About Hanover's fundamental rule of the Jewish calendar

1. Introduction.

In the beginning of Hanover's book כללי סוד העיבור והתכונה the author explains and justifies the postponement rules of the Jewish calendar by a fundamental and general rule, which he presents without justification as a general principle that the first day of any Jewish month may not fall before the day of the true conjunction.

דע בזמן שאין שם סנהדרין בא"י או סמוכים, אין רשות לקבוע החדשים והמועדות על פי הראייה. וראוי להיות יום הקביעה מכל החדשים או ביום קיבוץ האמיתי או ביום אחר קיבוץ אמיתי, אבל לא קודם לו כמו בעיבור השנה צריך להיות פסח או ביום תקופת ניסן האמיתי או לאחריו אבל לו קודם יום תקופה אמיתי.

In his book Sefer Tekhunat ha-Shamayim ha-Arokh folio 22a of the manuscript, 2 chapter 71 (ancient numbering) 82 (new numbering), he writes more in detail:

ואולם בזמן שאין שם סנהדרין או סמוכים בא"י אין לנו רשות לקבוע החדשים והמועדות על פי ראיית הירח אלא קובעין כל ר"ח או ביום קיבוץ האמיתי או ביום אחר קיבוץ האמיתי אבל אין לנו רשות לקבוע ר"ח קודם אלא קובעין כל ר"ח או ביום קיבוץ האמתי שהוא חידוש הירח יום שבו קיבוץ האמתי שלא וכל להיות ע"פ מולד האמצעי שלא ע"פ הראייה. ובעבור שהשנת הירח ר"ל י"ב באמת ואין הקביעות שלנו יוכל להיות ע"פ מולד האמצעי שלא ע"פ הראייה. ובעבור שהשנת מלאים משלשים יום חדשי הירח עולים ל שנ"ד ימים ח' שעות תתע"ו חלקי תתר"ף והם עולים לששה חדשים מלאים ביום המולד וששה חדשים חזרים מ כ"ט יום ושנה כזו נקרא שנת כסדרן ויהיה ראש כל חודש מהמלאים ביום אחר המולד. אבל בעבור שהקיבוץ האמיתי לפעמים מאוחר למולד עד יום שלאחריו ואי אפשר לקבוע ר"ח קודם יום שבו קיבוץ האמיתי כדאמרינן, משום זה צריכין אנו לדחות איזה ראש חדשים מיום המולד עד יום שלאחריו. ואולם שהחשבון מקיבוץ האמיתי לאו כל אדם יכול ללמוד אותו כי הוא חשבון האמצעי ונתן לנו איזה כללים, והם ארבע דחיות כדי שיכולין לתקן כל השנה ע"י דחיית ראש חודש תשרי מיום הולדו ועל ידו אנו בטוחים שלא יקבע ר"ח אחר מחדשי השנה שעבר קודם יום קיבוץ האמיתי. אלא תמיד יהיה ראש חודש בקביעת שלנו או ביום קיבוץ האמיתי או ביום שלאחריו. ואני יגעתי וחשבתי משנת 4100 כי באותו זמן היה הלל הנשיא והוא היה בעל המסדרן סדר חשבון העיבור לכל הדיעות וחשבתי משנת 4200 ר"ל מן מאה שנה קיבוץ האמיתי לכל הדשים ומצאתי פלא זה שאמרתי, עיין בסוף הספר.

And at the end of the book, on the last page of the manuscript (p.136 of our virtual edition) he wrote:

מן חשבון קיבוץ אמיתי מן מאה שנה כמו שתראה בלוח מצינו אמיתת הטעם שכתבנו בפרק ז' לדחיות הארבע וכן לשאר סדר וכללים שכתבנו לנו ממסדר[י] חשבון [העיבור] וכללו הוא זה כדי לפגוע ביום קיבוץ האמיתי ר"ל שיהיו כל קביעות ראשי חדשים [ביום] קיבוץ אמיתי או לאחריו אבל אינן יכולים לקבוע ר"ח ביום שקודם לקיבוץ אמיתי.

² This chapter has no equivalent in the printed version of Tekhunat ha-Shamayim, Amsterdam 1756; it remains in manuscript. The second part of this book including a complete commentary on Hilkhot Kiddush ha-Hodesh and in addition Talmudical novellae with a mathematical character and tables appeared in a virtual edition. See http://www.ajdler.com/jjajdler/hanover.

¹ See virtual edition of this manuscript; see http://www.ajdler.com/jjajdler/hanover.

Hanover mentions explicitly the quotation from Hilkhot Kiddush ha-Hodesh 7: 7. כדי לפגוע ביום קיבוץ האמיתי.

It appears that Hanover's rule represents in fact his understanding of the former quotation. Hanover writes that he checked all the years between 4100 and 4200, which required the calculation of 185 true conjunctions and he never found his rule to be wrong. The aim of the present communication is to check this statement and this rule. With this aim in view we constructed two tables, the first for the seven types of ordinary years and the second for the seven types of leap years. In each table we gave for each keviah, the last possible Molad of each month, resting on the four gates' table.³ The last Molad of each month of the year was deduced by the addition of the remainder of the preceding months in that year.

Now we know that the true conjunction can follow the mean conjunction by a span of time, which does not overstep the limits of 6 hours in Tishri and 14 hours in Nisan.⁴ On this basis we constructed the table 3 on the assumption that the maximum delay of the true conjunction with regard to the mean conjunction can be considered as linearly proportional during the year.⁵

We know further that today the Molad does not more represent the mean conjunction; the Molad is delayed by about 2 hours. In Maimonides' days this delay was about 50 minutes. Et is certain that at the beginning of the Jewish calendar the Molad represented for the meabrim the mean conjunction.

Thus if we want to check today the possibility to find cases where the true conjunction falls on the day following the yom ha-keviah, we must subtract 2 hours from the latest possible Molad of each month before adding the maximum possible span of time between the mean conjunction and the following true conjunction.

However as we want to screen all the years elapsed since the inception of the Jewish calendar we must consider the case when the Molad coincided with the mean

In tables 1 and 2 we colored in green the background of the squares where the latest true conjunction corresponding to the Molad falls on the day following the yom ha-keviah and we indicated the moment of this last possible true conjunction under the value of the latest Molad. This allows estimating how far the true conjunction can trespass on the following day. It is evident that the probability of meeting such a situation of the true conjunction falling on the day after the yom ha-keviyah is proportional to the possible trespass of the latest possible true conjunction on the day following the yom ha-keviah.

2. Tables for the fourteen types of years giving the yom ha- keviah, the latest possible Molad and the latest true conjunctions trespassing on the day following the yom ha-keviah.

⁶ See J. Ajdler, Hilkhot Kiddush ha-Hodesh al-pi ha-Rambam pp. 176-178.

³ This table can be found in the books of Sar Shalom, Slonimski and Joffe. In Hikhot Kiddush ha-Hodesh al-pi ha-Rambam it can be found on p. 223.

⁴ See Sefer Tekhunat ha-Shamyim, Amsterdam 1756 chap. 63 and 64 pp. 20-21. See Ibn Ezra Shemot 12: 2. See J. Ajdler, Hilkhot Kiddush ha-Hodesh al-pi ha-Rambam p. 216. ⁵This is a simplifying assumption which is probably not exact.

שנים פשוטות

	בחג		בשה		גכה		הכז	
תשרי	ח	1 - 9 - 203	ח	2- 17 - 1079	٦	3 - 9 - 203	r:	5 - 9 - 203
חשון	7	2-21 – 996	7	4 - 6 - 792	ה	4 – 21 – 996	7	6 –21– 996
כסליו	Γ	4 -10 -709	١	5 - 19 - 505	٦	6 – 10– 709	×	1 –10– 709
טבת	٦	5 -23 - 422	×	0 - 8 - 218	×	7 - 23 - 422	٦	2 –23 –422
שבט	7	7 -12 - 135	П	1 –20 –1011	П	2 – 12– 135	Γ	4 –12 –135
אדר	П	2 - 0 - 928	7	3 - 9 - 724	7	4 - 0 -928	-	6 - 0 - 928
ניסן	٦	3–13 – 641	ה	4 - 22 - 437	ה	5 – 13– 641	7	7 –13 –641
		4 - 3 - 641		5 - 12 - 437		6 - 3 - 641		1 - 3 - 641
אייר	r	5 - 2 - 354	1	6 - 11 - 150	1	7 - 2 - 354	ា	2 - 2 - 354
סיון	١	6 – 15 – 67	×	0 - 23 - 943	×	1 – 15 – 67	ג	3 –15 – 67
		7 - 2 - 427		1 - 11 - 223		2 - 2 - 427		4 - 2 - 427
תמוז	×	1 - 3 - 860	ス	2 - 12 - 656	٦	3 - 3 - 860	r:	5 – 3 – 860
אב	П	2 –16 -573	7	4 - 1 - 369	7	4 – 16 –573	٦	6 – 16–573
		3 - 1 - 213				5 - 1 - 213		7 - 1 - 213
אלול	7	4 – 5 - 286	٦	5 - 14 - 82	~	6 - 5 - 286	×	1 - 5 - 286

	השא		זחא		זשג		
תשרי	ī	5-17 - 1079	7	6 - 9 - 203	7	7-17 - 1079	
חשון	7	7 - 6 - 792	ב	7 – 21–996	ב	2 - 6 - 792	
כסליו	ב	1 –19 –505	٦	2 - 10 - 709	7	3 –19 –505	
טבת	7	3 - 8 - 218	7	3 – 23–422	7	5 - 8 - 218	
שבט	ī	4 –20-1011	ה	5 – 12–135	7	6-20-1011	
אדר	7	6 - 9 - 724	7	7 - 1 - 928	ב	1 - 9 - 724	
ניסן	Х	7 – 22–437	Ж	1 – 13–641	٦	2 –22– 437	
				2 - 3-641			
אייר	٦	2 – 11-150	٦	3 - 2-354	ī	4 –11– 150	
סיון	7	3 – 23–943	7	4 – 15 – 67	٦	5 –23 –943	
				5 - 2-427			
תמוז	1	5 – 12–656	٦	6 - 3 - 860	×	7 –12–656	
אב	Ţ	7 - 1 - 369	7	7 – 16–573	ב	2 - 1 - 369	
				1 – 1–213			
אלול	ב	1 - 14 - 82	ב	2 - 5 - 286	7	3 - 14 - 82	

Table 1: For each of the seven types of ordinary years we give the yom ha-keviyah and the latest possible Molad of all the months of the year. We consider then the latest possible true conjunctions on the basis of the maximum possible span of time between the mean conjunction and the following true conjunction. When the true conjunction can trespass on the day following the yom ha-keviah we color the corresponding square and indicate the latest possible true conjunction. The colored square represents a theoretically possible case of a yom-ha-keviah preceding the true conjunction.

שנים מעוברות

	בחה		בשז		גכז		החא	
תשרי	ב	1 - 20 - 490	ב	2 – 17–1079	ړ	3 – 17–1079	7	4 - 11 - 694
חשון	7	3 - 9 - 203	7	4 - 6 - 792	Æ	5 - 6 - 792	1	6 - 0 - 407
כסליו	בו	4 - 21 - 996	٦	5 - 19 - 505	٦	6 - 19 - 505	×	7 - 13 - 120
						7 - 3 - 807		
טבת	1	6 –10– 709	×	0 - 8 - 218	×	1 - 8 - 218	ב	2 - 2 - 913
שבט	7	7 –23 –422	ב	1 - 20 - 1011	ב	2 - 20 - 1011	٦	3 - 14 - 626
		1 - 9 - 1027				3 - 7 - 536		4 - 1 - 151
'אדר א	П	2 –12 –135	7	3 - 9 - 724	7	4 - 9 - 724	ה	5 - 3 - 339
'אדר ב	7	4 - 0 -928	7	4 - 22 - 437	7	5 - 22 - 437	7	6 - 16 - 52
ניסן	ב	5 –13 –641	7	6 - 11 - 150	7	0 - 11 - 150	×	1 - 4 - 845
		6 - 3 - 641				1 - 1 - 150		
אייר	7	7 - 2 - 354	ב	0 - 23 - 943	ח	1 - 23 - 943	٦	2 - 17 - 558
סיון	×	1 - 15 - 67	٦	2 - 12 - 656	٦	3 - 12 - 656	7	4 - 6 - 271
		2 - 2 - 427						
תמוז	ג	3 - 3 - 860	ה	4 - 1 - 369	π	5 - 1 - 369	٦	5 – 18–1064
אב	7	4 –16– 573	٦	5 - 14 - 82	٦	6 - 14 - 82	7	7 - 7 - 777
		5 - 1 - 213						
אלול	١	6 - 5 - 286	Х	0 - 2 - 875	Х	1 - 2 - 875	ב	1 - 20 - 490

	השג			זחג	זשה		
תשרי	r	5 –17–1079	۲	6 - 20 - 490	۲	7 – 17–1079	
חשון	7	7 - 6 - 792	П	1 - 9 - 203	ា	2 - 6 - 792	
כסליו	ח	1 - 19 - 505	ג	2 - 21 - 996	7	3 - 19 - 505	
טבת	7	3 - 8 - 218	7	4 - 10 - 709	٦	5 - 8 - 218	
שבט	ה	4 –20–1011	ה	5 - 23 - 422	7	6 - 20 - 1011	
				6 - 9 - 1027			
'אדר א	7	6 - 9 - 724	7	7 - 12 - 135	ב	1 - 9 - 724	
'אדר ב	ב	7 - 22 - 437	ב	2 - 0 - 928	7	2 - 22 - 437	
ניסן	٦	2 - 11 - 150	٦	3 - 13 - 641	7	4 - 11 - 150	
				4 - 3 - 641			
אייר	π	3 –23 – 943	ה	5 - 2 - 354	7	5 - 23 - 943	
סיון	7	5 - 12 - 656	٦	6 - 15 - 67	Х	7 - 12 - 656	
				7 - 2 - 427			
תמוז	*	7 - 1 - 369	Х	1 - 3 - 860	۲	2 - 1 - 369	
אב	ב	1 –14 – 82	ב	2 - 16 - 573	7	3 - 14 - 82	
				3 - 1 - 213			
אלול	7	3 - 2 - 875	7	4 - 5 - 286	١	5 - 2 - 875	

Table 2: idem table 1 for the seven types of leap years.

The latest possible true conjunction following the mean conjunction

	Ordinary years	Leap years
Tishri	6	6
Heshvan	7 – 360	7 – 151
Kislev	8 - 720	8 – 302
Tevet	10	9 – 454
Shevat	11 – 360	10 - 605
Adar I	12 - 720	11 – 756
Adar II		12 - 907
Nisan	14	14
Iyar	12 - 720	12 - 720
Sivan	11 – 360	11 – 360
Tamuz	10	10
Av	8 - 720	8 – 720
Elul	7 – 360	7 – 360

Table 3: Maximum span of time between the mean conjunction and the following true conjunction. The table is constructed on the assumption of a maximum delay of 6 h in Tishri and 14 h in Nisan. We assumed a linear repartition of the delay between these two limit cases. Today the Molad occurs about two hours after the mean conjunction but at the beginning of the Jewish calendar the Molad coincided with the mean conjunction.

3. Conclusions drawn from the two tables.

1. Ordinary years.

Theoretically there is a possibility to have a true conjunction falling on the day following the yom ha-keviyah of the months Nisan, Iyar and Av in the following cases:

- In the years of the type λ π λ if the Molad of Tishri is between (1-9-203)-(0-3-641)=1-5-642 and 1-9-203.
- In the years of the type π if the molad of Tishri is between (3-9-203)-(0-3-641)=3-5-642 and 3-9-203.
- In the years of the type π of if the molad of Tishri is between (5-9-203)-(0-3-641)=5-5-642 and 5-9-203.
- In the years of the type \aleph if the molad of Tishri is between (6-9-203)-(0-3-641)=6-5-642 and 6-9-203.

In all these cases the breadth of the window allowing this situation diminishes from Nisan to Av.

2. Leap years.

Theoretically there is a possibility to have a true conjunction falling on the day following the yom ha-keviyah in the following cases:

In the years of the type \exists if the Molad of Tishri is between (1-20-490)-(0-9-1027)=1-10-543 and 1-20-490. The possibility concerns the

months of Kislev, Shevat, Nisan, Sivan and Av. The window is the broadest in Shevat.

- In the years of the type τ \supset λ if the Molad of Tishri is between (3-17-1079)-(0-7-536)=3-10-543 and 13-17-1079. The possibility concerns the months of Kislev, Shevat and Nisan. The window is the broadest in Shevat.
- In the years of the type $\pi \pi \pi$ if the Molad of Tishri is between (4-11-694)-(0-1-151)=4-10-543 and 4-11-694. The possibility concerns the months of Shevat.
- In the years of the type π τ λ if the Molad of Tishri is between (6-20-490)-(0-9-1027)=6-10-543 and 6-20-490. The possibility concerns the months of Shevat, Nisan, Sivan and Av. The window is the broadest in Shevat.
- 4. Heuristic examination⁷ of the years according to the area of Molad defined above with the program of R. Eytan Tsikuni (I used only the true conjunction of this sophisticated visibility program).

I did not find a case of a true conjunction falling on the day following the yom hakeviyah among the ordinary years during the period 4111 - 6000.

In the case of leap years I found the following cases, only in the month of Shevat:

- In the years of the type ¬¬¬.

 In the years: 4636, 4910, 5130, 5157, 5228, 5404, 5475, 5573, 5662, 5749, 5820 and 5847.
- In the years of the type גכז.
 In the years: 4229, 4476, 4574, 4750, 4821, 4997, 5166, 5244, 5413 and 5589.
- In the years of the type ז ה.
 In the years: 5290 and 5635.

Only a systematic computer screening could give a definitive and certain result. It appears that the rule of Hanover has about 24 exceptions in the 1900 first years of the Jewish calendar corresponding to 23500 months. It is thus verified in about 999 cases on 1000 and it presents an exception in 1 case on 1000. It is however surprising that Hanover could not foresee the theoretical possibility of exceptions and concluded on the basis of a 100 years' examination when in the case of the possibility of a moon's sighting before the yom ha-keviyah he was more perseverant and considered and found the possibility of one case in 500 years.

Anyhow the justification given by Hanover, at different occasions in his writings, of the postponement rules, through different examples, proving that their aim is to prevent absolutely the possibility that the true conjunction could occur on the day following the yom ha-keviah, must be reconsidered. Although this is generally the case, it cannot be presented as an absolute rule.

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 $^{^{7}}$ I used the table 2 (keviot of the years 4111 – 6000) and the table 3 (Moladot of the years 4111 – 6000) on pages 11 – 13 of Halakhah Times, Leo Levi, Rubin Mass 1992 (2^{nd} edition).