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concerning their character. Formerly, evidence as to the appearance of the new moon was received from any one; but when the heretics corrupted the witnesses, it was ordained that evidence should be received only of those whose good character was well known. § 2. Formerly, fires were lighted on the tops of the mountains, to announce the appearance of the new moon; but when the Samaritans led the nation into error, (by lighting these mountain beacons at wrong times, to mock and mislead the Jews,) it was ordained that messengers should be sent out. § 3. In what manner were these mountain fires lighted? They brought long staves of cedar wood, canes, and branches of the olive tree, also the coarse threads or refuse of flax, which were tied on the top of them with twine; with these, they went to the top of the mountain, lighted them, and kept them moving to and fro, upward and downward, until they could perceive the same repeated by another person on the next mountain, &c. The names and orders of the mountain stations are, § 4, Mount of Olives, Sartaba, Grophinah, Hoveran, and Beth Baitin; they did not cease to wave the flaming brands at Beth Baitin to and fro, until the whole country of the captivity (Babylon) was as a blazing fire. § 5. There was a large court in Jerusalem, called Beth Yangzek, where all the witnesses \* met, and where they were examined by the Beth Din. § 6. Their examination was conducted by inquiring of the oldest of the first pair (they were examined according to their priority) as to the form of the moon, whether her horns were turned towards the sun, or away from it? to the north, or south of it? what was her elevation in the horizon? towards which side was her declination? the width of her disk, &c. The second witness (of the pair) was then examined, and if his testimony agreed with that of the former, it was declared valid. The remaining witnesses were then superficially examined, not because of the necessity of the case, but to encourage them to report on future occasions. § 7. The chief of the Tribunal then said, 'The feast of the New Moon is Mekoodash,' (consecrated) and all the people proclaimed after him, 'Mekoodash, Mekoodash.'† Whether the New Moon had been seen at the proper time (at latest 31st) or not, it was consecrated. § 8. Raban Gamliel, prince of the captivity, and chief of the Sanhedrin, had on a tablet, and on the walls of his room, various delineations of the figure and aspects of the moon, which he showed to ignorant witnesses, asking them whether it was of this or of that form." A very interesting and important case is mentioned in § 8 and § 9, bearing on the question of relative weight of opinion and authority, to which we can but refer the reader; for here we must conclude our extracts from the Mishna, with the following;—Ch. III, 1 "If the Beth Din and all Israel saw the New Moon, (on the night of the 30th day) or if the examination of the witnesses had already taken place, but it had become dusk before the word 'Mekoodash' had been pronounced, the month will be intercalary."

\* Abendana says, "It seems to have been the peculiar office and employment of the tribe of Issachar, to watch the lunar changes, and they are said to be 'men that had understanding of the times.' 1 Chron. xii. 32." See his "Discourses of the Ecclesiastical and Civil Polity of the Jews, &c. Lon. 1706.

† By some, David is said to allude to the proclamation of the New Moon, when he says, Ps. lxxxi, 3. "Sound the trumpet on the New Moon, &c." The present form of proclaiming the day on which the feast of the New Moon is to be observed, is well known from its insertion in the Jewish Liturgy. Not so well known, perhaps, is the very ancient formula, still used by the Jews in China, where they are supposed to have settled soon after, if not before, the destruction of the first Temple. (See Basnage, Jost, and "The Jews in China," by James Finn, Lon., 1843.) Here it follows:—

אציתו שמאעו כחניא וליואי תקאעו קבאעו רבנן ראש ירחא  
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ישראל השתא בעגאלא ויקומון שנגה עפרא מו עפרהון ויכנש