

There is made no direct mention of Hours in the law of Moses or in the historical portions of the Jewish Scriptures. The first use of the term שעה, or rather its Chaldaic emphatic form שעה, which is generally accepted as an equivalent to the English term "hour," occurs in Daniel iii, 6. The only other passages in which it occurs, is in the same book, chapters iii, 15; iv, 16, English version, 19; iv 30, (E. V. 33) and v. 5,—in all which it has generally been rendered "hour" by the Hebrew commentators; though, as it is confessed, an indefinitely short period of time is rather understood, than one equal to the 24th part of a natural day. The passages which might be best understood as referring to this latter length of time, are probably iii, 6; iii, 15. And while it has been advanced with reference to iv. 19, that it is not probable Daniel should, literally, detain the king for one hour, during which time we there learn he "was astonished," (אשתונם בשעה חדא) it may be replied that some warrant for this interpretation is to be found in the explicitness of the text, which has not only the definitive חדא (one) but the proposition כ (as or about) and that about or nearly an hour elapsed, ere Daniel could collect himself, to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream. It is certain, however, and must be stated in this connexion, that in the Talmud and other Post-Biblical writings, שעה is frequently used in this indefinite sense; e. g. in the Shulchan Aruch, Treatise Tephilah, chap. 93 § 1; it is recommended to pause one hour (שעה) before and after engaging in prayer; though, even here, some commentators understand the word literally. But, if even we give up these passages, this will not prove that the Israelites, long before the closing of the Scriptural canon, did not divide their days into 24 equal parts. For, first, we have to take into account the great astronomical knowledge obtaining, even then, amongst them. As Jahn aptly remarks, "The interests of agriculture and navigation required some knowledge of astronomy." Moreover, it is traditionally maintained that this knowledge was even antediluvian;—Adam being a great astronomer. Certain is the fact, that the great length of the antediluvians' lives was very favorable to the acquisition of astronomical knowledge and observation. Joseph in his dream speaks of the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing down to him, the twelfth; "thus referring to the constellated signs of the Zodiac, in whose bounds the sun and moon are always found. Jacob in his blessing, specifies these signs. Reuben, 'unstable as water' is Aquarius, דלי. Simeon and Levi, coupled together as 'brethren', represent Gemini, the twins, תאומים. Judah, a 'lion' is Leo, אריה. Zebulun, 'dwelling at the haven of the sea', represents its production, Cancer, the crab, סרטן. Issachar the 'servant unto tribute,' is Taurus, the bull, שור, which the ox was to man in his labors in the field; and it is to be noted that the Septuagint reads for חמר נרם 'a tiller of the ground. The three signs under which Dan is represented, follow one another in the same positions as in our Zodiac. He is a 'Judge,' Libra or equal Balance, מאזנים. He biteth the horse's heel,' just the position of Scorpio with respect to the Centaur or horseman, representing Sagittarius. Gad is Sagittarius, the Archer, קשת. Asher, 'royal dainties, is Pisces דגים. Naphtali, is

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