

What, then, was the main reason? We read further:

A year may be made embolismic on three grounds—on account of the (state of the) green ears of corn or (that of) fruit (growing on the) trees or the (lateness of the) *t'quphab*.¹⁾ Any two of these reasons may justify an embolismic year, but one of them (alone) does not justify an embolismic year. Everyone is glad when the (state of the) green ears of corn is one of them. Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says, On account of the (lateness of the) *t'quphab*.²⁾

The reasons given here are of very different quality. Observation of the grain crops is also, as I have endeavoured to show, no more than a popular interpretation of the motive for the adjustment of the lunar calendar to the tropic year at the time of the spring equinox.³⁾ The state of the fruit harvest, referred to in this passage, is exactly parallel; fruit was offered at Pentecost, as the 'Omer, or sheaf of corn, was offered each day between Passover and Pentecost. That "everyone was glad" when the grain rather than the fruit harvest was a criterion is self-evident, for on the former depended the economic prosperity of the nation during the ensuing year.

The mention in this passage of the *t'quphab*—the solstice or equinox, or the period between solstice and equinox and between equinox and solstice—is, however, a very different matter. Its significance is heightened by its being attributed to Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel; he spoke not only with the authority of his own learning, but also as the Nasi', acquainted with the well-guarded traditions of that office.⁴⁾ The incidence of solstice and equinox was, in fact, the primary element by which intercalation was governed among the Jews at this time—and earlier.⁵⁾

letter in the same tenor from R. Gamaliel (I; see above p. 265 n. 2) to the Jewish communities in Babylonia, Media and elsewhere; cf. *JT Ma'aser Sheni* v. 6 (fol. 56c) and parallel passages.

¹⁾ That is, of Nisan, the period from the spring equinox to the summer solstice.

²⁾ *BT Sanhedrin* 11b; *Tos. Sanhedrin* ii. 2; *JT Sanhedrin* i. 2 (fol. 18d), which reads, "... R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says, even on account of the (lateness of the) *t'quphab*". *BT Sanhedrin* continues, "The Schoolmen inquired, Did (R. Simeon) mean to say that they were glad because the (lateness of the) *t'quphab* (was one of the two reasons) or that the *t'quphab* (alone was adequate reason) for declaring the year embolismic? The question remains undecided."

³⁾ See above p. 265 f.

⁴⁾ Above p. 259.

⁵⁾ For a similar citation of primary and secondary motives for intercalation side by side, cf. *BT Sanhedrin* 18b and parallel passages: "Three cowherds were standing (conversing and) were overheard by some Rabbis. One (of the cowherds) said, 'If the early and late sowing sprout together, then the month is Adar; if not, then it is not Adar'. The second said, 'If in the morning the frost is severe enough to kill an ox, and at midday the ox slumbers in the shade of a tree and scratches