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The New Moon Benediction.

בִּרְכַּת הַלֵּבָנָה.

Its Origin and Development, Including a Comparative
Text and Regulations as to the Time and Place
of Performing the Ceremony.

With an

Introduction

The New Moon in General ^{on} among the Israelites.

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Cincinnati, 1906.

Preface.

To
the memory of my Father
David Schwarz.

Preface

The whole work is based upon the two articles on
New Moon in the Jewish Encyclopedia - which
fact ought to have been stated
K.

Preface.

The principal aim in the following pages has been to set forth the origin of the new moon benediction and its evolution, both as to form and signification, in content and in the ceremonies connected therewith, by addition and variation through many centuries. A comparative text, which was to make clear the changes, previously discussed, that had taken place in the form of the benediction, was prefixed to the regulations which in the course of time grew up around the ceremony as belonging to that section which was supplementary to the alterations in the general form and conception of the benediction, dealt with in the first chapters. The Introduction on the New Moon in General among the

Israelites was meant to explain in what manner so apparently simple a matter as a benediction in honor of the new moon came to acquire so much importance, and thus to form the background for the discussion of the benediction itself. *

I regret that I have been unable to include a discussion of peculiar customs which came to attach to the ceremony of reciting the benediction, such as raising the body on the tips of the toes, or shaking out the corners of the garments.

May, 1, 1906.

J. D. S.

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The New Moon Benediction.

Chapter 1. Origin.

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Introduction.

The New Moon in General among the Israelites.

I. Before the Exile.

1. New Moon celebrations among ancient nations.

Many nations in antiquity celebrated the new moon, welcoming the periodic return of the grateful rays of the orb of night with festive ceremonies. Among the Semitic peoples, the observance of new moon festivals was very general,⁽¹⁾ and dates from remote antiquity when the moon was an object of reverence and worship. The ancient Egyptians worshiped the moon and celebrated festivals in its honor.⁽²⁾ Among the Assyrians,

(1). Encycl. Biblica, art. New Moon. (2). Cf. Gen. 1, 19; 17, 3; II Kings 2, 13. Jer. 17, 18; 8, 2; 19, 13; 44, 17 sqq. (3). Sinq. G. Wilkinson, The Ancient Egyptians, New York, 1878, vol. III, pp. 47, 372.

on the days marking the definite phases of the moon, work was prohibited.⁽⁴⁾ The Zoroastrian prayer-ritual Zend Avesta, in use among the Persians, contains a benediction to be recited on the new moon day, in the middle, and at the end of the month.⁽⁵⁾ Among the Greeks and Romans, as well as among still other ancient nations, it was customary to observe special rites in connection with the moon.⁽⁶⁾ In Rome it was the duty of one of the pontifices minores, in ancient times, to observe the first appearance of the new moon, and, as soon as he detected it, to carry word to the rex sacriculus, who thereupon offered a special sacrifice in its honor.⁽⁷⁾ Other nations offered similar sacrifices.⁽⁸⁾ It ap-

(4). George Smith, The Assyrian Coptic Canon, p. 194.

(5). Pellhhausen, Prolegom., p. 117, Note 2.

(6). Brückh, Rub. Ceremonialgebr., Breslau, 1837, p. 36, Note 13.

(7). Isidor. Orig. I. 33; Macrobi. Saturn. I. 15; Vac. Gerin. II. (Priner Bibl. Realwörterb. Art. Neumonde).

(8). Macrobi. Saturn. ibid. (8). Suidas, Lexicon, v. ἀρτήγατος; Meurs. Græcia feriat. I. p. 21129. (Priner, ibid.)

comp also numerous references in
Wilhelm's Reste des Arab. Nordens
Hin klar, Altorientalische Forschungen
Hinschneide, Mondstationen etc.

Ideler, Sternkunde
see also The new moon in Babylonian legend
Jensen in KBT Mythen und Sagen

pears, also that, in Rome, as soon as the pontifex discovered the moon's slight disk, a hymn was sung⁽⁹⁾. It was further customary among ancient peoples to introduce special prayers⁽¹⁰⁾, and to hold festive banquets⁽¹¹⁾ on the new moon day.

2. The antiquity of the celebration in Israel. Among the Israelites the custom of celebrating the new moon by joyous feasts is very old, probably dating from prehistoric times, before their occupation of Canaan. It has been pointed out⁽¹²⁾ that the Hebrew word לילך was derived from an old word for new moon corresponding to the Arabic *hilal*, which has ^{which} that meaning, and connected with the regular ex-

(9). Macr. *ibid.* I. 9; Varro, *De Re Rust.* I. 37. (Wm. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Boston, 1859, Art. *Calendar*). (10). Demosth. in *Aristog.* I. p. 799; Horat. *Od.* III, 23, 1499. (Nisier, *ibid.*). (11). Horat. *Od.* III, 19, 949; cf. *Concl. Cull. can.* 62 (Nisier, *ibid.*). (12). Nowack, *Hebräische Archäologie*, pp. 138, 9; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 117.

pression for festivals of rejoicing as in Judges 9, 27 (cf. Levit. 19, 24), where the feast at vintage time is called וְהָיָה . This seems to show that many, if not all, of the religious (and joy-making) festivals among the Israelites were connected, at one time, with the new moon, — an inference that we can well allow when we consider the importance that the new moon had for primitive peoples by whom most grand natural phenomena were associated with religious sentiments and ceremonies, especially, when on the observance thereof depended the regulation of their months, and on that account, there being no fixed calendar, of the economic and religious life of the whole year. A final fact that testifies to the great antiquity of the new moon festival in ancient Israel is its connection with the clan sacrifices.⁽³⁾

3. The character of the celebration among the Israelites in historic times. In historic times, before the Exile, the new moon day was an important

(3). I. Sam. 20, 6. V. inf. par. 3.

festival, on which the Sabbath, as a subordinate lunar festival, was dependant⁽¹⁴⁾, and to which, in its import as a religious celebration the same was inferior⁽¹⁵⁾. In some respects New Moon and Sabbath stood on the same plane. Both days were observed by abstention from labor and other business pursuits⁽¹⁶⁾, were joyous festivals to which religious ceremonies, sacrifices and convocations, were attached, and, being days on which servant and beast were free from ordinary toil, were marked by journeys, and by pilgrimages to prophet and shrine⁽¹⁷⁾. The superior importance of the new moon festival can be seen from I Samuel 20 (5 seq). The day, as we learn ^{from this passage,} was celebrated at the court of King Saul by a common sacrificial meal from which it was

(14). Heine. Zimmermann, Keilinschriften und Bible, Berlin, 1903, pp. 30-32; Nowack, *ibid.* p. 143. Wellhausen, *ibid.* p. 117 and Note 1. (15). Encycl. Biblica, *ibid.* Cf. Nowack, *ibid.* p. 129. (16). Amos 8, 5. (17). Hos. 2, 13; Is. 1, 13. (18). II. Kings, 4, 23.

permissible to no one to absent himself without valid excuse.⁽¹⁹⁾ The new moon was, moreover, the occasion for the holding by the clans of yearly sacrificial assemblies, crowned by family feasts, as by the Bethlehemite clan to which David belonged.⁽²⁰⁾ The second day of the new moon, it would seem, was also celebrated.⁽²¹⁾ The early literary prophets still rank the new moon as a religious festival not only with the Sabbath but also with the three pilgrimages feasts: it will be part of the people's punishment, they declare, that all these celebrations will have to be discontinued in the Exile.⁽²²⁾ In short, the new moon celebration retained its character, inherited from the time when the Israelites, like other primitive nations, looked with wonder and awe on the strange aspect of the changing moon, as a most important religious and family festival.

(19). L. c. W. 5, 24-29.

(20). Ibid. W. 6, 29.

(21) Ibid. W. 27, 34.

(22). Hosea 2, 13; Is 1, 11 & 14.

II. After the Exile.

1. The New Moon ^{was} overshadowed by the Sabbath. The New Moon came to lose its pre-eminent importance during the Exile. This was probably due, at least more than to any other cause, to the fact of the altered significance of the Sabbath, which, on the one hand, had succeeded in cutting itself loose from its former dependence on the moon's phases, and, on the other, came with its rapidly predominating importance to overshadow the New Moon day completely. As long as the Sabbath depended for the time of its celebration on the New Moon day itself, the latter was naturally the more important festival. When, however, the Sabbath became fixed as the seventh day in each week of seven days, and only collided now and then with the New Moon day, instead of being, as before, determined by it, ⁽²³⁾ the New Moon by this very circum-

(23) Zimmern *ibid.*; Nowack, *ibid.* p. 140; Wellh. *ibid.* p. 118; *Encyc. Bibl.* *ibid.*

stance lost some of its importance, and the Sabbath was free to work itself out along independent lines, irrespective of the source from which it sprang. The circumstance that, owing to the absence of shrine and priesthood, neither the New Moon day nor the Sabbath could be observed in the Exile in the same manner as in the home land⁽²⁴⁾ accounts also, in a measure, for the decline in the observance of the former, as for the development of the latter in a new direction. The Sabbath, finally, having become connected with the agricultural life of the masses,⁽²⁵⁾ and becoming, during and after the Exile, the day of Rest par excellence, not any longer, as formerly, in consequence of the celebration of the day by sacrifice and worship, but as an idea in itself,⁽²⁶⁾ acquired a preponderating influence which succeeded ultimately in forcing the New Moon into the background.

2. Its significance after the Exile. For a long

(24). Cf. Nos. 2, 13; Lament 2, 6. (25). Cf. Exod. 20, 10; 23, 12; 34, 21; Deut. 5, 13, 14. (26). Cf. Ex. 16, 12; Num. 15, 32; Ex. 20, 16.

time after the overshadowing of the New Moon day by the Sabbath, the former must have retained some of its old importance in the life of the people. That this was so is suggested by the circumstance that the later prophets often date their revelations as occurring on the New Moon.⁽²⁷⁾ A further confirmation is found in the references to the popular regard for the day in later literature.⁽²⁸⁾ The prophet, moreover, takes for granted that the new moon observance will continue in Messianic times.⁽²⁹⁾ At any rate, it is probable that the importance of the old new moon celebration did not at once die out. The significance of the new moon in later times, however, was due chiefly to its relation to the festivals, which, being now attached to fixed days of the month, depended upon it.⁽³⁰⁾ To the importance of the new moon for the festivals was probably due

(27). Ezeke. 26, 1; 29, 17; 31, 1; 32, 1. Hag. 1, 1. (Encycl. Bibl. *ibid.*)

(28). Judith 8, 6. Coloss. 2, 16. (29). Is. 66, 23.

(30). Encycl. Bibl. *ibid.*; Nowack, *ibid.*

the fact that the day was observed in the temple, by special sacrifices,⁽³¹⁾ and by sounding the trumpet.⁽³²⁾ In later times, the new moon received an added significance, whereby it was regarded as the reflection of Israel's history, and the symbol of the Messianic hope and the redemption.⁽³³⁾

3. The character of its observance in later times. In the Temple, as has already been mentioned, the New Moon was celebrated by special sacrifices and the blowing of the Shofar. That the offering was larger for this day than for the Sabbath,⁽³⁴⁾ was probably due to the significance of the new moon at this period, for the great festivals, and perhaps also, was a reminiscence from the time when the new moon festival was all important. By holy convocation (שבת קודש) or the cessation of labor (יום טוב שאין עובדין בו), however, the day was not

(31) Num. 28, 11-15; II Chron. 23, 31; II Chr. 2, 3; 8, 13; 31, 3; Ezra 5; Neh. 10, 34.

(32) Num. 10, 10. Cf. Ps. 81, 4. (33) V. chap. 1, par. 6.

(34) Cf. Num. 28, 9-10; Ezek. 46, 4-5.

celebrated.⁽³⁵⁾ That it was permitted to labor on the new moon day is expressly mentioned in the Talmud⁽³⁶⁾. The women, who, it was said, were entitled to a special privilege because they had been less eager to worship the golden calf than the men, were accustomed to abstain from all unnecessary work on that day⁽³⁷⁾. To us the explanation of this special observance of the new moon in the home may seem with better reason to lie in the circumstance that the women had been, in ancient times, the particular adherents of the primitive moon cult.⁽³⁸⁾ Fasting was prohibited to all.⁽³⁹⁾ Owing to the fact that the importance of the new moon had come to consist chiefly in its connection with the fixing of the festivals, the

[35]. Cf. Num. *ibid.* [36] Hagiga 18 a. Erak. 10.

[37]. Jer. Pes. II; Pirke R. El. XLV; Ha-Manhig, Ha. Hallel XLIII, Tur Orak. Haiyim, 417.

[38]. Cf. Jer. 7, 18; 44, 15 *seq.*

[39]. Va'anot II. 10. Cf. Judith 8, 6.

most important ceremonies in later times centered around the observation and solemn proclamation of the new moon⁽⁴⁰⁾, conducted, during the Second Commonwealth, by the highest authorities in the State, and continued, thereafter, under the direction of the Academies. In order that all might know when the festivals were to be celebrated, care was taken to announce the time of the new moon thus officially established. This was done at first by fire signals⁽⁴¹⁾ afterwards, messengers were dispatched to the various communities. On the synagogue, the day was observed by the reading of the special section from the Torah (Num. 28, 11-15)⁽⁴²⁾. In connection with the proclamation ceremonies, which were accompanied, as were formerly the sacrifices in the Temple, by the blowing of the trumpet⁽⁴³⁾, it became customary

(40). V. chap. 1, par. 3, 5. (41). Rosh. Hash. II. 2-4.

(42). Ibid. I. 3; II. 2. Cf. ibid. 25a.

(43). Megilla III. 6; IV. 2. (44). Sanh. 41b.

to recite a special liturgical formula which
in the course of time received the name of
"new moon benediction" (ברכת הולדה).

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Article New Moon.

~~Winer~~ Jewish Encyclopedia, New Moon
from which two articles, most of the following
is derived.

The New Moon

Benediction.

ברכת הלבנה

Handwritten notes in the right margin, including the Hebrew word "ברכה" (Birkah) and other illegible text.

Chapter 1. Origin.

1. The earliest version of the benediction. A version of the benediction proper ascribed to R. Jehuda bar Ilai (about 140 C.E.), which varies but slightly from our present text (v. chap. 3) is found in Talmud Sanhedrin:
 ברוך אשר במצאנו:
 ברוך שחקים וברוח פיו כל צבאם חק וזמן נתן להם
 שלא יעלו את תפקידם שמים ושמים לעשות רצון
 קולם פועל. אמת שפועלתן אמת וללבה אמת
 שתתחדש על פרת ותפארת לעמוסי בטן שהן עתידין
 להתחדש כטותה ולפאר ליוצרים על שם לבויד

It has its root in the time when the proclamation of the new moon ⁽¹⁾ by the Sanhedrin ⁽²⁾, on which the observance of the festivals depended ⁽³⁾, was an important event in the life

(1). 42 a. Cf. Masseket Soferim IX, 1.
 (2). Rosh Hash. II. 7. (3). Ibid. I. 3, 4, 9.

of the Jews, in and outside of Palestine. The formal ceremony of announcing the new moon is, indeed, our starting point. Before entering into this question, however, it will be proper to mention another kind of benediction that was recited in connection with the moon.

2. Other benedictions in connection with the moon. Benedictions similar to those prescribed in connection with other natural phenomena⁽⁴⁾ were also recited in connection with the moon. According to the Tosefta⁽⁵⁾ it was customary to say a benediction at sight of sun, moon, and stars: **את החמה ואת הלילה ואת השמים כסדרן אומר יוסה** On beholding the moon in its full light, the same benediction was recited: **החמה ואת הלילה ואת השמים כסדרן אומר יוסה**.⁽⁶⁾ These benedictions

(4) Ber. IX. 2. (5) Tosefta Ber. VI. Cf. the benedictions in Ber. IX. 9. (6) Baraita Ber. 59b. Cf. Jerusalemi IX.

probably gave way to or were merged, later, in the benediction given above. We return to the latter, and to the proclamation ceremony in which, as we shall endeavor to show, it had its origin.

3. The proclamation of the new moon. Originally, and still in the time of the Second Temple, the regulation of the new moon was in the hands of the priests⁽⁷⁾, and the proclamation was made by the high priest, as in Rome by the Pontifex Maximus⁽⁸⁾. Later the right of calculation became the prerogative of the Sanhedrin and particularly of the patriarch (xvi), its president⁽⁹⁾. Before the introduction of a fixed calendar (which took place about 360 C. A.), the fixing of the New Moon day was based principally on the testimony of witnesses, who were examined in the presence of the Sanhedrin on the thirtieth day of such month⁽¹⁰⁾.

(7). Rosh Hash. I. 7. (8). Jewish Encyclopedia, art. New Moon.

(9). Rosh Hash. I. 7; II. 5, 7, 9. (10). Ibid. II. 5, 6.

As soon as sufficient evidence had been secured, the president of the Sanhedrin, in the presence of at least three members⁽¹¹⁾, consecrated the new moon, pronouncing the word "וְיָיָן", "it is consecrated," which was repeated twice by the assembled multitude.⁽¹²⁾ In case adequate testimony was not secured before dark, the month was declared intercalated (וְיָיָן)⁽¹³⁾, and the word of consecration not pronounced.⁽¹⁴⁾ It will be attempted to trace the present new moon benediction back to an original short formula which must have been connected with the expression וְיָיָן, repeated by the people after the Nasi when the formal sanctification took place.

4. Evidence of an original short formula. From evidence in the Talmud and Midrash, as well as in the regular new moon Vefilla, it appears

(11). Ibid. III. 1. Sanh. I. 2.

(12). Rosh Hash. II. 7. (13). Ibid. III. 1.

(14). Ibid. II. 7; Demarah 24 a.

Origin.

6.

That the formula originally in use in connection with the new moon was a short one (ברכה קצרה)⁽¹⁵⁾, corresponding to the usual form of benediction found in Mishna Berakot.⁽¹⁶⁾ From Rabbi Sanhedrin we learn that the short benediction ברוך מחדש חדשים was in use in R. Uchi's time (about 380).⁽¹⁷⁾ Shemot Rabbah II has the following: הוואה את קלוגה קדש ברך לברך ברוך שדו יטראל מקדשין את החדש. יש מן רבגין ארתי ברוך מחדש חדשים ויש מהם אוטרים ברוך מקדש חדשים ויש מהם אוטרים מקדש יטראל שאם אין יטראל מקדשין: אוטרו אין אוטרו קדוש ליום: It seems probable from Beza 17a that the phrase ברוך שדו יטראל מקדשין את החדש has been misplaced⁽¹⁸⁾ and, consequently, that these are herein reported the short formulae that were regularly in use when this passage was written. The following passage from Yerushalmi⁽¹⁹⁾ קדוה א מ

(15). Cf. Jer. Ber. I, Babil. 46; Pes. 104b. (16). II. 1-3; II. 1-3. (17). 42a. (18). Müller, Mas. Sofrim, p. 280 (19). Ber. II. 13^b

Origin

קדושה אור ברך סודו סודו, and the benediction
 in the Musaf Tefilla for the New-moon day, both
 for Sabbath and week days: **ה"א ה סקדו ישראל**
והאטי חדשי (20), also point to an original short
 formula. The passage from Shemot Rabbah suggests
 immediately that the therein last mentioned formula
ה"א ה סקדו, to which the words **והאטי חדשי**
והאטי חדשי must be supplied in order to
 complete the sense, was the original version, and
 that the others grew up in course of time. This is
 confirmed not only by the fact that the version
והאטי חדשי וישראל was preserved in the Tefilla,
 but further by the circumstance that the identical
 form occurs as the ending of the benediction re-
 cited at the new moon banquet (21) of which more
 will be said later. Finally, the version under con-
 sideration is in accord with the word of sanctifica-

(20). Cf. Ibid: **בתפילה ל' יוסי בר יהודיא אמר סקדו**
ישראל והאטי חדשי ח"א בר אטי אמר סקדו ישראל ור"ח:

(21). *Muss. Sof.* XIX, 9.

Origin

8.

tion, וְהִקְרַב, pronounced by the Nasi and repeated by the people at the moment when the ^{new} moon was proclaimed. (22) The form וְהִקְרַב הַיָּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה, as in the version of the longer formula in Masseket Sopherim (23) which was preserved in some cases as the regular ending of the present benediction (v. Chap. 3), represents the natural shortening of the formula by the diminution of the הַיָּדוֹשׁ idea from the text. The third version וְהִקְרַב הַיָּדוֹשׁ, which is supported by Sanhedrin (24) and most authorities (v. Chap. 3), was probably introduced later to correspond more nearly with the idea of renewal, and perhaps to differentiate from the formula in the regular B'filla. The development of this original short benediction into our present longer form was influenced by another benediction recited by a select few at a special

(22) Cf. Shemot Rab. IX: 'הַיָּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְהִקְרַב הַיָּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה וְהִקְרַב הַיָּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אַגְוִי ה' וְלִפְנֵי שְׁהֵם
מִקְדָּשִׁים לְשִׁמְשִׁים לְכַךְ מֵהֶם מִקְדָּשִׁים הוּא מִקְדָּשׁ:
(23) IX. 1. (24) V. sup. par. 1.

This is scarcely correct.

The הַבְּרִית 7178 6300 of the Mishnah Lamberkin was originally the same as the הַבְּרִית 7178 6310 and received the former name from the greater functional importance of the same in case of the הַבְּרִית 7178. See Mueller's notes and the text of Mas. *Shema*.

gathering in honor of the new moon.

5. The new moon banquet and the benediction recited thereat. Whenever the Sanhedrin was constrained, by lack of proper testimony with regard to the new moon, to intercalate a current month, signifying thereby that not the thirtieth but the next day was to be the first of the new month, in which case the formal act of sanctifying the new moon in the presence of witnesses did not take place ⁽²⁵⁾ it was customary to hold a banquet in the evening, called the "intercalation banquet," סעודת יום טוב, which the members of the Sanhedrin and the "סנינים", members of the סנינים, attended. ⁽²⁶⁾ At this banquet, after the סעודת יום טוב, a special benediction in honor of the new moon was recited. ⁽²⁷⁾

(25). V. sup. par. 3.

(26). Maimon. Hil. Kid. hu - Hodesh III. 7. Cf. Mass. Sof. XIX, 9; Bar. San. 70b. Mishna ibid. VIII. 2.

(27). Mass. Sof. ibid. Cf. Nahalat Ya'akov s. l.

The benediction, which is found only in *Masseset Sopherim*⁽²⁸⁾, reads as follows: *בא"ה אט"ה אש"ר*
בצגולה גיורל דורשים האם ולטדם זמן חדשים
טיכס ירח כילל לבנה שיגה גבוגם סודלי צמים
פילס צורגו קי"צ רגעים שבם תיקן אופות חודש
ומעדים שגא' אשה ירח לטועדים [שמש ידע מבוא]
(תהלים ק"ד) ואומר (ישעיה' ס"ו) כי כאשר שמים חדשים
והארץ החדשה וחיותם בא"ה מקדש ישאל וראש חדשים

Here the benediction proper ends, after which Psalms 106, 107 and 108, and II. Chron. 20, 21 were recited. There followed a prayer for the coming of Elijah and the Messiah, and for the future glory of Israel, concluding with the formula "it is consecrated," especially employed for the sanctification of the new moon in many varying combinations. [*] (30).

(28). Ibid. (29). Restored from the extant corrupt version: Müller, *Mass. Sof.* pp. 272-3. 30. *Mass. Sof.* ibid.

[*]

קודש החדש מקודש בל"ח טק וד' זמנו טק' צינודו טק' כסוד
 ט' כהלכה טק' בעליונים טק' בתחתונים טק' בא"ה טק'

An examination of what we have called the benediction proper, will show that it consists of three separate parts: (1) an introduction; (2) a Biblical quotation (Ps. 68, 22); and (3) a closing formula (יהוה שם). The introduction is an expression of thanksgiving to God for the wise men, who, according to the divinely appointed phases of the moon, regulate the months and fix the seasons, which is in excellent accord with the practice of regulating and proclaiming the new moon as we have described it. The closing formula is identical with the short formula ^{originally} in common use. (31) The Biblical quotation, "For as the new heavens and

(31). Cf. sup. par. 4.

קָדַם סֵק' דִּימְהֵלִים סֵק' בְּכֹל סִקְוֹתָא יִשְׁרָאֵל סֵק' דְּפִי דְּבִרְתָּא
 :דְּיָוָה סֵק' בְּבֵית דִּי יָוָה. The phrase סֵק' דְּיָוָה was probably
 introduced at the time when the banquet was held even
 if the month was not intercalated, i. e. when the first day of the
 month fell regularly on the 30th. Cf. Müller, *ibid.*, p. 271.

the new earth which I will make, shall have permanence before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name be permanent," finally, simplifying as it does, a comparison of the moon's renewal with the fortunes of Israel, has an important connection with the text of our present benediction, as will be shown.

6. The new moon and the fortunes of Israel.
 A peculiar fact, which, in later times, gave to the moon, aside from its intimate connection with the festivals, its chief importance, and to which was probably due the retention, after the introduction of a fixed calendar, of the ceremonies in connection with its periodic renewal, was the conception of the similarity of the waxing and waning of its light to the fortunes of Israel, the comparison between the changing phases of the moon and Israel's history is a familiar one: החדש לי
 יום ומלכות שלכם לי לזר. הלגנה בבא שון של גסן
 טתחלת להאד וכל שהיא הולכת ואצירה עד ט"ו יום

ודיסקוס שלה מתטלא וטטיו ונד לי אור שלה חסר. בלי
 גיגה נראית כן ישראל טיו דור טן אברהם ונד
 שלטה..... כיון שבא שלמה נתטלא דיסקוס של לבנה..
 וטטם התחילו הטלכים בוחטן והולכין.....

A similar comparison of Israel with the moon, although on
 different lines, is contained in the following:

לכך מסר חקב"ה סוד הלבנה לישראל שהיו הם
 טוגים בה והצכו"ם טונין לחמה. לוטר מה חטה גיה
 אלא ביום כך הם אין טושלים אלא בעוה"ז וכטם
 שהלבנה נראית ביום ובלילה כך ישראל טושלין
 בעה"ז ובצה"ב ולכך נאטר החוש הזה שיהא שלכם
 (33) As a result, no doubt, of such
 comparisons, the prophet's prediction that in the
 future "the light of the moon will be like the
 light of the sun" (Is. 30, 26), was taken as a promise
 of the future glory of Israel. (34) The sanctification

(32). Shemot Rab. VI.

(33). Ibid. Cf. Pesikta R. VI.

(34). Jewish Encycl., Art. New Moon.

of the new moon was likened to the sanctification of Israel, and the renewal of the moon's light regarded as prophetic of Israel's renewal:

כמו שראשי חדשים מסקדשין ומתחדשין כעולם הזה
 כך יהיו ישראל מסקדשין [ומתחדשין] לעתיד לבוא: ⁽³⁵⁾

As the moon, so the Messiah appointed to redeem Israel was, according to belief, at times hidden and at times again revealed. ⁽³⁶⁾ A messenger sent to sanctify the new moon was given a Messianic password. ⁽³⁷⁾ The special prayer inserted in the Sepilla for the Sabbath preceding ^{ד'טו}, in connection with the proclamation of the same, contains a special reference to the hoped for redemption. ⁽³⁸⁾ Finally, the coming of the Messiah and the future glory of Israel when it will have

(35). Pirke R. Eliezer LI. Cf. En Yaa'kob to Ber. LIX.

(36). Pesikta R. Ibid. Cf. J. Euseb. ibid.

(37). Rosh Hash. 25a. V. chap. II. par. 2.

(38). מי שיעשה וסים לאבותינו הוא יגאל אותנו

ו'קבץ נדחיהו מארבע כרפות הארץ:

been noticed, apart from the actual act of sanctifying the new moon, the central idea in the Special exercises at the new moon banquet.⁽³⁹⁾ It will be seen later that the added significance which had thus come in time to attach to the new moon has an important connection with the present benediction.

7. The present benediction. In place of the short formula originally recited at sight of the new moon⁽⁴⁰⁾, there came to be substituted, perhaps because of the increased significance of the moon as the symbol of Israel's fortunes, and under the influence, no doubt, of the special benediction recited by the כֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל at the new moon banquet, a benediction of the so-called long form (ברכה ארוכה). The closing phrase of this benediction (חזקיסה) which, as has been pointed out, is found in *Sukhedrin*⁽⁴¹⁾, is the same as the

(39). V. sup. par. 5. (40). V. sup. par. 4.

(41). V. sup. par. 1.

recited at the banquet held in honor of the new moon; and that, later, the original short formula in common use was replaced, under the influence of the eulogy of the $\text{O}^{\text{m}} \text{N}^{\text{m}}$, by a longer benediction, which existed as early as 140 C. E. For a closer determination of the origin of the benediction, or of the date of its composition, the necessary data are lacking.

Chapter 2. Further Development.

To the benediction proper as described in the last chapter, a number of additions was made subsequently from time to time, until the original comparatively simple form developed into a eulogy of numerous parts. These additions will be taken up in the order in which they occur in our prayer book. The designations, used for convenience only, are our own.

11. The Musafet Sopherim addition. Musafet Sopherim has⁽¹⁾ in addition to the original benediction, the following:

וְאִמְרַת ג' פ' סִימָן טוֹב סֵטֶן
 סִימָן טוֹב [סִימָן טוֹב] לְכֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרוּךְ יוֹצֵר בְּרוּךְ יוֹשֵׁב
 בְּרוּךְ קוֹרֵן בְּרוּךְ בּוֹרֵךְ וְרוֹקֵד ג' רִקִּידוֹת כְּאֵגֶדֶה
 וְאִמְרַת ג' פ' כֶּסֶם שֶׁאֵי רוֹקֵד וְאֵי נֶגֶד וְאֵי נֶגֶד
 כִּי כִן אֵם יִרְקֵדוּ אַחֲרָיִם כְּאֵגֶדֶה לֹא יִרְאֶוּ בִּי

Further Development.

19.

תפואה עליהם אימיה ופחד ולספרך אמן אמן סלה
 הללויה ואומר לחבריו ג"פ שלום וילך להיטוב בלב
 : 10. This is the text of the usual edition, and
 is nearer than that of older editions to the text
 of our prayer book (v. chap. 3).

The most obvious explanation of the clause
 להיטוב בלב is that it was
 added to emphasize the idea that the new
 moon was a sign propitious to Israel and
 prophetic of its glorious future.⁽²⁾ The view which
 connects these words with the clause ואלו
 דוקד will be referred to in connection with
 the latter. The corresponding clause in our
 prayer book (ולו להיטוב בלב) has been transferred so as to follow
 the greeting שלום עליכם.

The short eulogy in added praise of the

(2). Cf. Pesikta R. VI: יקב שהוא קטן טובה
 ללבנה שהוא קטן אמר לי נתמן והוא סוף טוב
 and v. chap. 1, par. 6. see Huber.

therefrom, the order of the Midrash. This version is given also by other authorities (v. chap. 3). It is possible that the original version read simply $\text{יָבֹחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$, corresponding exactly to the Midrash on which it was based, and that the order of the two different versions found in the extant editions of Masseket Sofrim represents the original phrase with the addition of one cognate expression, as the version of the usual edition, as well as other versions, represents the same with several such additions. At any rate, it is evident in the light of the varying additions and arrangements found in the numerous versions (v. chap. 3), that the later version of Masseket Sofrim, which is the same as that of our prayer book, has been designedly arranged, and perhaps the additional words correspondingly selected, to form an acrostic constructed from the initial letters of the name Jacob ($\text{יָבֹחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$), with reference,

no doubt, to the words of the Midrash quoted above. That this acrostic arrangement existed already in Gaonic times is to be seen from the fact that Solomon b. Yerucham (first half of the tenth century) is acquainted with it⁽⁶⁾.

As to the origin and significance of the following clauses of this section, there is considerable difference of opinion among commentators and writers. One commentator⁽⁷⁾ offers the fanciful explanation that the ceremony of shipping towards the moon three times and repeating the accompanying formula was intended as an act of supplication to God that He might withhold from His people the three kinds of calamities (those sent by God, those originating in Nature, and those having their source in man himself) that may befall the human race. Müller⁽⁸⁾ thinks that the sentence may

(6) Müller, *Has. Sof.* p. 281.
p. 246. (8) *Ibid.* p. 282.

(7) Eshück, *Sid. Rabbim*,

date from the time when the Romans, i. e. under Constantius (about 350 C. E.), forbade the computation of the calendar, and was meant to encourage the faithful to adhere to this practice in spite of Roman spy or hostile interference. In the opinion of Gottlieb (9) they are directed against the Karaites, who refused to accept the fixed calendar of the Rabbantes. The most that can be said for these latter opinions is that there is no particular evidence against them. To us, however, it seems probable, from the character both of the language itself and of the ceremony attached thereto, that the clause is a Kabbalistic formula, meant to express a mystical relation between the celebrant and the moon. That Maimonides considered the same a magical formula, and as such to be rejected, is most likely to be inferred from the circumstance that he fails

(9). *Orientalist* for 1876. p. 246. Müller, *ibid.*

to include it in his version of the benediction,⁽¹⁰⁾ since the fact that it occurs in Massahet Zopherim proves its existence before his time. That the origin of the formula was is difficult to say. It is possible that, as Jacob Reifmann suggests,⁽¹¹⁾ the formula, dating from the remote past, was originally employed on the occasion of an eclipse of the moon (למנוחה וירח אור), and was later, for some unaccountable reason, added to the new moon benediction. According to this explanation, an eclipse of the moon was of old considered a sign of evil,⁽¹²⁾ and was supposed to presage calamity and disaster.⁽¹³⁾ Consequently, its maintenance, fasting was recommended in such cases,

(10). Hil. Ber. v. 16. Cf. Landschutz, Heyyon Leb. p. 393.

(11). Peshet Debar, Warsaw, 1845, p. 21 (Landschutz, ibid.).

(12). Cf. Succah 29a; Mev. in Yalcut Bo, 181.

(13). Tana Debe Elijahu II. 16.

(14). Sefer Hasidim. 230.

and it became customary to seek to divert the threatened evil by reciting magical formulae, to which the one in our benediction at one time belonged. This view includes the clause גַּיּוֹ יָרֵוֹ as a part of the incantation. Perhaps, however, the formula in question is only one of similar mystical formulae found in the Talmud and especially in later Kabbalistic literature for the origin of which it is as well not to attempt to give a rational explanation.

In explanation of the greeting וּבְרַחֲמֵי it has been suggested (15) that the celebrants exchange mutual good wishes to offset the unfriendly attitude they assume in common toward their enemies, whom they have sought to charm into powerlessness with the words וּבְרַחֲמֵי . It must be remarked, however, that the custom of mutual greeting after prayer is

(15). Magen Abraham to Shulhan Aruk, Oraḥ Hayyim, 426.2.

already known to the Talmud.⁽¹⁶⁾ The superstitious notion that whoever recited the new moon benediction would not die during that month⁽¹⁷⁾ is said to have been founded on this greeting.⁽¹⁸⁾

As to the time when this section was added, nothing can be maintained with certainty. It can only be conjectured from the fact that it occurs in Masseket Soferim, which dates from Gaonic times (between 750-850),⁽¹⁹⁾ whereas the version of the benediction in the Talmud does not include it, as well as from the superstitious character of a part thereof, which is in accord with much of the general spirit of that time, that the addition was made some time during the period of the Gaonim. The

(16) Yoma, 53b: הַטּוֹטָב לְלֵבִיךָ שֶׁיִּפְסִיךָ שְׁלוֹשׁ
פְּסִיחוֹת לְאַחֲרָיו וְאַחֲכֵי יָמֵי שְׁלוֹמִים:

(17) Seder Birkat ha-Hodesh (Baer Abod. Yisr. p. 338).

(18) Or Hadash (Baer, ibid).

(19) Müller, ibid., Introduction p. 2122.

polation was due to the fact that David established the lunar cycle of 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 (of 1080 parts), as he finds stated elsewhere.⁽²⁵⁾ The author of Sha'are Efraim⁽²⁶⁾ gives as the reason that the numerical value of the words $\text{וְיָשָׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל קִי וְקִיִּים}$ is equal to that of וְיָשָׁב מִדָּו . The most probable explanation is that the clause is but another allusion to the Messianic hope,⁽²⁷⁾ to which it will be remembered special emphasis was given in the original benediction.⁽²⁸⁾ This explanation is borne out by the context of the passage in the Talmud in which the words occur: $\text{א"ל דדי לר' ח"א זיל לעין ט ב}$

דוד טה אג' לא אמרתי שירה עד שנת חרפתו מאורי
 ו עד שגברו בידי יכך ישראל איך אומרים שירה עד שימחר
 ו עד שיפלו בי דם וזה כמסופת הי"ת לרבים ואג' סימן טו
 [47]. Ibid. (25). Jehudah ha-Sewi, Kuzari
 II. 64; II. 29. (26). To Shulhan Arukh, Or. Hay. ibid.
 [27]. Cf. Schück, ibid; Isserles to Sh. Ar. Or. Hay. ibid.
 [28]. V. chap. 1 part.

that aside from the fact that Maseket Soferim does not know of it, and that, as has been said, it is not found in an old manuscript or the prayer books, it is likewise missing in two of the oldest printed editions of the prayer book, in Mahzor Vitry and in Wundersham. Mention of the custom of reciting these words in connection with the new moon benediction is also not made in the original text of the Shulhan Aruk on this topic,⁽³⁰⁾ but R. Moses Isserles ad locum calls attention to it.

3. The addition from Canticles. The following verses from Canticles⁽³²⁾ were appended as a still further addition to the benediction: קול דודי הנה זה: בא מדלג על ההרים טק פץ על הגבצות: דומה דודי לצבי או לצפר האילים. הנה זה צומד אחר כפולו: Neither the Sephardic

(30). Baer, *ibid.* V. *ibid.* p. 71.

(31). Orak. Hayyim 426, 2.

(32). 2, 8, 9.

and אשר אבי הלק צריך להסירא מקומו (37) These comments, which were made originally with the purpose of emphasizing the importance of the ceremony, were appended for the same reason, to the benediction. With no doubt the same purpose in view, R. Jacob Emden (1698-1776) in his Siddur includes still another comment, אשר כל המברך את, ⁽³⁸⁾ החדש בזמנו כאלו מקבל פגי השכינה: which he inserts before the first (39)

5. The second Messianic addition. A second Messianic addition came in the course of time to be injected into the ceremony. This section, which takes the form of a special prayer introduced and concluded by a Biblical verse, reads as follows:

טי זאת צלה טן הסדנר שתרכקתל על דוד ה: ⁽⁴⁰⁾
 ויהי רצון כי אלהי ואלהי אבותי לטל צוה פגי ימות
 הלבנה ולא יהיה שום סיעוסי ויהי אור הלבנה כאור
 החמה וכאור שפעת ימי בראשית כמו שהיתה קדם

(37). Ibid. Mention of the custom of reciting both passages is made in *Neuw. ibid.*, p. 74 a. (38) Ibid. (39) *Buer, ibid.*, p. 339.

which does not occur in the Sephardic ritual was introduced by Isaac Luria, the Kabbalist (1532-1572).

6. The addition of special Psalms. It became customary, as is reported in the name of the Kabbalist Isaac Hurwitz (17th century), to recite Psalms 121 and 150 at the end of the benediction⁽⁴⁵⁾. Kabbalists added also the 67th Psalm⁽⁴⁶⁾.

(45). *Magen Abraham* to Shul. Ar. Or. Hay. *ibid.* Cf. *Yeh. Mils. v. Abr. Epstein, Kitzur Sheloh, Amsterdam, 1701, p. 75a. Hurwitz himself (ibid pp. 74a, 140) mentions* *book 2* 150. (46). Epstein, *ibid.* p. 75a.

Chapter 3. Comparative Text, with Regulations as to the Time and Place of Performing the Ceremony.

A. Text.

A comparison of the various extant versions of the benediction reveals a number of variations in the text, the most important of which in the principal parts of the benediction, will be pointed out.

1. The original benediction. The text of the original benediction in our prayer book (*Ch. Beneyiz ritual*) reads as follows: ברוך אתה יי אלהינו סוף קדושים אשר ברא שחקים וברוח פיו כל צרכאם חק וזמן גמון להם שלא ישגו את תפקידם ששים ושחקים⁽²⁾ לשות לבון קיוםם פועל אתם שפועלתו אתם וללכנה אתם שנתפחדים

(1). Cf. Psalms 33.6.

(2). Cf. *ibid.*, 19.6

קטרתם תבצרם לעמודי בטן הקתידים להתחיל
 כמותה ולפצר ליוצרים על שם כבוד מלכותו עולם
 אלה " סוף דע חרשים:

Our reading קו וק is found also in the Sanhedrin version⁽⁴⁾ in the Talmud compilation of R. Asher b. Yehiel (Rosh), in Sefer Mivvot Gadol (Semag)⁽⁵⁾, in Tur⁽⁶⁾, in Rokeach (of R. Elijzer b. Jehudah of Worms)⁽⁷⁾, in Commentary to Meshor of Shem Tob⁽⁸⁾, in the two of the oldest printed editions of the prayer book referred to above (chap. 2, par. 2 and note 30), and in an old manuscript of the prayer book⁽⁹⁾ Amram Siddur, Sinson Kalisa in Halakot Gedolot, the Talmud compilation of R. Jona Alfasi, Machzor Vitrei⁽¹⁰⁾, Meimohides⁽¹¹⁾, Isaac b. Joseph in Sefer Mivvot Katan (Semak)⁽¹²⁾, Shilole ha-Seket⁽¹³⁾, and Abudraham⁽¹⁴⁾ read קו וק . Maschet

(4) Sanhedrin 42a. v. chap. 1, par. 1. (5) Ber. 27. (6) Or. Hay. 426.
 (7) 229. (8) II. 5. (9) V. Baer, Abud. Yeor. p. 33 f.
 (10) Ed. S. Hurwitz, Berlin 1893, p. 183. (11) Ber. I. 16. (12) 150.
 (13) Ziphayah b. Abi. ha-Rofeh, ed. Buber, Vilna, 1886, p. 133. (14) Hil. Ber.

Comparative Text

Soferim ⁽¹⁵⁾ omits the words שש"ם...: קו"ם.

The reading שש"ם ופיוט שש"ם ופיוט of our prayer book occurs in Alfasi, Rosh, Semag, Tur, Mahar Vitry and the Sephardic ritual. Other versions and Old Manuscript ⁽¹⁶⁾ have שש"ם ופיוט שש"ם ופיוט and שש"ם ופיוט שש"ם ופיוט respectively. Sanhedrin, Masseket Soferim in a manuscript ⁽¹⁷⁾, Rabbinum Seder, Kelura, and Rokeach read שש"ם ופיוט שש"ם ופיוט. The usual edition of Masseket Soferim has שש"ם ופיוט שש"ם ופיוט. Maimonides reads שש"ם ופיוט שש"ם ופיוט.

For פסוקי תורה of our text, Masseket Soferim has פסוקי תורה ופיוט. For פסוקי תורה, the same, Sanhedrin and Maimonides read פסוקי תורה ופיוט. Mahar Vitry and Masseket Soferim read פסוקי תורה ופיוט and פסוקי תורה ופיוט respectively. Instead of פסוקי תורה ופיוט, Masseket Soferim has פסוקי תורה ופיוט. Maimonides reads פסוקי תורה ופיוט with the addition of פסוקי תורה ופיוט.

(15) ~~181~~. (16) Baer, *ibid.* (17) Müller, *Max. Sof.* p. 281.

: ידא הדרו

This passage is missing altogether in Seder-
gin, R. Ahrahan Seder, and Meimorides. It
occurs in Masseket Soferim⁽²¹⁾, Mahzor Vitry^{and} Albu-
ham, without the clause וְיִתְּנֶנּוּ לָנוּ הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה. In
Masseket Soferim, which contains the earliest
version of the passage⁽²²⁾ and as late as Mahzor
Vitry (about 1100⁽²³⁾), the remaining clauses are
arranged in an order different from that of
our text, viz., כִּי יִתְּנֶנּוּ לָנוּ הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה כִּי יִתְּנֶנּוּ
(אֲנִי וְעַמִּי) כִּי יִתְּנֶנּוּ לָנוּ הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

The reading כִּי יִתְּנֶנּוּ לָנוּ הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה
כִּי יִתְּנֶנּוּ לָנוּ הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה of our text is found in the usual
edition of Masseket Soferim and in Albuham.
Older editions of Masseket Soferim⁽²⁴⁾, Mahzor
Vitry, ha-Mankig⁽²⁵⁾, Bahya commentary to Ps,
and others, have כִּי יִתְּנֶנּוּ לָנוּ הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה כִּי יִתְּנֶנּוּ לָנוּ הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

(21). Ibid. 2. (22). V. chap. 2, part 1.
(23) Zunz, Pitus, p. 20. (24). Baer, ibid. p. 338.
(25). Ab. S. Nathan (ab. 1200) of Lüneburg, ed. J. Hildberg, Berlin.

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it was permissible, as we have seen, to recite the benediction any night from the first appearance of the moon until after the fifteenth day of the month, later authorities restricted the time considerably. The first of these instructions, found in Masseket Soferim⁽³⁵⁾ reads as follows: $\text{אין מברכין בלילה אלא ביום}$. As to the original meaning of this passage there is much difference of opinion. The accepted signification of the words as they stand is that the benediction is to be recited at the close of the Sabbath when the celebrant is arrayed in festive garments. The difficulty arises from the fact that R. Jona Allusi had a different version of the passage: $\text{אין מברכין בלילה אלא ביום}$ ⁽³⁶⁾, which is variously interpreted⁽³⁷⁾. According to one view

(35). XX. 1.

(36). Ber. IV. The same version is given by Midrash Jerushalmi (Aludarkham Hil Ber).

(37). Bet Josef to Tur Or. Hay. 426.

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the meaning of the words *עד שיתכבד שם* is: until after the benediction has been said over the spices⁽³⁸⁾. Another explanation gives them the meaning: when it (the moon) grows large and spreads its light like a canopy.⁽³⁹⁾ A third explanation interprets: when it (the moon) becomes fragrant or sweet, i. e. when man begins to enjoy its light.⁽⁴⁰⁾ According to the explanation last given, the benediction cannot be said until after three days following the conjunction of the sun with the moon (*אסולת*), when the latter first becomes visible on earth. Whether the version *עד שיתכבד שם* was the original reading of the passage in *Masseket Soferim* is doubtful; and why it was deemed appropriate to connect the ceremony with the close of the

(38) *עד שיתכבד שם* שיתכבד על הכתמים: (39) *עד שיתכבד שם* שיתכבד על הכתמים: (40) *עד שיתכבד שם* שיתכבד על הכתמים: *עד שיתכבד שם* שיתכבד על הכתמים: *עד שיתכבד שם* שיתכבד על הכתמים:

Sabbath is likewise difficult to say. It is possible, that, as Brück maintains, the custom of reciting the benediction at the close of the Sabbath grew out of the Kabbalistic notion that the celebrants must sever themselves toward the moon like bridegroom to bride⁽⁴²⁾, wherefore the close of the Sabbath was chosen as the time when the ceremony could most suitably be performed with the requisite pomp and solemnity. That the custom originated in this manner is borne out partly by the fact that the occasion is otherwise spoken of as one of happiness and rejoicing⁽⁴³⁾. Not any rate, we learn from the

(41). *Kub. Cerem. Gebr.* pp. 37-8. (42). *Hurw. Shene Dub. ha Berit, Thy'ar ha-Otiyot* (Brück, *ibid.*, p. 38, Note 16). Brück holds further (*ibid.*, p. 38) that the same idea accounts for the practice of performing the ceremony only in an assembly of ten (7. *ib.*). (43). Cf. the words in the *Mass. Sif.*, l. c.: $\text{ג'י'ו ג'י'ג' י'ו'ג'ה' ג'י'ג'}$, and the explanation of Bahya (*com. to Bo*) of the custom of dancing

3. *Later restrictions.* By later regulations the time for performing the ceremony was restricted still more. It was held not permissible to recite the benediction on Sabbath Eve or on the eve of any festival.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Further, the ceremony must be postponed before all fast days, so in the month of Ab until after the Fast on the ninth day (it is not even permitted to perform the ceremony at the close of that day, and in the month of Tishri until the close of the Day of Atonement⁽⁴⁷⁾). The reason for these restrictions is, perhaps to be found in the Kabbalistic conception of the sanctification of the new moon as a ceremony of marriage, which should not take place on any festival or holiday.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Finally, on account of the possibil-

Ber. 57a וְהָיָה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁמַע אֶת הַקּוֹל בְּיָמֵינוּ וְיִשְׁמַע אֶת הַקּוֹל בְּיָמֵינוּ; and same in
 Isserles to Shul. Ar. Or. Hag. ibid. (46). Mahari'el, Hil. Yom. Tob.
 Shul. Ar. ibid. (47). Shul. Ar. ibid.
 (48). Brück, ibid. p. 39.

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ity of cloudy weather, it was not allowable, in any event, even for the sake of performing it at the close of the Sabbath, to postpone the ceremony after the tenth of the month.⁽⁴⁹⁾

As a result of the various restrictions enumerated, the period during which the ceremony might be performed was limited to any night between the third and the sixteenth day of the month, with the exception of Sabbaths and holidays and the entire time in any month preceding a fast day, and with the additional proviso that, if possible, it was to take place at the close of the Sabbath.

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It is very probable that it was customary, at one time, to recite the new moon benediction in the home, as we are told⁽⁵⁰⁾ concerning

(49). Isserles to Shul. Ar. ibid. (50). Mass. Sof. III, 9. Cf. Nahalat Ya'akov a. l.

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the special benediction originally recited by the
וְרַחֵם at the new moon banquet, ⁽⁵¹⁾ and in any
posture that it pleased the celebrant to assume. ⁽⁵²⁾
In Talmudic times it was prescribed, because
of the great importance that had come to
attach to it, that the benediction be recited
standing. ⁽⁵³⁾ Later authorities enjoined that
the ceremony be performed in the open air, ⁽⁵⁴⁾ and
finally, forbade the home observance altogether, ⁽⁵⁵⁾
except when the fear of hunger, such as the
hostility of scoffing neighbors, prevented the
holding of the prescribed solemnization in
the street, in which case it was made allow-
able to recite the benediction from an open
door or window. ⁽⁵⁶⁾

(51). V. Chap. 1, par. 5. (52). Cf. Brück, *ibid.*, p. 34.

(53) Sanhedrin 42a: וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם
וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם. (54). Hag. Alfasi *ibid.* (55). *Ibid.*: וְרַחֵם

וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם וְרַחֵם. Cf. Isserles to Shul. *ibid.* (56). Bayit Ha-
dash to Shul. Ar. *ibid.*

Various explanations have been given of the practice of performing the ceremony in the open air. One explanation finds the reason therefor in the fact that, since the ceremony was instituted for the purpose of showing reverential honor to God⁽⁵⁷⁾, it must be performed in the open air, in the same manner that one goes forth to do homage to a king⁽⁵⁸⁾. According to another explanation the ceremony is performed in the public streets as an object lesson to idolaters who worship the moon, that they may hear God extolled as the creator of the moon, as of all else that exists⁽⁵⁹⁾. The most probable explanation⁽⁶⁰⁾ finds the basis for the practice in the Kabbalistic idea that the new moon ceremony is a virtual marriage between Israel and the moon, from which it was inferred that the former

(57). תפודו כע מן יאן 20 לראות, Dan 42 a. (58) Bayit Hadash, *ibid.* (59). Schück, Sid. Rash. p. 25 a. (60) Brück, *ibid.*, p. 38.

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was to be performed, like the latter, in the open street.

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