

## INTRODUCTION TO OUR ANNUAL CALENDARS:

1. The days marked with a new moon crescent are the dates on which the new moon for each month is expected to be seen (in Jerusalem). If the new moon crescent appears in the block of the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of a given month, it means that the new moon should be visible on the evening following the 22<sup>nd</sup> day and that the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of that month will be the first day of the new Scriptural month. Please note that there are usually one or two months each year for which the visibility cannot be predicted with 100% certainty. It is our suggestion that in cases where the actual new moon happens to be a day earlier or later than indicated on this calendar, the dates of the feasts falling in that particular month (if any), be changed accordingly. A Scriptural month is determined by the phases of the moon and can only be 29 days or 30 days long. The Hebrew word for “month” in Scriptures is the same as the word for “new” (moon).
2. The new moon closest to 21 March (when the sun moves across the equator, to introduce the transition from winter to spring in the Northern hemisphere) is normally the beginning of the new year. Each new year must begin with the new moon introducing the month in which new, young barley sheaves appear for the first time in Israel. This month is the proper month of Aviv (which means “green, young ears” in Hebrew). For the purpose of drawing up a calendar, one may assume that the new moon closest to 21 March will (or should) be the beginning of the new year, but in reality the month of Aviv can never be introduced without the physical presence of green, barley sheaves in Israel. Pesach, the day of preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is always on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv – one day before the beginning of the seven days of Unleavened Bread. In ancient times in Israel it was customary, in obedience to the Scriptural command, to wave the first fruits of the Barley harvest on the day after the weekly Shabbat that falls within the seven days of Unleavened Bread. Shavuot (Pentecost) should be celebrated exactly seven weeks after this day and therefore also falls on a day following a Shabbat – that is, the first day of the week.
3. If the first new moon following after the 12 months of the preceding year is expected to appear more than half a month before 21 March (that is, on or before 6 March), one may assume that a thirteenth month should be added on the calendar, to ensure that the month of Aviv falls within the proper season. The final decision, however, depends upon the state of barley in Israel.
4. According to Scriptures there are seven feast days (special “Sabbaths”) on which no servile or occupational work is to be done. In this calendar these days, together with the weekly Sabbaths, are highlighted by the use of a slightly darker colour. The correct timing, according to Scriptures, to follow with regards to both weekly and annual Sabbaths, is to observe these days from sunset on the previous day until sunset of the Sabbath day in question.

*The information regarding the beginning of each new month in this calendar is based on the expected visibility of the new moon in **Yerushalayim** (Jerusalem), in accordance with the principle of Yeshayahu 2:3 and Michayah 4:2: “out of Tsiyon comes forth the Torah, and the Word of Yahweh from Yerushalayim”. In order to predict the new moon visibility as accurately as possible, we looked at the most reliable sources available, among others the software programs *Virtual Moon Atlas* by C. Legrand & P. Chevalley (2012), *Planetary, Lunar, and Stellar Visibility* by Alcyone Software; *The Stellarium Opensource Software*, astronomical data provided by the *Royal Greenwich Observatory*, the *US Naval Observatory*, the *UK Hydrographic Office* and the *HM Nautical Almanac Office*, as well as the authoritative books by B.D. Yallop, *A method for predicting the First Sighting of New Moon* (1998) and M.S.H. Odeh, *New Criterion for Lunar Crescent Visibility* (2004).*