

val, referred to in the text, can only be understood therefore, of the first *phasis*, or appearance of the moon, which God ordered as a season, that they were fully able to determine themselves and by their own observation. But they were not left to do even this, for as it was of infinite importance that the matter should be well known by Israel generally, not only that they might observe uniformly and at the proper time, the feasts of new moon, but all the other festivals also, it became a matter proper for *authority* to decide. Hence, the Talmud affords us much interesting and valuable information on this important subject, preserving a traditional account of great weight and of almost universal acceptance among scholars both Jewish and Christian, as to the manner and rules for determining and consecrating the new moons, some of the most important of which we shall here append. The reader will please remember that the beginning of the Jewish months was not reckoned from the moon's conjunction with the sun, but from the time the former emerges from the latter, and is first visible in the west after sunset; and hence the appropriateness of applying the terms *ירח*, literally, "moon," and *חודש* "renewal," to express "months" in Hebrew, since they actually commenced with the renewal of the appearance of the moon.* This premised, we proceed now to condense from the Mishna, (Treatise Rosh Hashanah) the information above referred to, interpolating some necessary explanations, and referring the English reader to Revs. De Sola and Raphall's Translation, (p. 157,) for further details.

Ch. 1 § 3. Messengers were sent out from Jerusalem (to announce elsewhere the day on which the Sanhedrin had fixed the last new moon) for the following six months, for Nissan on account of the Passover; Ab, for the fast; Elul, for the feast of New Year; Tishri, for the regulation of the festivals, Kislev for Hadnuka, Adar for Purim, and Iyar during the existence of the 2nd Temple for the second Passover. § 4. For the new moons of two months, the witnesses might profane the Sabbath by travelling to Jerusalem, viz: for those of Nissan and Tishri, because on these months only the messengers went to Syria, and the festivals are regulated by them. During the existence of the 2nd Temple, the Sabbath might be profaned for any, because of the regulation of the offerings on the feast of new moon on their proper day. § 5. Even had the new moon been seen high on the horizon, (and there was reason to believe therefore it had been seen in Jerusalem,) the Sabbath might be profaned by the witnesses, nor were they, as is seen in § 6, for any reason to be detained in their progress. With respect to the witnesses, § 7, Father and son and relatives in every degree may be allowed as competent, but (§ 8) immoral characters, such as gamblers, &c., are not admitted to give evidence, but denounced as incompetent witnesses. Even in cases of inconvenience or exigency, witnesses were obliged to give their evidence, (§ 9) and in the event of their being unknown, (Ch. II. § 1) others were sent with them to testify

* It is also be remembered that there are three kinds of months dependent upon and correspondent with the three following revolutions of the Moon, 1st. the Tropical being of 27d. 7h. 43' 4" 6795. 2nd. the Sidereal of 27d. 7h. 43' 11" 6259. 3rd. the Synodic of 29d. 12h. 44' 2" 8283. The tropical revolution which signifies the complete revolution of 12 signs performed round the earth, is distinguished as a periodical month. The sidereal which means a return to the same point or star, is, as will be perceived, a few seconds longer than the tropical, because of the precession of the equinoxes. The synodic is the time from one conjunction with the sun to another. In 29d. 12h. 44' 2" 8283, the moon will be found to be again in conjunction with the sun, the earth being at the distance of 29° 6' 20" 2 from the point of the former conjunction.