

Chapter XIII

The Hasidic System (System B)

Since the first century C.E., the most prevalent and popular view for the observance of Phasekh and the seven days of unleavened bread has been System B—an interpretation first expressed by the ancient Hasidim. Our questions must be:

- What is the ancient evidence of this interpretation? Also, just how and on what days did they keep the Festival of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread?
- When did this Hasidic view of Phasekh and the seven days of unleavened bread first appear?
- What issues created their interpretation and how did they derive their understanding of בערב (be-arab; in the mixing of light and dark [twilight]) and its cognate term בין הערבים (byn ha-arabim; between/among the mixings of light and dark [twilight])?

Hasidic Roots

There is little doubt that the group who originated System B, the most enduring interpretation for Phasekh and of the expression “*byn ha-arabim* (between the mixings of light and dark [evenings]),” was the חסידים (Khasidim; Hasidim) of the early second century B.C.E., from whom the Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots, and other Jewish groups, including the later Rabbinites and Talmudists, are spiritual descendants.

The System B view, for example, is clearly manifested in the Hasidic work entitled the book of Jubilees,¹ the earliest known Hebrew fragments of this text coming from the period around 100 B.C.E.² Internal evidence dates the origin of Jubilees to “between 161–140 B.C.E.”³ It was at this time, in the 150th Jewish Seleucid year (162/161 B.C.E.), that Judaeian independence was recognized by the Greek Syrian king, Antiochus V.⁴ The Hasidim are again mentioned in the 151st Seleucid year (161/160 B.C.E.), when some of them tried to make peace with Demetrius II, the Greek king of Syria, but were betrayed and murdered by him.⁵

The Hasidim, therefore, appear in Jewish history at a time of tremendous conflict and turmoil in Judaea. It was a period when the Greeks exerted heavy

¹ Jub., 49:1–23.

² OTP, 2, p. 43; DSST, pp. 238–245.

³ OTP, 2, pp. 43–45; THS, p. 283.

⁴ 1 Macc., 6:20–63; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:3–7.

⁵ 1 Macc., 7:1–18.

influence upon the Jews, when various attempts at Hellenization were made (both by Greeks and Jews), and a time of wars. The subsequent division among the early Hasidic groups into such parties as the Pharisees and Essenes (those retaining the name Hasidim)⁶ took place sometime between 160 and 145 B.C.E. Copies of Hasidic material, such as the book of Jubilees, were in turn retained and preserved by these new offshoots.

Hasidic Interpretation

Gesenius's Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon notes that the phrase *בין הערבים* (*byn ha-arabim*) is used to mark the space of time during which the paschal lamb was slain. It then adds:

The Pharisees, however (see Joseph. Bellum Jud. vi. 9, § 3), and the Rabbinists, considered the time when the sun began to descend to be called the first evening.⁷

This text goes on to say that in Arabic this phrase is referred to as “little evening” or “when it begins to draw towards evening” and is equivalent to the Greek phrase “δείλη προΐα” (i.e., *deile proia*; early afternoon). It further adds that the Pharisees believed “the second evening to be the real sunset (Gr. δείλη ὀψία)” (i.e., *deile opsia*; late afternoon).⁸

Hasidic tradition defines the two periods of *arab* as “from the afternoon to the disappearing of the sun, the first evening being from the time when the sun begins to decline from its vertical or noontide point towards the west; and the second from its going down and vanishing out of sight.”⁹ This view merely reflects the strong influence of Greek culture upon the developing Hasidic schools after the conquest of Judaea by Alexander the Great. Eustathius, for example, in a note on the 17th book of the *Odyssey*, points out that it was the early Greeks who had designated *δείλη προΐα* (*deile proia*) as the evening that commenced immediately after noon and a second evening, called *δείλη ὀψία* (*deile opsia*), formed the latter part of the day.¹⁰ The conservative Jewish schools, as we shall later demonstrate, rejected this scheme as a foreign innovation.

These two periods of *arab* are elsewhere defined by some of the Jewish Talmudists (the spiritual descendants of the Pharisees), by such scholars as Rashi and Kimchi, as “the time immediately before and immediately after sunset, so that the point of time at which the sun sets divides them.”¹¹ In his *Lexicon*, Kimchi states:

⁶ That Hasidim (Khasidim) was another name for the Essenes see above Chap. XI, p. 184, n. 32. Outstanding representatives of the Hasidim, also called “men of action,” were Khoni ha-Me’aggel, his grandsons Abba Hilkiah and Hanan ha-Nekhba (B. Taan., 23a), and Khanina ben Dosa, who lived at the end of the second Temple period and whom the Mishnah refers to as the last of the “men of action” (Sot., 9:15, while the J. Sot., 9:15, reading gives “Khasidim”). This evidence demonstrates that the Hasidim continued as a movement until at least the latter part of the first century C.E.

⁷ GHCL, p. 652, #6153, s.v. ערב.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ CBTEL, 7, p. 735.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

בין הערבים is from the time when the sun begins to incline towards the west, which is from the sixth hour [= noon] and upward. It is called ערבים because there are two evenings, for from the time that the sun begins to decline is one evening, and the other evening IS AFTER THE SUN HAS GONE DOWN, and it is the space between which is meant by between the two evenings.¹²

Rashi reports:

From the sixth hour [= noon] and upward is called between the two evenings (בין הערבים), because the sun begins to set for the evening. Hence it appears to me that the phrase between the two evenings denotes the hours between the evening of the day and the evening of the night. The evening of the day is from the beginning of the seventh hour [= immediately after noontide], when the evening shadows begin to lengthen, while the evening of the night is at the beginning of the night.¹³

With this background of the varying Hasidic views we must now address the questions, “What scriptural issues caused these Hasidim (and later their spiritual descendants the Pharisees, Essenes, and others) to break from the earlier view held by the Aristocratic school with regard to the observance of the Phasekh?” And second, “How did their view of *byn ha-arabim* affect their construction of the Festival of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread?”

Scriptural Issues for the Hasidim

The advocates of System B believed that they had found a better understanding of just how they were to observe the Phasekh and the seven days of unleavened bread. Two passages served to be the catalyst for all their interpretations: Leviticus, 23:5–8, and Numbers, 28:16–25.

In the first moon, on the 14th for the moon, הערבים בין (*byn ha-arabim*), is a Phasekh for Yahweh. AND ON THE 15TH DAY FOR THIS MOON IS A חג (*khag*; festival) OF UNLEAVENED BREAD FOR YAHWEH; SEVEN DAYS YOU SHALL EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD. On the first day is a sacred convocation for you, you shall not do any laborious work.¹⁴ And seven days you shall bring a fire offering near for Yahweh. And the seventh day is a sacred convocation, you shall not do any laborious work.¹⁵

¹² HBL, p. 277, s.v. ערב; CBTEL, 7, p. 735.

¹³ Rashi, *Com. Exod.*, 12:6; CBTEL, 7, p. 735.

¹⁴ Lev., 16:31, 23:24, 26–32, 39, all demonstrate that sacred gatherings are also called *sabbathon* days (i.e., high Sabbaths).

¹⁵ Lev., 23:5–8.

And in the first moon, on the 14th day for the moon is a Phasekh for Yahweh, AND ON THE 15TH DAY FOR THIS MOON IS A KHAG. SEVEN DAYS UNLEAVENED BREAD SHALL BE EATEN. On the first day shall be a sacred convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.¹⁶ And you shall offer a fire offering, a burnt offering to Yahweh: two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven yearling lambs; perfect ones they shall be for you. And their food offering, flour mixed with oil, three tenth parts for a bullock, and two tenth parts for a ram you shall prepare; one tenth part you shall prepare for the one lamb, and for the seven lambs; and one goat for the sin offering to atone for you. Besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for the continual burnt offering, you shall prepare these; in this way you shall prepare daily seven days, bread for a fire offering, a soothing fragrance for Yahweh; besides the continual burnt offering, it (the bread) shall be prepared and its drink offering. And on the seventh day shall be a sacred convocation for you; you shall not do any laborious work.¹⁷

In both cases the Phasekh is said to be the 14th day of the first moon, a day clearly designated as the time when the Phasekh lamb was sacrificed.¹⁸ The 14th is followed by the 15th, which is called “a Khag of Unleavened Bread for Yahweh.” This statement is in turn followed by the explanation, “seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.”

Meanwhile, the Israelites were commanded to eat the Phasekh victim “this night” with “unleavened bread.”¹⁹ Since the 15th was “a Khag of Unleavened Bread for Yahweh,” the Hasidim reasoned that the 15th was also the night of the Phasekh supper. If the night of the 15th is the Phasekh supper, then the understanding of the conservative priests (the Aristocratic school), which held that twilight after sunset was *byn ha-arabim* and the period that began the day, came to be judged as incorrect. A new, or at least different, understanding of בין הערבים (*byn ha-arabim*) was sought for. The logic of those developing and continuing the Hasidic views of System B reasoned the data as follows:

- The 15th was a Khag of Unleavened Bread. Therefore, the 15th must also have been the first day of the seven days of unleavened bread and a high Sabbath.
- The evidence was unequivocal that the lamb was sacrificed on the 14th, yet the Phasekh lamb was also to be eaten with unleavened bread.

¹⁶ See above n. 14.

¹⁷ Num., 28:16–25.

¹⁸ Exod., 12:6.

¹⁹ Exod., 12:8; Num., 9:11.

Therefore, they calculated that the Phasekh supper was on the 15th, the first day of the seven-day Khag of Unleavened Bread.

- As a result of the above conclusions, the statement found in Exodus, 12:18, had to be addressed. It states, “In the first (moon), on the 14th day for the moon, בערב (*be-arab*; within twilight) you shall eat unleavened bread until the 21st day for the moon בערב (*be-arab*; within twilight).” Since the 15th day, and not the 14th, was determined to be the first day of unleavened bread, “within ערב (*arab*)” on the 21st day had to be explained as the period ending rather than beginning that day. In turn, the expression, “until the 21st day for the moon within ערב,” as the outer limit for these seven days, meant that the word “until” was inclusive of the 21st day.
- The Phasekh lamb was ordered to be eaten “on this night” immediately following the period called “בין הערבים (*byn ha-arabim*),” the time in which the Phasekh lamb was sacrificed.²⁰ This circumstance brought into question the timing of “בין הערבים.” If the 15th was the Phasekh supper, *byn ha-arabim* could not be twilight during the first part of the 14th day, for in that case the phrase “on this night” would refer to the first part of the 14th day (the Hebrew day beginning at sunset).²¹ Further, it would have been impractical to sacrifice at twilight on the 14th and then wait over 24 hours to eat the lamb at night on the 15th.

To prove that there were two periods of *arab*—one of which ends the day—those supporting the Hasidic view offered as proof Leviticus, 23:32. This passage is part of the discussion about the Day of Atonement, which takes place on the 10th day of the seventh moon.²² In this particular reference, according to the Hasidim, the following statement is made:

It is a Sabbath of rest for you; and you shall humble your *nephesh* בתשעה לחדש בערב (*be-teshuah la-khodesh be-arab*), from *arab* until *arab* you shall keep your Sabbath.

The phrase בתשעה לחדש בערב (*be-teshuah la-khodesh be-arab*) is read by the Hasidim to mean, “in the ninth of the moon at *arab*.” Therefore, it is argued that one begins to keep the Day of Atonement from the *arab* of the ninth until the end of the *arab* on the tenth day of the seventh moon (i.e., exclusive of the ninth and inclusive of the tenth). For those holding to the Hasidic view, this statement proves that there is a period of *arab* in the afternoon of the day.

For the Hasidic interpretation to work there was yet one more problem to overcome. According to Scriptures, one must not sacrifice the Phasekh with

²⁰ Exod., 12:6–8.

²¹ The Hebrew legal day, which was controlled by the moon phases, begins when the sun has set and the new moon became visible (see THP, p. 131, and n. 3; ADB, 4, pp. 765f; EWJ, pp. 15f, and n. 2, pp. 26f; HBC, pp. 9f). Those defiled and unclean had need to bathe and then at sunset, at the beginning of a new day, were once again declared clean (THP, p. 199, n. 6). Also see our discussion in FSDY, 2.

²² Lev., 16:29–34, 23:27–32, 25:9; Num., 29:7–11; Philo., *Spec.*, 1:35 §186; Jos., *Antiq.*, 3:10:2f.

leavened bread.²³ Therefore, unleavened bread must be used from the 14th of Abib כַּעֲרֹב (*be-arab*; within twilight), when the sacrifice took place, to the 21st day כַּעֲרֹב (*be-arab*; within twilight).²⁴ Yet there were only seven days of unleavened bread. To solve this dilemma, the advocates of the Hasidic view interpret the command to eat unleavened bread for only seven days as relevant only from the 15th through the 21st. Nevertheless, they remove leavening out of their houses before noon on the 14th, prior to the time of their sacrifice of the Phasekh.²⁵ For this reason, they actually counted seven and one-fourth days of unleavened bread. The Pharisee priest Josephus counts it as a festival of “eight” days.²⁶ Augustine similarly notes that these Jews (Pharisees) calculated Phasekh “from the 14th to the 21st day” of the moon of new corn (Abib), i.e., for eight days.²⁷

Ancient Records

There are a number of ancient records that demonstrate the Hasidic view.

The Book of Jubilees

The book of Jubilees, originally composed in Hebrew by the Hasidim in the late second century B.C.E.,²⁸ gives us the earliest representation of the Hasidic argument. To date, the most complete version of this text is found in the Ethiopian edition. It reports:

Remember the commandment which the sovereign commanded you concerning Phasekh, that you observe it in its time, on the 14th of the first moon, so that you might sacrifice it BEFORE IT BECOMES ARAB and so that you might eat it DURING THE NIGHT ON THE ARAB OF THE 15TH FROM THE TIME OF SUNSET. For on this night there was the beginning of the festival and there was the beginning of joy. You continued eating the Phasekh in Egypt and all of the powers of Mastema (Satan) were sent to kill all of the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh to the first-born of the captive maidservant who was at the millstone and to the cattle.²⁹

Let the children of Israel will be ones who come and observe Phasekh on its *moad* (appointed time), on the 14th of the first moon *byn ha-arabim*,³⁰ from the third

²³ Exod., 34:25, cf., 23:18. Accordingly, this was also the understanding in the Mishnah (Pes., 5:4; Makk., 3:2).

²⁴ Exod., 12:18–20.

²⁵ Pes., 1:4–6; B. Pes., 11b–12b, 21a; JE, 9, p. 550; CBTEL, 7, p. 737.

²⁶ Jos., *Antiq.*, 2:15:1.

²⁷ Augustine, *Epist.*, 55:9 §16.

²⁸ OTP, 2, pp. 43–45.

²⁹ Jub., 49:1f. This passage is taken from the Ethiopic text—the Latin is lacking at this point.

³⁰ That the Ethiopic term used here is equivalent to *byn ha-arabim* see HBJ, p. 172, n. 8. The Latin gives *ad vesperam*, which is used in the Vulgate to translate *byn ha-arabim* (cf., Vulg. at Exod., 12:6; Num., 9:3, 5, 11; Lev., 23:5). It is emended by R. H. Charles to read *ad vespas* (HBJ, p. 173, and n. 5). Also see below n. 36 regarding the parallel Greek term *ἑσπέραν* (*hesperan*; twilight).

(part) of the day to the third (part) of the night, because two parts of the day are given for light and one third for *arab*.³¹ This is what the sovereign commanded you so that you might observe it IN THE TIME OF ARAB.³²

In this text the Hasidic understanding of *byn ha-arabim* is defined. For Phasekh, the first *arab* is the last one-third of the fourteenth day (i.e., from the eighth until the twelfth hour of daylight). The last *arab* of *byn ha-arabim* begins at sunset and consists of the first one-third of the night (including twilight as part of night), i.e., from the first until the fourth hour of night. The lamb is slaughtered within the *arab* ending the fourteenth day and is eaten during the *arab* at the beginning of the fifteenth day.

This evidence also demonstrates that the early Hasidim began their legal day at sunset and had two periods of *arab*. The *arab* at the end of the day consisted of one-third of the daylight, i.e., from the eighth hour until the fulfilling of the 12th hour at sunset. Following sunset was the *arab* of the night, which began the 24-hour day. The *arab* of the night consisted of one-third of the night, i.e., the four hours following sunset, the first through fourth hours of the night.

Philo

Philo, the mid-first century C.E. Jewish Pharisee and priest from Alexandria, Egypt,³³ also expresses the Hasidic system when he writes:

After the New Moon comes the fourth ἑορτή (*heorte*; festival), called the διαβατήρια (*diabateria*; crossing-festival), which the Hebrews in their native tongue call Phasekh. In this festival many myriads of victims FROM NOON ἄχρι (*akhri*; TERMINATING AT)³⁴ ἑσπέρας (*hesperas*; TWILIGHT) are offered by the whole people, old and young alike, raised for that particular day to the dignity of the priesthood.³⁵

The Greek word ἑσπέρα (*hespera*), like the Latin term *vespere*, is properly a reference to the evening star, Venus. By extension it came also to refer to the time of the day when that evening star made its appearance—i.e., the period of twilight just after sunset and lasting until dark—as well as to the westernmost sky and lands.³⁶ Philo uses this term to translate the Pharisaic idea of

³¹ At this point the Latin text uses the term *in vespere* and, as reflected in the Ethiopic text, should read for the Hebrew “*arab*.”

³² Jub., 49:10f; Latin and Ethiopic in HBJ, pp. 172 and 173.

³³ Jerome, *Lives*, 11.

³⁴ The term ἄχρι (*akhri*) is akin to the term ἄκρον (*akhron*), “through the idea of a *terminus*” and means, “(of time) *until* or (of place) *up to*:—as far as, for, in (-to), till, (even, un-) to, until, while” (SEC, Gk. #891); “Prep. with gen., *even to, as far as* . . . of Time, *until, so long as*” (GEL, 1968, p. 298)

³⁵ Philo, *Spec.*, 2:27 §145.

³⁶ GEL, 1968, p. 697. The Greek word ἑσπέρας (*hesperas*), “Lat. *vespera*, properly fem. of ἑσπερος . . . *evening, eventide, eve*” . . . ἑσπερος (*hesperos*), “*of or at evening*” . . . “esp. of the planet Venus . . . ἑσπ. θεός the god of *darkness*” (GEL, p. 318; GEL, 1968, p. 697; NGEL, p. 579). Macrobius, *Saturn.*, 3:14f, “*vespera* follows” sunset. For the Greeks, ἑσπέρας (*hesperas*) properly represents the

arab. The above statement from Philo shows that the victims were sacrificed from noon only up until the beginning of *hesperas* (twilight). Philo continues:

The ἑορτῆω (*heorteo*; festival) BEGINS at the middle of the moon, ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY, when the moon is full, a day purposely chosen because then there is no darkness, but everything is continuously lighted up as the sun shines from earliest dawn unto ἑσπέραν (*hesperan*; TWILIGHT) and the moon (shines) from ἑσπέρας (*hesperas*; TWILIGHT) terminating at

period from sunset until the first hour of darkness at night. It is the time of Venus as the evening star as opposed to Venus as the morning star (e.g., see Aristotle, *EN*, 5:1:15; Homer, *Iliad*, 22:317f; cf., Horace, *Odes*, 2:9:10f). James Donnegan's lexicon defines it this way, "Hesperus, (*the planet Venus*) when it sets after the sun; Lucifer, Φωσφόρος, when it rises before" (NGEL, p. 579).

Leonard Whibley notes that the period of ἑσπέρα (*hespera*) was part of the period associated with darkness as opposed to those Greek terms associated with daylight (CGS, p. 589, §626). To demonstrate further, the Greek writers make the evening star appear at the time of "φθιμενοῖς (*phthi-menois*; waning)" of the day (Gk. Anth., 670). Oppian defines this period of *hespera* when he writes, "ἑσπερίησιν ὅτ' ἠέλιος ζυγά κλίνει (*hesperiesin ot helios zuga klinei*; the time of *hespera*, at which time the sun's team laid down), when herdsmen command their herds what time they travel homeward to their folds, heavy of breast and swollen of udder" (Oppian, *Cyng.*, 1:138ff). The Greek idea was that the team that pulled the sun chariot across the sky during the day laid down to rest after the sun had been pulled beneath the horizon. According to Pliny, the day among all "the common people everywhere" extended "a luce ad tenebras (from dawn until the dark of night)" (Pliny, 2:79). Therefore, the evening star appeared during the waning part of the day (after sunset).

Other markers demonstrating the Greek concept of the time of *hesperas* are as follows: In Acts, 4:3, this period is placed in context when we read that Keph (Peter) was placed in a holding cell "until the αὐριον (*aurion*; morning breeze; SEC, Gk. #839), for it was already ἑσπέρα (*hespera*)," in order that he might be brought before the rulers and elders at Jerusalem. Accordingly, he was placed in a holding cell after the government's daily business hours. Homer, meanwhile, speaks of how some people "waited until *hesperon* should come; and as they made merry dark *hesperos* came upon them. Then they went, each man to his house" (Homer, *Ody.*, 1:422f). This statement clearly connects the time of *hesperon* with the darkening of light after sunset. In another place Homer writes that some people were to "gather at *hesperious* beside the swift ship," and then subsequent to that event notes, "Now the sun set and all the ways grew dark. Then she (the goddess) drew the swift ship to the sea" (Homer, *Ody.*, 2:385-389). Therefore, the people gathered at twilight and only after it became dark did the ship set sail. Homer also notes that a man visited his fields and herdsmen and then afterward, when *hesperios* arrived, returned to the city (Homer, *Ody.*, 15:503-505). Homer also writes that it was at the time of *hesperios* that the ram longs to return to the fold (Homer, *Ody.*, 9:447-452). As any sheep rancher will advise, this occurs with sunset. He also reports the words of a man advising a stranger that, "The day is far spent, and soon you will find it colder ποτὶ (*poti*; toward) ἑσπερα (*hespera*)" (Homer, *Ody.*, 17:190f).

In another place Homer reports that certain people "took supper, and waited until *hesperon* should come" (Homer, *Ody.* 4:785f). Men generally worked in the fields until the 11th hour (e.g., Matt., 20:1-13), after which they would return home to supper (cf., Ruth, 3:7). It would be fair to conclude that this also was the hour for supper among the Greeks. It is true that supper among the priests and upper class Jews was a little earlier, coming late in the afternoon, at various times between the ninth until the twelfth hours (EWJ, pp. 44f). Yet this principle was in part guided by the fact that the ninth hour (3 P.M.) was the hour of prayer (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:4:2; Acts, 3:1). Josephus notes that the Essenes had breakfast in the fifth hour (11 A.M.) and then returned to their labors until δεῖλης (*deiles*; afternoon), at which time they would have supper (Jos., *Wars*, 2:8:5). In either case, the supper mentioned in the Greek story took place at some point prior to the arrival of the hour of *hespera*. This detail places the Greek time for *hespera* later in the day than the Hasidic concept of an afternoon *arab*, despite the fact that the Hasidic writers used *hesperon* to identify an earlier period of *arab*.

Hespera, therefore, is a reference to the time of a day connected with darkness, after supper, and when the *Hesperus* star appears, that is, the period of twilight after sunset.

dawn, while the stars give place to each other no shadow is cast upon their brightness.³⁷

Notice that the moon shines from ἑσπέρας (*hesperas*; twilight = *arab*) until the dawn on the 15th day. Since during the 14th to the 16th the moon makes its appearance before sunset, Philo has demonstrated that, in this case, by ἑσπέρας (*hesperas* = *arab*) he means the twilight on both sides of sunset, including the time when the star Venus would make its appearance as the evening star. Philo also adds:

Again, the festival is held for seven days to mark the precedence and honor which the number holds in the universe, indicating that nothing which tends to cheerfulness and public mirth and thankfulness to the deity should fail to be accompanied with memories of the sacred seven which he intended to be the source and fountain to men of all good things. TWO DAYS OUT OF THE SEVEN, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, ARE DECLARED SACRED. In this way he gave a natural precedence to the beginning and the end; but he also wished to create a harmony as on a musical instrument between the intermediates and the extremes. Perhaps too he wished to harmonize the festival with a past which adjoins the first day and a future which adjoins the last.

These two, the first and the last, have each the other's properties in addition to their own. The first is the beginning of the festival and the end of the preceding past, the seventh is the end of the festival and the beginning of the coming future. Thus, as I have said before, the whole life of the man of worth may be regarded as equivalent to a festival held by one who has expelled grief and fear and desire and the other passions and distempers of the soul. The bread is unleavened, EITHER³⁸ because our forefathers, when under divine guidance they were starting on their migration, were so intensely hurried that they brought the lumps of dough unleavened, OR ELSE because at that season, namely, the springtime, when the festival is held, the fruit of the corn has not reached its perfection, for the fields are in the ear stage and not yet mature for harvest.³⁹

³⁷ Philo, *Spec.*, 2:28 §155.

³⁸ Notice that Philo can only offer guesses as to why unleavened bread was used. The Jews were puzzled by this question. It was answered by the messiah and the disciples, who noted the unleavened bread represented the messiah's body, truth, and sincerity (1 Cor., 5:8, 11:23f; Luke, 22:19; Matt., 26:26; Mark, 14:22); that is, unleavened bread represents the sinlessness of the messiah.

³⁹ Philo, *Spec.*, 2:28 §156f.

Philo further comments:

With the διαβατηρίοις (*diabateriois*; crossing-festival) he (Moses) combines one in which the food consumed is of a different and unfamiliar kind, namely, unleavened bread, which also gives its name to the festival.⁴⁰

Philo's interpretations are in accordance with the opinion quoted by S. R. Driver, "that the sacrifice if offered before noon was not valid."⁴¹ But those supporting the Hasidic view, when translating the Hebrew thought into Greek, also used the term ἑσπέρας (*hesperas*) as a translation of their idea of the afternoon *arab* which ends the day. For example, in another text Philo writes:

Why is the Phasekh sacrificed πρὸς ἑσπέραν (*pros hesperan*; at twilight = *byn ha-arabim*)?⁴² Perhaps because good things were about to befall at night. It was not the custom to offer a sacrifice in darkness, and for those who were about to experience good things at night it was not (proper) to prepare it before the ninth hour (about 3 P.M.). Therefore it was not at random but knowingly that the prophet set a time between the turning πρὸς ἑσπέραν (*pros hesperan*; at twilight = *byn ha-arabim*).⁴³

The Greek phrase πρὸς ἑσπέραν (*pros hesperan*; at twilight) was used by those holding to the Hasidic view as a translation of the Hebrew בין הערבים (*byn ha-arabim*), by which term they meant the *arab* of the afternoon.⁴⁴ This interpretation must not be confused with the proper Greek usage of *hespera* (twilight after sunset and early dark) or the Aristocratic usage (twilight after sunset).

In this above instance from Philo, when we come to the idea of *byn ha-arabim*, he takes the standard Pharisaic line for the two periods of *arab*. He therefore refers to each *arab* as a time of ἑσπέρας (twilight), and makes the first ἑσπέρας (twilight) occur at the ninth hour (about 3 P.M.). This awkward usage of the Greek word ἑσπέρας (the period of twilight and early dark after sunset) for mid-afternoon is unique to the Greek-speaking Hasidim and other adherents to

⁴⁰ Philo, *Spec.*, 2:28 §150.

⁴¹ BE, p. 90, n. 6; also cited in Colson, *Philo*, vii, p. 627.

⁴² See Marcus, *Philo*, Sup. II, p. 20, n. d. The term πρὸς (*pros*), when used with ἑσπέρας (*hesperan*) means "at" or "on the side of" the time of *hesperan* (GEL, 1968, pp. 697, 1496f). More exactly, this phrase refers to the beginning time of *hesperan* (= *arab*). The Greek phrase πρὸς ἑσπέραν (*pros hesperan*) is used in the LXX as the equivalent of the Hebrew לַעֲרֵב עֶרֶב (*la-ath arab*; at the time of *arab*), cf., LXX at Gen., 8:11; 2 Kings (MT 2 Sam.), 11:2; Isa., 17:14; and the Hebrew בין הערבים (*byn ha-arabim*), cf., LXX at Exod., 12:6, 16:12; Num., 9:3, 11, 28:4, 8.

⁴³ Philo, *Exod.*, 1:11. J. B. Aucher renders this last line literally, "*tempus mediocre ad vesperam vergens* (the time between inclining toward *vesperam*)" (Marcus, *Philo*, Sup. II, p. 20, ns. d & h.).

⁴⁴ See the LXX at Exod., 12:6, 16:12; Lev., 23:5; Num., 9:3. Interestingly, both the supporters of the Hasidic view and the Aristocratic view could look at the same words used in the LXX and come to entirely opposite understandings of what the word *pros hesperan* meant. For those of the Aristocratic school it meant twilight after sunset, while those of the Hasidic school interpreted it to mean the afternoon *arab*.

System B.⁴⁵ With regard to Philo's wording for the phrase "between the two evenings," F. H. Colson, citing S. R. Driver on Exodus, 12:6, states, "For this [[phrase]] the traditional interpretation adopted by the Pharisees and Talmudists was that the 'first' evening was when the heat of the sun begins to decrease, about 3 P.M., and the second evening began with sunset."⁴⁶

Josephus

The Jewish Pharisee priest Josephus, writing around 93 C.E., also gives us the Hasidic-Pharisaic view about Phasekh. We begin with his discussion of the Phasekh that occurred at the Exodus:

The deity, having revealed that by yet one more plague he would constrain the Egyptians to release the Hebrews, now bade Moses instruct the people to have ready a sacrifice, making preparations on the 10th of the moon Xanthicus (Abib/Nisan) over against the 14th day—this is the moon called by the Egyptians, Pharmuthi, by the Hebrews Nisan, and by the Macedonians termed Xanthicus—and then to lead off the Hebrews, taking all their possessions with them. He accordingly had the Hebrews ready betimes for departure, and ranging them in fraternities kept them assembled together; then when THE 14TH DAY was come the whole body, in readiness to start, sacrificed, purified the houses with the blood, using bunches of hyssop to sprinkle it, AND AFTER THE MEAL burnt the remnants of the meat as they neared freedom. Hence comes it that to this day we keep this sacrifice in the same customary manner, calling the festival Phasekh, which signifies 'passing over,' because on that day the deity passed over our people when he smote the Egyptians with plague. For on the selfsame night destruction visited the first-born of Egypt, insomuch that multitudes of those whose dwellings surrounded the palace trooped to Pharaoh's to urge him to let the Hebrews go.⁴⁷

In another place Josephus writes:

In the moon of Xanthicus, which with us is called Nisan (Abib) and begins the year, ON THE 14TH DAY BY LUNAR RECKONING, the sun being then in Aries, our lawgiver, seeing that in this moon we were delivered from bondage to the Egyptians, ordained

⁴⁵ The Latin term *vespere* (*vesparum*; etc.), which has essentially the same meaning as the Greek term ἑσπέραν (*hesperan*), was also used by the supporters of System B for the mid-afternoon *arab*. Also see above ns. 30 & 36.

⁴⁶ Colson, *Philo*, vii, p. 627; BE, p. 90, n. 6.

⁴⁷ Jos., *Antiq.*, 2:14:6.

that we should year by year offer the same sacrifice which, as I have said, we offered then on departure from Egypt—the sacrifice called Phasekh. And so in fact we celebrate it by fraternities, nothing of the sacrificial victims being kept for the morning. ON THE 15TH THE PHASEKH IS FOLLOWED BY THE FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, LASTING SEVEN DAYS, during which our people subsist on unleavened loaves and each day there are slaughtered two bulls, a ram, and seven lambs. These are all used for burnt offerings, a kid being further added as a sin-offering, which serves each day to regale the priests.⁴⁸

Josephus reports that, during the first century C.E. (up until the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E.), at which time the Hasidic practice was the state religion, the hour for the Phasekh sacrifices was as follows:

Accordingly, on the occasion of the festival called Phasekh, at which they sacrifice FROM THE NINTH TO THE ELEVENTH HOUR, and a little fraternity, as it were, gathers round each sacrifice, of not fewer than ten persons—feasting alone not being permitted—while the companies often included as many as twenty, the victims were counted and amounted to two hundred and fifty-five thousand six hundred; allowing an average of ten diners to each victim, we obtain a total of two million seven hundred thousand, all pure and sacred. For those afflicted with leprosy or gonorrhoea, or menstruous women, or persons otherwise defiled were not permitted to partake of this sacrifice, nor yet any foreigners present for worship, and a large number of these assemble from abroad.⁴⁹

Based upon these views, Josephus then concludes:

Hence it is that, in memory of that time of scarcity, WE KEEP FOR EIGHT DAYS A FESTIVAL called the Festival of Unleavened Bread.⁵⁰

Supporting the idea that Phasekh was counted as one day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread followed by seven more days, Josephus, in a discussion of Hezekiah's celebration of the Phasekh festival, writes:

⁴⁸ Jos., *Antiq.*, 3:10:5.

⁴⁹ Jos., *Wars*, 6:9:3f §423ff.

⁵⁰ Jos., *Antiq.*, 2:15:1.

Now, when the Festival of Unleavened Bread came round, they sacrificed the Phasekh, as it is called, but then they offered the other sacrifices for seven days.⁵¹

Josephus also notes that the entire eight-day Pharisaic observance (actually seven and one-quarter days) was called Phasekh. In the events of the year 65 B.C.E., he reports:

But as this action took place at the time of observing the Festival of Unleavened Bread, WHICH WE CALL PHASEKH, the Jews of best repute left the country and fled to Egypt.⁵²

Josephus also comments, "While the priests and Aristobulus (II) were being besieged, there happened to come round the festival called Phasekh, at which it is our custom to offer numerous sacrifices to the deity."⁵³ These numerous sacrifices refer to the entire festival period. Similarly, in his history of the death of King Herod the Great during the spring of 4 B.C.E., Josephus writes:

At this time there came round the festival during which it is THE ANCESTRAL CUSTOM OF THE JEWS TO SERVE UNLEAVENED BREAD. IT IS CALLED PHASEKH, being a commemoration of their departure from Egypt. They celebrate it with gladness, and IT IS THEIR CUSTOM TO SLAUGHTER A GREATER NUMBER OF SACRIFICES AT THIS FESTIVAL than at any other, and an innumerable multitude of people come down from the country and even from abroad to worship the deity.⁵⁴

In another book, while discussing the same event, he writes:

And now THE FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, WHICH THE JEWS CALL PHASEKH, came round; it is an occasion for the contribution of a multitude of sacrifices, and a vast crowd streamed in from the country for the ceremony.⁵⁵

Mishnah

The Mishnah (about 200 C.E.), being a written record of the Pharisaic oral laws and traditions, confirms that during the time of the second Temple the lamb was sacrificed shortly after the eighth and one-half hour (i.e., after 2:30 P.M.) on the "*arab* of Phasekh" (i.e., according to Pharisaic interpretation, the afternoon *arab* before the night of the Phasekh supper). It states:

⁵¹ Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:13:2-3.

⁵² Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:2:1.

⁵³ Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:2:2.

⁵⁴ Jos., *Antiq.*, 17:9:3.

⁵⁵ Jos., *Wars*, 2:1:3.

The Daily Whole-offering was slaughtered at a half after the eighth hour, and offered up at a half after the ninth hour; (but) on the *arab* of Phasekh it was slaughtered at a half after the seventh hour and offered up at a half after the eighth hour, whether it was a weekday or the Sabbath. If the *arab* of Phasekh fell on the *arab* of a Sabbath, it was slaughtered at a half after the sixth hour and offered up at a half after the seventh hour. AND, AFTER THIS, THE PHASEKH OFFERING (WAS SLAUGHTERED).⁵⁶

The difference between the Phasekh of the Exodus from Egypt and those that followed are explained in this way:

Wherein does the Phasekh of Egypt differ from the Phasekh of the generations (that followed thereafter)? At the Phasekh of Egypt the lamb was obtained on the 10th (of Abib), sprinkling (of the blood) with a bunch of hyssop was required on the lintel and on the two side-posts, and it was eaten in haste and during one night [. . .]⁵⁷ whereas the Phasekh of the generations continued throughout seven days.⁵⁸

Conclusion

The heart of System B is the belief that the seven days of unleavened bread begin with the 15th of the first moon and last until the end of the 21st day. It is also obvious from this evidence that, for the adherents to the Hasidic view (System B), the expression עֲרֵבִים (*arabim*) represents two periods of the day: the afternoon and the evening twilight, with mid-afternoon or sunset at the end of a day dividing the two. Another way of looking at this view is to make the early afternoon the first *arab* and the late afternoon, either ending at sunset (a legal day) or ending at dark (a common day), the second *arab*. Sacrificing the Phasekh lamb at about 3 P.M., accordingly, accommodates all three Hasidic understandings.

Since the destruction of the Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E., sacrifices required under the Torah of Moses, including the Phasekh sacrifice, have been dispensed with by the Jews. Yet, many of the Jewish faithful look forward to the reintroduction of these sacrifices when a future third Temple is built in Jerusalem. When these sacrifices are reinstated, it is their belief that a Phasekh lamb should once again be sacrificed in the afternoon of the 14th of Abib and eaten during the night of the 15th.

⁵⁶ Pes., 5:1.

⁵⁷ The Gemara points out that there is a lacuna here in the Mishnah. In its place, the Gemara claims, it should state that the prohibition against leavened bread during the Phasekh of Egypt "lasted but one day," and then the text continues as above (Gem., 96b).

⁵⁸ Pes., 9:5.