



BRUCE LICHT

FOUNDER OF *MY ELEVATOR PITCH FOR GOD*, ENTREPRENEUR, AND AUTHOR

Bruce grew up in Lafayette, California and received a BA in Political Science from UCLA as well as a Graduate Gemologist degree from the Gemological Institute of America. After graduating, Bruce operated his family's 100 year-old retail fine jewelry business for twenty-two years. Bruce had a passion for computers and graphic arts, so he changed careers and joined his best friend at a national technical publishing company for seventeen-years as the company's Publisher, where they invented the modern labor law poster industry, including the first "*All- On-One Labor Law Poster*" and "*Labor Law Poster Compliance Plan*."

Aside from being the Founder of the website, "*My Elevator Pitch for God*," Bruce was the co-editor of the book, *My Elevator Pitch For God: Volume 1*, and author of the cookbook titled, *Immediate Chef: No Previous Experience Required*.

The Wisdom of the Heavens

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A typical quartz timepiece is only accurate to within three minutes a year. To achieve a higher degree of precision, one would have to rely on an atomic clock, which wasn't invented until 1949.¹ So how is it possible that over 3,300 years ago, the newly freed Jewish slaves from Egypt were able to properly determine the exact length of a lunar month to within one tenth of a second?

The first commandment that was given in the Book of Exodus within the Old Testament was for the Jews to maintain a lunar calendar.²

So there is the "Lunar Calendar Cycle" which NASA, with years of research using satellites, telescopes, laser beams, and supercomputers, calculated to be on average 29.530588 days in length.³ There is also the "Yearly/Annual Calendar Cycle" that is approximately 365 days long. I say "approximately" because as we know, every four years there is a "leap year" where we add an extra day. However, to be exact, it is less commonly known that every one hundred years, we don't add a leap year, and every four hundred years we add a leap year even though we normally would not (and we have to make calculations to "fix" or "true-up" the calendar).⁴ So as you can see, it is not perfectly straight forward and all these little necessary "tweaks" were only discovered recently. It wasn't until a few hundred years ago, that we finally had the astronomical prowess to finally determine how to precisely "set" our yearly calendar.

It is noteworthy that the Talmud, a document that is thousands of years old, tells us the equation used by the ancient Jews to determine the length of a lunar month down to the millisecond.⁵ It breaks down an hour not into sixty minutes but into 1080 "chalakim," meaning that each minute is eighteen chalakim long, and it states that a lunar month is exactly 29 and 1/2 days and no less than 793 chalakim. This comes to 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and ~3.3 seconds, or 29.530594 days⁶ (a difference of only 0.000006 from NASA's modern day calculation). Did they have supernatural knowledge of the natural world? All the other calendars of ancient times were extremely arbitrary and inexact, however this ancient calendar calculation has withstood scientific scrutiny and the test of time to this day.

How did the Jews comprehend how to compute, organize, sustain, and perpetuate a calendar? This calculation demands a massive extent of specialized knowledge that goes far beyond an understanding of the cycles of the seasons. They didn't have the mathematical expertise, the highly sophisticated technical apparatuses, or space exploration vehicles to understand the wisdom of the heavens. How could they have figured this out if they did not have Divine assistance?

This is one of a few commandments where we can clearly see the strength and veracity of the proof of God's existence. Contemplating this miraculous achievement is just one way of gaining understanding and getting close to God in this world.

Footnotes:

1. <https://www.timeanddate.com/time/how-do-atomic-clocks-work.html>
With an error of only 1 second in up to 100 million years, atomic clocks are the most accurate timekeeping devices in history.
2. Exodus / Parshas Bo / Chapter 12 / Verses 1-2
"HASEM said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 'This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months.'"
3. <https://www.rationalistjudaism.com/p/chazal-and-nasa>
NASA, with years of research using satellites, telescopes, laser beams and supercomputers, calculated the mean length of the lunar month as 29.530588 days.
4. https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/1643088/jewish/Astronomy-and-Torah.htm
Astrophysicist, Dr. Jeremy Schnittman, discusses how studying astronomy can be a spiritual experience and explains the astoundingly accurate calculations that the Sages used for determining the appearance of the new moon.
5. There is a "leap year" every 2.72 years in the Jewish Lunar Calendar, so every 19-year cycle has 7 Leap Years, and a second month of Adar (Adar II) to align with the yearly/annual calendar cycle.
6. <https://www.rationalistjudaism.com/p/chazal-and-nasa>
In the Gemara, Rabban Gamliel says that the average length of the lunar month is 29.530594 days.