and Dt. 16:1 (well before the Second Temple was built), is completely in harmony with Gen 1:14, which says that both the sun and the moon determine the mo'adim.

4. Only the judges of Dt. 17:11 have the authority to change the last legal ruling of the Sanhedrin. Until then, we must follow those judges (implied: Rabbis), especially in their halakhic rulings.  
5. Until a new Sanhedrin rules, just go with the last LEGAL ruling given 1600 years ago.

Answer: These two arguments have many parts and are rather tricky. To start off with, notice that the first argument assumes that the Rabbis are, in fact, the judges mentioned in Dt. 17:11. The question any Torah-minded people should be asking themselves at this point is: ARE the Rabbis the judges of Dt. 17:11? After all, this is what the Rabbis claim, and if this is true, then we MUST follow what they say, since the Torah commands just that very thing. It is unfortunate, however, that most people just stop here and conclude that the Rabbis' claim is valid.

But surely you, my friends, are better than to simply accept the Rabbis' claims on blind faith. Let us, then, examine what the Torah says about those judges. According to Ex. 18, the Torah system of

judges is set up in the following way: there are judges of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands. At the top is Moses himself, or a high priest who is able to get an answer directly from YHWH via Urim and Thummim regarding a specific situation. When a case is brought to a lower judge and he cannot answer, then the case is taken to next highest judge. If that judge is not able to answer, then the case goes up to the next, and so on, until the case gets all the way to the person at the top, who then is able to get an answer directly from YHWH through prophecy. It is for this reason that Dt. 17 says that the person who will not obey the decision of the judge in that day must be executed: because the system prescribed by Torah is hierarchical, with YHWH Himself at the top, and anyone who stands in opposition to the judge stands in opposition to YHWH Himself.

Friends, please ask yourselves: does this in any conceivable way resemble the system that the Rabbis have invented? If you are honest with yourselves, I believe you must admit that it does not. Not only are the Rabbinical courts not hierarchical in the way prescribed by the Torah; more importantly, the Rabbis themselves have declared that they need not listen to Heaven (YHWH) in matters of halacha (Baba Metzia 59b). For the benefit of those who do not have access to a copy of the Talmud, I have quoted it for you below:

It has been taught: On that day R. Eliezer brought forward every imaginable argument, (3) but they did not accept them. Said he to them: 'If the halachah agrees with me, let this carob-tree prove it!' Thereupon the carob-tree was torn a hundred cubits out of its place - others affirm, four hundred cubits. 'No proof can be brought from a carob-tree,' they retorted. Again he said to them: 'If the halachah agrees with me, let the stream of water prove it!' Whereupon the stream of water flowed backwards - 'No proof can be brought from a stream of water,' they rejoined. Again he urged: 'If the halachah agrees with me, let the walls of the schoolhouse prove it,' whereupon the walls inclined to fall. But R. Joshua rebuked them, saying: 'When scholars are engaged in a halachic dispute, what have ye to interfere?' Hence they did not fall, in honour of R. Joshua, nor did they resume the upright, in honour of R. Eliezer; and they are still standing thus inclined. Again he said to them: 'If the halachah agrees with me, let it be proved from Heaven!' Whereupon a Heavenly Voice cried out: 'Why do ye dispute with R. Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the halachah agrees with him!' But R. Joshua arose and exclaimed: 'It is not in heaven.' (4) What did he mean by this? - Said R. Jeremiah: That the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice, because Thou hast long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai, After the majority must one incline. (5)

R. Nathan met Elijah (6) and asked him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do in that hour? - He laughed [with joy], he replied, saying, 'My sons have defeated Me, My sons have defeated Me.'

Notes:

(3) Lit., 'all the arguments in the world'.

(4) Deut. XXX,12.

(5) Ex. XXIII,2; though the story is told in a legendary form, this is a remarkable assertion of the independence of human reasoning.

(6) It was believed that Elijah, who had never died, often appeared to the Rabbis.

The significant part about this story is not whether the miracles and voice from Heaven happened or not; all present acknowledged that they were real, yet asserted their independence from having to follow YHWH. Even more shocking, in the Rambam's Introduction to the Mishnah, he states that God only permitted Israel to learn from the Rabbis, not from prophets (contrast this with both Ex. 18 and Dt. 18), and that any prophet who dares prophesy in matters of halacha is to be put to death. How much farther away from the authentic Biblical court system can the Rabbis be? In the Torah system, the person who doesn't listen to the judge, who derives his authority from prophecy, is to be killed; in the Rabbinic system, it is the prophet who dares prophesy in matters of halacha who is to be killed, by those who usurp authority! Friends, can't you see that the self-proclaimed "authority" of the Rabbis is downright rebellion against YHWH Himself?

It is safe, then to conclude that the Rabbis have improperly claimed the authority of Dt. 17 and taken it on themselves, while themselves being in rebellion to YHWH. Therefore, in this light, please reconsider how "legal" the last decision of the Rabbinic Sanhedrin could possibly have been. If this last "legal" ruling, that is the Rabbinic calendar, is not really legal, then what are you doing following it?

6. The sages even have the power to suspend a Torah precept if the need arise. Example: Elijah sacrificing on Mt. Carmel at a time when the Temple stood in Jerusalem.

Answer: Elijah was a prophet and he was acting in accordance with the direct command of YHWH. Again, where is the proof that the Rabbinic sages have this same authority, since they by their own admission do not listen to Heaven (YHWH)?

Also, please note that the Rabbis use Ps 119:126 as the authority to "suspend a Torah precept." Please see <http://www.yeshiva.org.il/midrash/Shiur.asp?ID=839> for an excellent example of how this reasoning is applied by modern-day Rabbis in order to force the verse to read, "It is time to act on God's behalf, suspend your Torah." If one reads Ps. 119:126 and its context, one will find that it does not say that at all. Ps. 119:126 beseeches YHWH to get to work because THEY (the arrogant - v122, the oppressors - v121, the wicked of the earth - v119, and those who stray from His statutes - v118) have made void the Torah! Friends, please ask yourselves: are these REALLY the "authorities" that you want to put yourselves under?

7. Not just anyone has the authority to declare when the first month has begun; only the Sanhedrin has that authority.

Answer: There is no commandment in the Torah which specifically says that only a given body has the right to determine the beginning of the year. That being said, however, it is likely that while Israel still had access to verifiable prophecy through the Urim and Thummim, the decision to declare when the new year had begun probably did rest with the judges mentioned in Dt. 17, and if the case was too difficult for the judges to solve, they would have turned to the high priest with the Urim and Thummim to get an answer directly from YHWH. The problem is that because of Israel's many sins, none the least of which was her refusal to listen to the voice of YHWH when she had access to it, this form of prophecy was taken away, and eventually, all prophecy was taken away. We are, therefore, left with many ambiguities and the inability to keep the Torah perfectly, which is a huge loss to us. So what is the remedy to this situation? Should we place ourselves under the authority of those who refuse to listen to YHWH? Is this not the very reason why we were punished in the first place?

8. Without the proper authority declaring the first month, every sect could come up with their own calendar.

Answer: This is a very real possibility, and it is a great loss to us that we do not have at this time access to verifiable prophecy, as mentioned above. The only thing we can do in its absence is to do the best we can with the knowledge that we have, and understand that we cannot keep the Torah 100% correctly until our exile and punishment are taken away. We MUST, however, repent of our rebellion against the word of YHWH.

9. This is a teaching that leads to division; it is a stumbling block to unity between Ephraim and Judah.

Answer: I'm sure that Elijah's teaching also lead to division-- after all, he was teaching people to forsake Ba'al, a very popular deity in his day. Does this make his teaching wrong? In the same manner, the Aviv teaching is not wrong just because it supposedly causes "division." As to the question of unity: should we seek to establish unity with people who reject the plain teaching of the Torah by ourselves also rejecting the plain teaching of the Torah? If we try to establish unity for its own sake, couldn't that also lead us to embrace the Catholic church? This may seem like a fantastic claim to some of you, but it is the absolute truth that some "mainstream" messianic organizations are right now doing just that, through "Toward Jerusalem Council II." (<http://www.tjcii.org/>)

This argument also reminds me of the attacks made by "mainstream" messianic organizations, such as the MJAA, against the two-house

teaching and those who proclaim or believe it. They vehemently attacked those who held to some form of the two-house teaching, even though THEY themselves were the ones disfellowshipping two-house believers, and not the other way around. In fact, it seems to me that this "divisiveness" accusation is a convenient smokescreen allowing those who wield it to vent hatred towards those who hold to a teaching that the accusers do not like, but against which they have no other evidence.

10. This is a teaching that leads people to arrogance, with people claiming that they are "more biblical than thou."

Answer: This is a real concern, but it in no way proves that the Aviv is the wrong way to determine the beginning of the year. Rather, this is a function of the sorry state of human nature, and the same arrogance could apply to those who follow the Rabbinic calendar and consider themselves superior to the minority who follow the Aviv. Instead, I beg you, dear reader, if you are among those who hold to the Aviv teaching, to approach those who follow some other calendar with a spirit of gentleness and humility, showing the Biblical basis for everything you present, and allowing each person to make his own choice based upon his conscience and current understanding. What else do we have?

11. "Aviv" is simply the name of a month, although it can also mean "fresh, green ears." Also, "Aviv" simply means "Spring."

Answer: As mentioned above, Aviv refers to a specific state of ripeness of the barley. Every time the word is mentioned in connection with the word month, it appears as "chodesh ha-aviv," or "the month of the Aviv." The word Aviv therefore cannot be the name of the month, because then it would not have the definite article attached. Rather, it is describing an event that occurs either during the month or just before it. It is worth mentioning here that Aviv also does not mean "green ears," since the ears of barley are dark green from the time they are first formed until just before they start turning ripe; by the time they reach the Aviv state, the ears have already started to fade to a yellowish-green color.

As to the word Aviv meaning Spring, this is true, in modern Hebrew. After all, the season in which the barley becomes Aviv is in fact Spring. However, this is a new meaning for the word, and it is irrelevant, since it applies to modern Hebrew, not Biblical Hebrew. In the Tanakh, it is clear from the passages cited above that Aviv is the stage of ripeness in which barley is ripe enough that it can be parched in fire, yet not ripe enough to be ground into flour as is.

12. The span of time in which Aviv barley appears in Israel is

several months, so Aviv cannot uniquely determine a single month.

Answer: It is likely for this reason that farmers were allowed to bring the firstfruits of their barley harvest as either Aviv parched in fire or as fully ripe grain (Lev. 2:14). Furthermore, no specific timetable is given for this offering, so each individual farmer could probably have brought it anytime between the first Omer offering and Shavuot. In any case, this argument is fatally flawed, since the Torah itself refers to only one month as "the month of the Aviv." Nowhere does it say "the months of the Aviv."

One more important point needs to be made here: when it gets close to the end of its growth cycle, barley develops very quickly. Barley that is in the Aviv state just prior to the beginning of the month will quickly ripen and become harvest-ready, given normal growing conditions, within one or two weeks. If the farmers waited too long to harvest it, the ears of grain would fall apart, the seeds would fall to the ground, and the harvest would be lost. Thus, although the TOTAL time span of the barley harvest across Israel's diverse climatic regions might be two months, or possibly even three, keep in mind that the Omer offering was brought at the BEGINNING of the harvest according to Lev. 23:10, so therefore the month of the Aviv HAD to be the first month that barley could be harvested in the land. If Israel failed to declare the Aviv in time and waited until the next month, it could have resulted in a disastrous loss of the crop for farmers in the areas where the barley ripens earliest.

13. If we follow the Aviv method of determining the start of the year, then it is technically possible to have an 11-month year, thus violating the Torah.

Answer: This is an interesting possibility, and according to the person who made this argument, it actually did happen in the year 1006-1007 CE. Apparently, some Karaites did observe an 11 month year at that time. Assuming that this is true, what does this prove? Where is the Torah command that says that every year must have at least 12 months? It is true that the book of Esther says the Jews decided to celebrate the festival of Purim during the twelfth month, but that is not the same thing as a Torah commandment. In any case, is it not YHWH who is in control of the weather? If He for His own reasons brings on an early Aviv, who are we to argue with Him? In any case, if something like this were to happen, it would likely create a situation where we would not be sure of what to do. Some probably would declare the Aviv early and others would go ahead and finish the twelfth month and then start the new year. This, again, is all part of our exile and punishment, in that we are not able to keep the Torah exactly the way it should be. If we had been willing to listen to the voice of YHWH from the start, His voice would not have been taken away from us. Do I need to mention again here that the remedy to this situation is NOT to put ourselves under the authority of the Rabbis, who themselves are

in rebellion against YHWH.

14. Philo and Josephus both mention that the year should be reckoned by astronomy, and Philo specifically never mentions barley.

Answer: Just because certain men who lived a long time ago talked about a subject, does that automatically make them right? Besides, Josephus was a Pharisee, so surprise, surprise! He favored the Pharisaic calendar! Philo was a philosopher who demonstrated a great deal of pagan influence in his writings, so who wants to take his word over YHWH's?

15. Moses was raised with all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and the Egyptians had buildings which allowed them to observe the equinox. Moses used the word T'kufah in Ex. 34:22 (so therefore, it must mean equinox!) Also, given Moses' Egyptian training, when YHWH said in Ex. 12:2 "this month shall be the first month," naturally, Moses would have been thinking of the equinox, since he had no training in barley hunting.

Answer: The person who makes this argument apparently thinks that he has the ability to read Moses' mind and determine what he was thinking 3000+ years ago. I, on the other hand, do not want to make such assumptions. Perhaps Moses was thinking about the equinox and perhaps not. We cannot conclude from the text that he had no training in distinguishing Aviv barley. In any case, he was a prophet following YHWH's direct commands, so whether he kept a calendar by the equinox before he was led by YHWH, or whether his Egyptian training included barley hunting is irrelevant. The important fact is that ONLY the Aviv is mentioned in the Torah as the sign that the first month has begun.

16. The moon determines the months, but the sun determines which month is first. The only repeatable time points involving the sun are the two equinoxes and the two solstices. Since barley is harvested in the Spring, the Spring equinox is the logical candidate.

Answer: Let me get this straight: there are only four days in a solar year that are repeatable every year? Hmm.... it seems to me that there are many other days that are also repeatable: for instance the day after each equinox is repeatable every year, as is the day that comes ten days after the equinox. Also, there are events which are repeatable every year, particularly in an agrarian society like ancient Israel, such as the time of plowing, the time of harvesting, threshing, etc. The significant thing here is that NONE of these events or days are mentioned in the Torah to help us know when to start the year; ONLY the Aviv is mentioned.

17. Aviv (sic) 1 can be determined by the New Moon closest to the

Spring Equinox. It can fall before or after the Spring Equinox, but Pesach must fall after the Spring Equinox.

Answer: The person who wrote this as an objection evidently does not know what he's talking about, since the Spring Equinox is March 20, so therefore according to HIS OWN OBJECTION, he should be celebrating Pesach this year on the evening of March 25th, along with all those who observe it according to the Aviv. This is the way that at least one of the sects of Pharisees set the calendar, according to Sanhedrin 11b. It is worth noting again, however, that nowhere in the Torah is there any commandment to set the new year according to the equinox; rather it is the Aviv that is mentioned time and time again.

18. Why follow the few and search for barley, while the many are following the Rabbinical calendar?

Answer: Why, indeed, follow the words of Yeshua?

"Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter in by it. How narrow is the gate, and restricted is the way that leads to life! Few are those who find it." Matt 7:13-14.

I'd rather be celebrating life with the few than death with the many, any day! The important thing to note here, however, is that it is not the number of people that do a certain thing that determines whether or not that thing is justified; rather, the yardstick is the Torah: which people are following the Torah and which are rebelling against it? That should be your question. The sad historical fact is that in most times and most places, the majority was rebelling against the Torah, not following it. It appears to be the same today. Even if you are the only one in your family or your neighborhood, or among your friends who is following the Torah, shouldn't you still follow it, rather than the many?

Did not the Prophets warn Israel about impending judgement for their behavior? Was not this behavior that of the majority? Did not the Prophets lament that they were alone? Doesn't Eph 6:6 say you are not to be pleasers of men, but to do the will of Elohim from your heart?

19. Rejecting the traditions of the avot (fathers) amounts to arrogance.

Answer: The Torah indeed commands that we must honor the elderly (Lev. 19:32) and, in particular, our own parents (Ex. 20:12). This is not, however, an automatic commandment that we must do everything that the fathers did. Over and over in the prophets, Israel is admonished for following the wicked deeds of their fathers. Should we therefore continue in their path, just to avoid "arrogance?"

Besides, who is REALLY arrogant here? Is it the fathers who insist on rebelling against YHWH, or the children who repent and turn back to YHWH with all their heart? Please read Ezek. 18 and tell me, what is the answer? Is not the real arrogance the putting of traditions ahead of following the commandments of YHVH? What should be the condition of our hearts? Concern for traditions of men or concern for standing with YHVH? YHVH knows and will judge by the condition of the heart. Did not YHWH say that this is a people who serve me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me and they serve me through the learned commandments of men (Isa 29:13)?

20. The Torah itself requires tradition, because many commandments given in the Torah are not crystal clear, and furthermore the Torah does not specify what to do in each possible situation. There could NEVER have been a time when just the written Torah was sufficient; there always had to be some kind of oral tradition.

Answer: This is a good point in that it is true that the Torah gives basically general guidelines, but does not go into every detail of everything that could possibly happen. In fact, there are five recorded instances in which Moses brought a case before him where he was unsure of what to do in that situation, and therefore had to ask YHWH directly (see Lev. 24:10-16, Num. 9:6-13, 15:32-36, 27:1-11 and 36:1-6). This shows us the true "Oral Law" (for lack of a better term) in action: in other words, when people didn't know what to do in a specific situation, they took their case to the judges, and if the judges could not decide, the case would go all the way to the top judge/priest, who determined the answer THROUGH VERIFIABLE PROPHECY. However, as mentioned above, Israel time and again rebelled against the voice of YHWH and refused to hearken, therefore the voice of YHWH was taken away from them. 2 Chronicles 15 is an excellent example of this type of story, and may we follow the example of King Asa and the people under his reign who renewed their commitment to following YHWH at that time.

Don't fool yourselves, my friends, no number of self-appointed "authorities," no matter how "ancient" can take the place of true prophecy, no matter how clever their arguments may seem to you. Just because a large group of men started claiming a long time ago to have been endowed with the ability to lead Israel does not mean that YHWH had actually granted them that authority. As noted above, the Rabbis claim to be in that position of authority, without having to listen to the voice of YHWH. Please have the discernment, my dear friends, and the wisdom to tell the difference between their claims and true authority. In fact, the claims of the Rabbis are in many ways no different than the claims of Korach and his followers (Num. 16), who also insisted that they had the ability to lead Israel without needing prophecy to back them up.

21. The messianic movement needs a body of case law similar to the

Talmud.

Answer: What all of Israel needs today, whether they consider themselves "messianic" or not, is to repent according to Dt. 30, turn to YHWH with all their heart, hearken unto His voice alone and experience an end to the exile and an end to the famine of prophecy (Amos 8:11). This will heal our ills a million times more than a messianic "Talmud" would.

22. The only way the Rabbis will take the two house movement seriously is if the Nazarenes are willing to prove themselves by respecting Rabbinic scholarship and becoming Torah-observant in all areas of their lives.

Answer: Why do we need the Rabbis to take us seriously? Why don't we instead seek to have YHWH take us seriously? How can we accomplish that without seeking His word and His will with all our heart and mind and soul? Some will object to this and say that we must not boast against the root, as it says in Rom. 11. Rather, we should seek unity with them. The question, though, is in trying to seek unity with Judah, is it proper to put ourselves under their rebellious leadership? Should we not rather seek out men from Judah who are seeking to follow the Tanakh as best they can, regardless of what label they choose to use for themselves?

23. The Tanakh mentions no prescribed ritual for locating Aviv barley.

Answer: This is true (although the clues given are sufficient for any open-minded person to see them), but it is also true that the Tanakh gives no specific ritual as to how and when to begin Shabbat. So therefore should we not keep Shabbat?

24. The Tanakh does not specify whether we are to look for wild or domesticated barley.

Answer: The domesticated barley in use today has been bred to yield larger kernels and a more plentiful harvest. This domesticated strain of barley probably was not existent at the time of the Exodus. The truth is, however, that it doesn't really matter. During the past Aviv searches, both wild and domesticated barley have been found to have roughly the same development timeframe: the difference is the amount and size of the grain that is yielded at harvest.

25. Ex. 12:2 is directed at Moshe and Aaron, thus the leaders of Israel, and not directed at individual Israelites.

Answer: This is a good point, and when all Israel repents and

returns to YHWH with all their heart, perhaps we will once again see righteous leadership which will then be given the authority directly by YHWH to determine when to begin the year (may that day come swiftly!). In the meantime, however, should we follow Israel's rebellious leaders (see Ezek. 34), or do our best to be faithful to the word of YHWH?

26. Lev 23:10 commands us to bring the Omer offering to the Temple, but since there is no Temple today, barley is a non-issue, and will remain irrelevant until the Temple is rebuilt and the Aaronic priesthood restored. Also, those who search for barley today are inconsistent because they don't bring the Omer offering.

Answer: This is like saying that it doesn't matter when to keep Shabbat, because there is no Temple to which we must offer the additional sacrifices required on Shabbat. Please! The truth is that there are two separate commands with relationship to barley: first, the Aviv determines when the new year begins (Ex. 12:2, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18; Dt. 16:1), and then, when the harvest is ready, the Omer offering is brought to the Temple (Lev. 23:10). The fact that we are unable to keep the second commandment today does not in any way obliterate the first.

27. The word Aviv does not occur in Lev. 23:10--the phrase here is "resheet omer."

Answer: True, and as noted above, this is the commandment to take the Omer offering to the Temple, and is not the commandment that tells us how to time the new year. That is found in Ex. 12:2, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18; Dt. 16:1-6.

28. Ex. 9:31-32, when properly read, shows a variety of stages of (sic) barley, therefore it is not clear what Aviv means.

Answer: Another argument that shows that its proponent did not read the text carefully. I urge you, brothers and sisters, to examine the text for yourself and you will see that three stages of ripening are indeed mentioned:

Aviv applies to: barley  
 Giv'ol applies to: flax  
 Afilot applies to: wheat and spelt  
 (sing. Afil)

However, please notice that only ONE stage of ripening is mentioned for barley. This just happens to be the state of Aviv, which is the sign that we're supposed to look for that signals to us that we may begin the new year. The other two stages mentioned, Giv'ol and Afil, do not apply to barley and are irrelevant to us. This just goes to show me how desperately some of these people are grasping at

straws to show their claim that we should not follow the plain meaning of the Torah.

29. The barley in Egypt ripens at a different time than the barley in Israel. Moses was in Egypt during the Exodus, not in Israel, and therefore could not have known when the barley was Aviv in the land of Israel.

Answer: Moses was a prophet, who received direct orders from YHWH Himself (Num 12:7-8). Therefore, it is unimportant whether the barley in Egypt ripened at the same time, or possibly earlier than the barley in Israel. The important thing is that Moses received the command directly from YHWH Himself. Does the person who makes this argument really believe that YHWH Himself did not know when the barley was Aviv in Israel?

30. The second month is called the month of Zif in I Ki. 6:1, which means "brightness of flowers," and the first Aviv occurs too early for the next month to be considered the month of "brightness of flowers." Therefore, the month of Aviv can't be the month of first occurrence of Aviv, so therefore, how can we determine which month is really Aviv?

Answer: Excuse me? What does this have to do with it? This is a Canaanite month name, just like the month of "Bul" mentioned in IKi 6:38 (named after a Canaanite deity--BDB p. 100). Why is it mentioned in the context of IKi. 6:1? Because Solomon had hired some Canaanites from Tyre to work on the Temple. By the way, "Ziv" itself means brightness. It is unclear that the "month of Ziv" mentioned in I Kings means the month of "brightness of flowers." Interestingly enough, if you look at Brown, Driver, Briggs page #264, you will see that the phrase "yerach ziv nitzanaya" appears about halfway through the entry for the word "ziv." This is an unspecified phrase coming from the Targum, which may or may not appear in the Targum at IKi. 6:1. It appears to me that the person who made this argument found this phrase in the BDB, and hastily concluded that the Hebrew phrase in IKi. 6:1 must mean the month of "brightness of flowers," again the sign of a person desperately seeking to establish proof where no such proof exists. In any case, this being a month name coming from Tyre (Lebanon), it may refer to an event that is more appropriate to the local climate of Lebanon than Israel, so therefore this argument is irrelevant to the discussion of Aviv in Israel.

31. Numbers 9, especially verse 22, shows that Israel did not search for Aviv barley in the wilderness, and this shows how people in exile are supposed to use a method other than Aviv barley to determine the year. Even Karaites living far enough away from Israel in 1000 CE were not able to base their year on Aviv barley.

Answer: The ninth chapter of Numbers begins with a direct commandment from YHWH to keep the Pesach on the 14th of that current month. It then goes into the story of the people who were defiled and could not keep the Pesach in its appointed time (one of the five cases where Moses did not know what to do and asked YHWH for clarification). The chapter then concludes with a summary of how the Israelites traveled through the wilderness at the direct command of YHWH. How does this in any way prove that the month in which the barley is Aviv is not to be considered the first month of the year? Even if it is true that no search parties were sent out to look for Aviv barley (which is not clear from the text itself), the Israelites were, at that point in their history, being directly guided by the hand of YHWH. Does anyone seriously think that YHWH did not know when the barley was Aviv in the land of Israel?

32. Dt. 30:11-14 says that the Torah is not too hard for us, and relying on Aviv barley would have been too hard for an exiled Israelite living far away from the land of Israel, so the Torah must not have Aviv barley in mind when commanding Pesach to be kept in the month of the Aviv.

Answer: This is like saying that when YHWH gave us the three pilgrimage festivals, he didn't really have that in mind, seeing as how that is impossible in our exile, with the Temple destroyed! Come on--do you really believe that? In any case, we need to do our best to do things according to YHWH's word, not according to what is convenient for us. All the more reason why we should repent and pray that YHWH will end our exile! Then we will be able to keep all the commandments as they were intended.

33. Which verse is strong enough to overturn Gen 1:14?

Answer: As mentioned above, Aviv barley is entirely consistent with Gen 1:14, since the sun is a major factor in ripening the crops. The most important point to mention, however, is that the Aviv is the ONLY sign given in the Torah that we are commanded to look for to determine the start of the year.

34. Neither Lev. 23:10 nor Dt. 16:9 provides a direct statement that the wave sheaf (Omer) offering determines the first month.

Answer: True, and that's because this is an entirely different commandment. Once we have determined the first month of the year, which is the month of the Aviv according to Ex. 12:2, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18 and Dt. 16:1, then shortly thereafter we begin the barley harvest and the Omer offering is brought to the Temple.

35. Ezra 6:15 and Nehemiah 6:15 tie in with Beresheet/Gen 1:14 to give the biblical and archaeological evidence that together show

explicit evidence that Beresheet/Gen 1:14 involves the vernal equinox so that the first month begins on or after the vernal equinox.

36. Ezra and Nehemia both used Babylonian month names, so this proves that they accepted the Babylonian calendar as is. Also, the book of Esther mentions the month of Adar, and the Maccabees, Josephus and others use Babylonian month names, so the Babylonian calendar must be the same as the Jewish calendar.

Answer: It is interesting to note that when Ezra and Nehemia are referring to secular matters, they use Babylonian month names (Adar mentioned in Ezra 6:15 in the context of rebuilding the Temple; Elul mentioned in Nehemia 6:15 in the context of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem). Other Babylonian month names are mentioned in other similar contexts in those books (ie. Nisan in Neh. 2:1). However, please note that when Neh. 8:2 talks about the people gathering together for Yom Teruah, one of YHWH's appointed times, it is quite significant that NO Babylonian month names are mentioned; rather, it simply says "the first day of the seventh month," as is proper to do according to the Torah.

Please notice here, dear readers, that the people who are making this argument apparently wish to convince you to use the Babylonian calendar in order to set the dates of your religious events. They bring proof from Ezra, Nehemia and Esther, along with proof from other writings such as Josephus to try to prove to you THAT THE BABYLONIAN CALENDAR IS THE CALENDAR OF YHWH! It may be true that Ezra, Nehemia and Esther used the Babylonian month names, just like today we use the Gregorian calendar to specify dates of various events, such as the date that I am writing this letter. This does not in any way prove that they accepted the Babylonian calendar in order to set their religious holidays any more than it proves that I accept the Gregorian calendar to set my religious festivities! And, even if later Jews did accept the Babylonian calendar, that does not make them right! After all, they WERE exiled for a reason!

37. The word t'kufah appears four times in the Tanakh, and in the Dead Sea Scrolls, apparently, the word Tekufah appears together with Mo'ed (appointed time), so it's not unusual for t'kufah to go together with mo'ed. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, t'kufah is used for the season of the Spring, which begins with the vernal equinox and ends with the summer solstice. The book of Ecclesiasticus also mentions the word t'kufah. The Hebrew word t'kufah can mean equinox, or solstice depending on context.

Answer: The meaning of t'kufah in the Dead Sea Scrolls and any other later Jewish writings is irrelevant to our discussion. The point is, what does the Tanakh mean when it mentions t'kufah? The word comes from a root meaning to make a circuit, and thus, it is used for events that come to a completion, or a full circuit of some sort.

Ex. 34:22 The final harvest of the year.  
 I Sam. 1:20 The end of a cycle of pregnancy.  
 II Chr. 24:23 The time of the year when kings go to war.  
 Ps. 19:7 The setting of the sun.

Notice here, please, that the ONLY verse that directly relates to the sun is Ps. 19:7, and it is clear from the context (vs. 6 and 7) that the word t'kufah here does not refer to an equinox, but rather the daily circuit that the sun makes from sunrise to sunset. The metaphor used here is that when the sun rises, it is like a bridegroom coming out of his bridal chamber (chupa). Also, it rises in one end of the heavens (miqtze hashamayim) and then sets in the opposite direction (al-q'tzotam). Until the time that it sets, we can't escape its heat.

Furthermore, it is extremely significant that of the four times that the word t'kufah is used in the Tanakh, NONE of them tells us when to start the year! Rather, the Aviv is given over and over as the indication of when to start the year (Ex. 12:2, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18; Dt. 16:1).

38. There is no ancient context which forces T'kufah to mean a point of time defined by the barley harvest in contrast to ancient texts that show it to relate to heavenly bodies.

Answer: As I pointed out above, the word t'kufah is not mentioned in the context of any commandment given as to when to start the year. Therefore, it is irrelevant whether the word may have any connection to heavenly bodies or anything else. It simply is not the thing that we are supposed to look for to determine the new year.

39. Gen. 1:14 is the only verse that specifically addresses the timing of the festivals.

Answer: Isn't this convenient! Gen 1:14 is the only verse that agrees with this person's argument, so he conveniently ignores Ex. 12:2, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18 and Dt. 16:1. Dear friends, I beg you to read all of the verses I have given here, and determine for yourself whether this assertion is indeed true.

40. In Acts 2 and 21, the believers are depicted as celebrating Shavuot with all Israel, therefore (it is implied by those who make this argument) they must have been following the Pharisaic calendar.

41. Yeshua and his disciples are depicted in the New Testament as following the calendar of the majority of Israel (assumption given here: Pharisaic calendar). Furthermore, Yeshua was silent about the calendar debate.

Answer: First of all, it is not clear from the text that the

holidays mentioned in the New Testament were indeed being celebrated always at the exact time that every single other Israelite was keeping them. Perhaps there were two or three major factions and Yeshua and his disciples, and later, Paul, were keeping the festivals according to the timing of one of those factions, and that there were also many others who kept the holidays at the same time. It is also possible that during the years in question, the main factions happened to be celebrating the holidays at the same time, but for different reasons. In any case, it is not the number of people that keep the holiday according to a given timing that makes that timing correct, but rather, whether that timing is in accordance with the Torah. Decide for yourself: would Yeshua have done the holidays in accordance with the Torah, or would he have followed rebellious, self-appointed leaders who refuse to listen to YHWH?

42. Paul commanded his followers to observe traditions (2 Thess 2:15, I Cor 11:2, Acts 28:17).

Answer: True enough, but it isn't exactly clear what traditions he is referring to here. It is unlikely, however, that he was referring to Pharisaic traditions, since he himself said that he counted all of that as loss (Phillipians 3:7)

43. Yeshua never spoke against the Torah itself, nor against the accepted traditions and interpretations handed down from time immemorial; he only spoke against the *takanot/gezerot*: the reforms and fences around the Torah added by the Pharisees.

Answer: I don't know that we can make such a neat distinction between what Yeshua accepted and did not accept as far as the Pharisaic "oral law" is concerned. It is clear from Mt. 5:17-20 that he accepted the Torah itself, but he was very critical of the teaching (he called it *leaven*) of the Pharisees, and I find it hard to believe that he would have accepted anything that the Pharisees taught that did not line up with the Torah itself.

Rather, in Matt 23:13 Yeshua said "But woe to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven from men; for you neither enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." This is a rather broad-reaching rebuke that makes no hint of acceptance of traditions and interpretations. Also Mt. 15:8-9. Mk. 7:6-8 Yeshua teaches against worshipping YHWH in vain by following only the learned commandments of men.

44. The New Testament has the status of Torah Law, and in Mt 16:19, Yeshua gave his disciples the authority to "bind and loose," that is, determine *halakha*. So, therefore, if a Nazarene *beit din* renders a *halakhic* decision, then that decision is binding.

Answer: Oh really? So if a Nazarene beit din were to get together and declare this month to be the first month of the year based upon the Aviv being found, does that mean that the leader who made this argument would abide by their decision?

45. Actually, though, Yeshua must have changed his mind, because later in Mt. 23, he commanded his followers to obey the scribes and Pharisees.

This is based upon a baffling statement translated from the Greek Matthew in which Yeshua apparently commands his disciples to follow the commands of the Pharisees, in contradiction to just about everything else he ever said about the Pharisees. The contradiction is easily solved, however, by looking at the same verse from Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew, in which Yeshua says "The Pharisees have seated themselves in the seat of Moses. Therefore, do everything that HE (Moses) tells you, but do NOT do according to their takanot (reforms) and ma'asim (precedents)." It is likely that Shem Tov's manuscript in this case preserved the original reading, since it is in harmony with everything else that Yeshua said about the Pharisees, and also since the difference in Hebrew between "he says" and "they say" is only one letter, and therefore it could have easily been mistranslated into Greek. For more information about this topic, please see [www.hebrewyeshua.com](http://www.hebrewyeshua.com).

46. The Karaites are following a tradition that only appears in the Talmud, or Aviv barley is just a tradition of man.

47. Karaites contradict themselves when they quote the Talmud to provide the proof for barley hunts. Why do they do this? Because they know that there is no verse that says specifically how to search for barley.

Answer: Again, the author of these gems conveniently leaves out Ex. 12:2, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18 and Dt. 16:1, which are the plain teaching of the Torah on this subject, because, after all, these clear passages from the Torah do not agree with his theory. Just because the Talmud also mentions the Aviv as a way to determine the year doesn't mean that the Talmud is the ONLY proof for it. Please!

Additionally, there is some historical validity to the Talmud. When reconstructing history, one must use all available resources in order to get as complete a picture as is possible. The Talmud talks about historical events and practices, so there is nothing wrong with looking at it as a research source. The problem comes when one seeks to follow the Talmud, or the modern Rabbinical system, as if it were the word of YHWH.

48. Karaites do not believe in Yeshua and/or deny his deity, and also engage in antimissionary activity, so we should not listen to

them. The Karaites only feel the need to look for earthly barley because they lack Yeshua, the real firstfruits offering.

Answer: If you believe that the opinion of Jews who do not believe that Yeshua is the Messiah is worthless (which, by the way, is anti-Semitism in its pure, original form), why, then, would you follow Rabbis who also do not believe in Yeshua, and also engage in anti-missionary activity? The issue here, again, is what does YHWH's word say about when to start the year? If Karaites provide a solid Scriptural basis for their understanding of the calendar, then it is irrelevant what any of their other beliefs may be.

49. Karaites believe that the Omer offering of Lev. 23:10 should be brought on Sunday, therefore (by implication) this makes them pagan sun-worshippers.

Answer: Lev. 23:11 says that we must offer the Omer offering on the morrow after the Sabbath ("mimochorat ha-shabbat"). Regardless of how you choose to interpret this verse, if you are fair minded, you MUST admit that the day following the weekly Sabbath IS a legitimate possible interpretation of this verse. The fact that pagans happened to name that day after their sun god is completely irrelevant! This reminds me of the argument that some make against people who choose to keep Shabbat: they accuse them of Saturn worship, just because the pagans happened to name that day after Saturn (Saturday)!

Furthermore, the leader who made this argument CLEARLY implied that the Karaites are pagan sun-worshippers, because they believe that the Omer offering should be brought on the day that the pagans happened to name after the sun god. THIS IS SLANDER OF THE WORST, MOST VILE, SORT, and this leader needs to make a public apology to the Karaites.

50. Karaites don't even agree among themselves.

Answer: It is true that the Karaites believe that our present state of exile prevents us from keeping the Torah 100% perfectly, which then leads to possible different interpretations, and maybe even different calendars, but so what? The quicker we repent and bring on the final redemption and end our exile, the quicker we will get out of this predicament that we are in. We certainly won't get there by following Israel's rebellious leaders!

Additionally, read the Talmud and see how often the Rabbis disagree on a whole host of topics and interpretations. In fact, in any people group, one will find lots of disagreements on almost anything. What does this prove? Nothing! This is not a legitimate argument for anything, and yet more evidence that the opposers of the Aviv must desperately grasp at anything to find their "proof."

51. Many messianics who deny Yeshua end up becoming Karaites.

Answer: Well, with stellar reasoning such as all of the above arguments seeming to be practically the only fare in the messianic movement these days, I can't say that I entirely blame them. Do you, dear readers, wish to remain messianic, but don't want to continue receiving such irrelevant babble from your leaders? Then rise up, and hold your leaders accountable to the word of YHWH! Demand accountability from them, and don't just believe every word they say, just because they claim to be in a teaching position! You should demand the same thing from the Karaites also, as well as from my husband and myself.

52. Even the Karaites outside the land do not follow the Aviv, or at least did not follow it 1000 years ago.

Answer: It is true that Karaites living in exile far away from the land of Israel were not able in most cases to keep the holidays in accordance with the Aviv, because they simply were too far away to receive timely word of the same, but what is your excuse today? You could be on the space shuttle today, and get an email or fax about Aviv barley being found in Israel.

It is interesting to note, however, that in many Karaite documents from 500-1000 years ago, it is clear that they at least tried to keep the calendar in accordance with the Aviv whenever possible, and that this caused them to sometimes change their timing of the holidays, even in the middle of the year. There is one interesting case, for example, from a Karaite letter from Shmuel ben David, dated 1641, where he celebrated the feast of Sukkot in Constantinople, and then sailed to Egypt and found out that the particular year in question had been an intercalated year, in which an extra month was added due to Aviv barley not being found at the end of the 12th month, and so he celebrated Sukkot the next month as well. I wish today's messianic leaders were as flexible as that!

53. Even Karaites themselves had an oral tradition.

Answer: There is a difference between writing down interpretations of various verses and actually claiming that those interpretations have some kind of sanctified status because they were "given at Mt. Sinai" along with the written Torah. As noted above, the only authentic oral tradition can be that which is given through the Torah-sanctioned system of judges, with the authority of verifiable prophecy. All other traditions must pass the Torah test: if they conflict in any way with the Torah, they must be discounted. The fact that some Karaites held steadfastly to this position, and others preferred to set up some kind of oral tradition, does not prove that this position is wrong, and furthermore, it is completely irrelevant to the issue of the Aviv.

54. Karaites denied their Jewish status and even helped the Nazis persecute Jews during the Holocaust.

Answer: More disgusting slander! It appears that this is also a case of mistaken identity (please see <http://www.karaite-korner.org/holocaust.htm> for a rebuttal of this specific claim). In any case, the alleged activities of Karaites 60 years ago is irrelevant to the discussion of the Aviv, and more evidence that those who wish to justify following the Rabbinic calendar must desperately look for support for their position; support which just doesn't appear in the Torah.

55. The Karaites have changed the definition of Aviv to mean less than ripe barley in order to accomodate a winter start of the year.

Answer: Another false claim made by a person who did not participate in the Aviv barley search. Aviv is, in fact, barley that is not quite ripe. Lev. 2:14 makes this quite clear, in that the farmer has the option to bring Aviv (still moist) grain, as long as it is parched in fire (so that it doesn't rot, which it would otherwise).

56. The Aviv barley that was found this month is not admissible as evidence, because it was found too close to the road, which provided artificial warmth and sped up the growth cycle.

57. The Aviv barley that was found this month is not admissible as evidence, because it was found in a canyon, which provided artificial warmth and sped up the growth cycle.

Answer: It's simply not true that the Aviv searchers looked for barley only in places close to the road. In fact, we avoided such places for that very reason, and searched in places far removed from asphalt! The place that had the most overwhelming amount of Aviv barley, and even a sizeable amount of fully ripe barley was in Ein Mabua, the vast majority of which was in places far removed from any asphalt roads. It is true, however, that it is in a canyon. It is also likely true that this canyon, with its salty earth, extra warmth and protection from some winds, probably provided an ideal environment for barley to grow; in fact, evidence of ancient terraces was found in that very site. It is likely, therefore, that barley was grown here in ancient times; indeed, it would have probably been difficult to grow other crops here. All of this does not, however, discount this particular site, since the canyon provided a natural environment, and one that existed long ago, as well.

58. The Aviv barley that was found this month is not admissible as evidence, because it was too brittle.

Answer: As mentioned in #12 above, once barley nears maturity, it dries out and becomes brittle. As the days go by and as the grains get drier and drier, the ears of grain also become more and more brittle. Therefore, if an ancient farmer, who only harvested his crop with a sickle, waited too long to harvest it, much of the crop would be lost, due to the ears of grain falling apart. Therefore, if the barley that was found this month is too brittle, how on earth does the person who made this objection think that waiting another month would solve that?

59. If we declare the first day of the first month prior to the Spring Equinox, as happened this year, then the grapes in Israel won't be ready in time for Sukkot.

Answer: As mentioned in my prologue above, the grape harvest in Israel has been completed, or at least mostly completed. A harvest/wine festival will occur on September 22-24, 2005, in Israel's wine country. Please see [www.m7000.com/harvest.pdf](http://www.m7000.com/harvest.pdf).

This new evidence in no way, however, should be taken as proof that the grape harvest should be used as a determining factor in the timing of the year. It is beyond my imagination how Israeli farmers, ancient or modern, can determine when to start the year based upon an event (the grape harvest) that will not happen in the land for at least another six months! Rather, it is simply evidence that beginning the new year with the appearance of Aviv barley in Israel has resulted in the rest of the events of the year coming into line as expected.

And thus, my friends, I bring this long letter to a close. After considering all of the evidence, I urge you to make a decision one way or the other, not in order to agree with me or with the Rabbis, but based upon your honest assessment of what the Scripture requires. Also, I wish to say I understand that since Pesach according to the Aviv will be held only a few days from now, and indeed, if you don't read this email right away, or if someone is forwarding this email to you, you may even be reading this AFTER the holiday. If you should decide in that case that the first month of the year was indeed in accordance with the finding of Aviv barley in March of this year, then please don't berate yourself: take inspiration from what the Karaites of the Middle Ages used to do, and simply adjust your calendar when you realize your error and move on.

Shalom,

Dina