

Holidays Karaite should not do Part 2.

By Yochanan Zaquantov

Christmas

When we look at the catholic encyclopedia we see that the date chosen was once used by another festival.

Natalis Invicti

“The well-known solar feast, however, of Natalis Invicti, celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December [date](#). For the history of the solar cult, its position in the Roman Empire, and [syncretism](#) with [Mithraism](#), see Cumont's epoch-making "Textes et Monuments" etc., I, ii, 4, 6, p. 355. Mommsen (Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, 1², p. 338) has collected the evidence for the [feast](#), which reached its climax of popularity under [Aurelian](#) in 274. Filippo del Torre in 1700 first saw its importance; it is marked, as has been said, without addition in Philocalus' Calendar. It would be impossible here even to outline the history of solar symbolism and language as applied to [God](#), the [Messiah](#), and [Christ](#) in [Jewish](#) or Christian canonical, [patristic](#), or devotional works. [Hymns](#) and Christmas offices abound in instances; the texts are well arranged by Cumont (op. cit., addit. Note C, p. 355).

The earliest *rapprochement* of the births of Christ and the sun is in Cyprian, "De pasch. Comp.", xix, "O quam præclare providentia ut illo die quo natus est Sol . . . nasceretur Christus." — "O, how wonderfully acted Providence that on that day on which that Sun was born . . . [Christ](#) should be born." (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03724b.htm>)

Here we see in the Encarta encyclopedia that the origins of Christmas were such that they were simply replace a pagan celebration for this new celebration.

“Historians are unsure exactly when Christians first began celebrating the Nativity of Christ. However, most scholars believe that Christmas originated in the 4th century as a Christian substitute for pagan celebrations of the winter solstice. Before the introduction of Christmas, each year beginning on December 17 Romans honored Saturn, the ancient god of agriculture, in a festival called Saturnalia. This festival lasted for seven days and included the winter solstice, which usually occurred around December 25 on the ancient Julian calendar. During Saturnalia the Romans feasted, postponed all business and warfare, exchanged gifts, and temporarily freed their slaves. Many Romans also celebrated the lengthening of daylight following the winter solstice by participating in rituals to glorify Mithra, the ancient Persian god of light (see Mithraism). These and other winter festivities continued through January 1, the festival of Kalends, when Romans marked the day of the new moon and the first day of the month and year.”
(http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761556859/Christmas.html)

Just from these two references we see that the origins of the December 25th holiday was Mithra and the Saturnalia. In fact many of the secular traditions of this holiday were carryovers of the traditional worship of the different practices of the pre-Christian people who lived there. So clearly even if we weren't dealing with strictly a Christian holiday today and I contend a day to worship another Elohim, then we should not keep it. We are also dealing with the syncretism of Christianity and older worship festivals which we too would say a mixing of their practices. What I mean by this is if you take the practice of one people worshipping their Elohim and add that to the worshipping of your Elohim then you are doing syncretism. What does the Torah say about keep another el's days besides the ones he commands? Does the Torah forbid syncretism?

Shemot/Exodus 23:23-24

23 When My messenger goes before you and brings you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I annihilate them,
24 you shall not bow down to their gods in worship or follow their practices, but shall tear them down and smash their pillars to bits.

So we see that we are not to bow down to them, nor follow their practices.

Shemot/Exodus 34:14

14 for you must not worship any other elohim, because Yehovah, whose name is Impassioned, is an impassioned Elohim. **15** You must not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for they will lust after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and invite you, and you will eat of their sacrifices. **16** And when you take wives from among their daughters for your sons, their daughters will lust after their gods and will cause your sons to lust after their gods.

We are not to worship another Elohim. Even making a covenant with the people of the land we allow them to continue in their practices among us.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 26:1

1 You shall not make "things of nothing" (idol) for yourselves, or set up for yourselves carved images or pillars, or place figured stones in your land to worship upon, for I Yehovah Eloheykhem.

It is interesting that an idol 'elil or in this case idols 'elilim come from al which means nothing and that comes from lo which mean no. So these things of nothing we should not use nor bow down to.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 10:20

20 You must revere Yehovah Eloheykha: only Him shall you worship, to Him shall you hold fast, and by His name shall you swear.

We are to only worship Yehovah and no other Elohim.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 12:1-4

- 1 These are the laws and rules that you must carefully observe in the land that Yehovah, Elohey of your fathers, is giving you to possess, as long as you live on earth.
- 2 You must destroy all the sites at which the nations you are to dispossess worshiped their gods, whether on lofty mountains and on hills or under any luxuriant tree.
- 3 Tear down their altars, smash their pillars, put their sacred posts to the fire, and cut down the images of their gods, obliterating their name from that site.
- 4 Do not worship Yehovah Eloheykhem in like manner,

Here we see that we should not apply the methods of worship to Yehovah from other Elohim. This was exactly the type of syncretism, which the Israelites would end up practicing.

What is syncretism? 1 : the combination of different forms of belief or practice 2 : the fusion of two or more originally different inflectional forms (<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/syncretism>)

Devarim/Deuteronomy 13:5

- 5 Follow none but Yehovah Eloheykhem, and revere none but Him; observe His commandments (mitzvotayv) alone, and heed only His orders (his voice you hear); worship none but Him, and hold fast to Him.

Yehovah made clear through Mosheh that we are only to follow Yehovah and keep his Mitzvah.

Bamidbar/Numbers 25:1-3

- 1 While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people profaned themselves by whoring with the Moabite women,
- 2 who invited the people to the sacrifices for their god. The people partook of them and worshiped that god.
- 3 Thus Israel attached itself to Baal-peor, and Yehovah was incensed with Israel.

When one practices the ways of another Elohim they attach/join themselves to that Elohim.

How do we know that they were doing syncretism?

Melekhim Aleph/I Kings 18:17-21

- 17 When Ahab caught sight of Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"
- 18 He retorted, "It is not I who have brought trouble on Israel, but you and

your father's House, by forsaking the commandments of Yehovah and going after the Baalim. 19 Now summon all Israel to join me at Mount Carmel, together with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

20 Ahab sent orders to all the Israelites and gathered the prophets at Mount Carmel.

21 Elijah approached all the people and said, "How long will you keep hopping between two opinions? If Yehovah is Elohim, follow Him; and if Baal, follow him!" But the people answered him not a word.

There were mixing the practices of both in their daily lives.

Melekhim Bet/II Kings 18:22

22 And if you tell me that you are relying on Yehovah Eloheynu, He is the very one whose shrines (high places) and altars Hezekiah did away with, telling Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship only at this altar in Jerusalem.'

Here Melekh Hiz'qiyahu removed the high places and those things devoted to worshipping other Elohim.

Melekhim Bet/II Kings 21:3

3 He rebuilt the shrines (high places) that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he erected altars for Baal and made a sacred post, as King Ahab of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the host of heaven and worshiped them,

You see the practice of syncretism was very much done in Israel. It is no wonder because this is the very thing people in that area and even today there are people who choose to combine the practices of other Elohim or peoples to their own. In the article above by the Catholics it shows they did syncretism in the co-opting the day for a Mithra god for their own god.

So clearly we should not do the practices of this day even if one believe it to be secular. Since that is the way that they the past observer would do that worship to their god.

What were the practices?

Christmas Tree

"Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Some built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles if wood was scarce. It is a widely held belief that Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars

twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles.

Most 19th-century Americans found Christmas trees an oddity. The first record of one being on display was in the 1830s by the German settlers of Pennsylvania, although trees had been a tradition in many German homes much earlier. The Pennsylvania German settlements had community trees as early as 1747. But, as late as the 1840s Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols and not accepted by most Americans.

It is not surprising that, like many other festive Christmas customs, the tree was adopted so late in America. To the New England Puritans, Christmas was sacred. The pilgrims's second governor, William Bradford, wrote that he tried hard to stamp out "pagan mockery" of the observance, penalizing any frivolity. The influential Oliver Cromwell preached against "the heathen traditions" of Christmas carols, decorated trees, and any joyful expression that desecrated "that sacred event." In 1659, the General Court of Massachusetts enacted a law making any observance of December 25 (other than a church service) a penal offense; people were fined for hanging decorations. That stern solemnity continued until the 19th century, when the influx of German and Irish immigrants undermined the Puritan legacy.”

http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content_type=Minisite_Generic&content_type_id=1284&display_order=4&mini_id=1290

Even before the introduction of the tree for Christians they tree was used by pre-christian people.

“Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. Just as people today decorate their homes during the festive season with pine, spruce, and fir trees, ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows. In many countries it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness.

In the Northern hemisphere, the shortest day and longest night of the year falls on December 21 or December 22 and is called the winter solstice. Many ancient people believed that the sun was a god and that winter came every year because the sun god had become sick and weak. They celebrated the solstice because it meant that at last the sun god would begin to get well. Evergreen boughs reminded them of all the green plants that would grow again when the sun god was strong and summer would return.”

http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content_type=Minisite_Generic&content_type_id=1284&display_order=4&mini_id=1290

So we see that the Christmas tree itself was a holdover of a previous practice.

Santa Claus

“St. Nicholas made his first inroads into American popular culture towards the end of the 18th century. In December 1773, and again in 1774, a New York newspaper reported that groups of Dutch families had gathered to honor the anniversary of his death.

The name Santa Claus evolved from Nick's Dutch nickname, Sinter Klaas, a shortened form of Sint Nikolaas (Dutch for Saint Nicholas). In 1804, John Pintard, a member of the New York Historical Society, distributed woodcuts of St. Nicholas at the society's annual meeting. The background of the engraving contains now-familiar Santa images including stockings filled with toys and fruit hung over a fireplace. In 1809, Washington Irving helped to popularize the Sinter Klaas stories when he referred to St. Nicholas as the patron saint of New York in his book, *The History of New York*. As his prominence grew, Sinter Klaas was described as everything from a "rascal" with a blue three-cornered hat, red waistcoat, and yellow stockings to a man wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a "huge pair of Flemish trunk hose."

http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content_type=Minisite_Generic&content_type_id=1277&display_order=3&sub_display_order=7&mini_id=1290

We see that the origin of this person was a Catholic saint. Known for his good deeds.

“18th-century America's Santa Claus was not the only St. Nicholas-inspired gift-giver to make an appearance at Christmastime. Similar figures were popular all over the world. Christkind or Kris Kringle was believed to deliver presents to well-behaved Swiss and German children. Meaning "Christ child," Christkind is an angel-like figure often accompanied by St. Nicholas on his holiday missions. In Scandinavia, a jolly elf named Jultomten was thought to deliver gifts in a sleigh drawn by goats. English legend explains that Father Christmas visits each home on Christmas Eve to fill children's stockings with holiday treats. Pere Noel is responsible for filling the shoes of French children. In Russia, it is believed that an elderly woman named Babouschka purposely gave the wise men wrong directions to Bethlehem so that they couldn't find Jesus. Later, she felt remorseful, but could not find the men to undo the damage. To this day, on January 5, Babouschka visits Russian children leaving gifts at their bedsides in the hope that one of them is the baby Jesus and she will be forgiven. In Italy, a similar story exists about a woman called La Befana, a kindly witch who rides a broomstick down the chimneys of Italian homes to deliver toys into the stockings of lucky children.”

http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content_type=Minisite_Generic&content_type_id=1282&display_order=3&sub_display_order=10&mini_id=1290

We can see that much of what they celebrate today was religious in nature and hardly secular. If you navigate this site you will learn more about this time of year.

So what I have shown is that whether secular or religious Christmas is a religious practice even before Christians changed it. Therefore it is us join their gods to partake in its celebration.

What about Hanukkah?

Hanukkah is a Rabbanite festival that fall in December. How did it get started and what is the authority for doing it?

“**Hanukkah** ([Hebrew](#): חנוכה, also spelled **Chanukah** or **Hanukah**), also known as the **Festival of Lights**, is an eight-day [Jewish holiday](#) beginning on the 25th day of [Kislev](#) according to the [Hebrew calendar](#), which may fall anytime from late November to late December. It celebrates the rededication of the [Second Temple](#) at the time of the [Maccabee](#) rebellion.

The miracle of Hanukkah is described in the [Talmud](#). The [Gemara](#), in tractate *Shabbat 21b* focuses on [Shabbat](#) candles and moves to Hanukkah candles and says that after the occupiers had been driven from the Temple, the Maccabees discovered that almost all of the ritual olive oil had been profaned. They found only a single container that was still [sealed](#) by the [High Priest](#), with enough oil to keep the menorah in the Temple lit for a single day. They used this, and miraculously, that oil burned for eight days (the time it took to have new oil pressed and made ready).

The Talmud presents three customs:

1. Lighting one light each night per household,
2. One light each night for each member of the household, or,
3. The most beautiful method, where the number of candles changed each night.”

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanukkah>)

From this Wikipedia entry we see that this is a time to recall the dedication of the Second temple at the time of the Maccabee rebellion. You will notice that this account is not from the Tanakh but instead from Talmud. So this account of the miracle oil is not even found in the books of Macabees but only in the Talmud. If such a miracle happened in their time don't you think they would have documented it.

Here is the account of the temple in 1 Macabees 4.

36 Then Yehuda and his brothers said, "See, our enemies are crushed; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it." 37So all the army assembled and went up to Mount Zion. 38There they saw the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, and the gates burned. In the courts they saw bushes sprung up as in a thicket, or as on one of the mountains. They saw also the chambers of the priests in ruins. 39Then they tore their clothes and mourned with great lamentation; they sprinkled themselves with ashes 40and fell face down on the ground. And when the signal was given with the trumpets, they

cried out to Heaven.

41 Then Yehuda detailed men to fight against those in the citadel until he had cleansed the sanctuary. 42He chose blameless priests devoted to the law, 43and they cleansed the sanctuary and removed the defiled stones to an unclean place. 44They deliberated what to do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been profaned. 45And they thought it best to tear it down, so that it would not be a lasting shame to them that the goyim had defiled it. So they tore down the altar, 46and stored the stones in a convenient place on the Temple Mount until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them. 47Then they took unhewn stones, as the law directs, and built a new altar like the former one. 48They also rebuilt the sanctuary and the interior of the temple, and consecrated the courts. 49They made new holy vessels, and brought the Menorah, the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. 50Then they offered incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the Menorah, and these gave light in the temple. 51They placed the bread on the table and hung up the curtains. Thus they finished all the work they had undertaken.

52 Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Kislev, in the one hundred forty-eighth year,^e 53they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. 54At the very season and on the very day that the goyim had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. 55All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. 56So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering. 57They decorated the front of the temple with golden crowns and small shields; they restored the gates and the chambers for the priests, and fitted them with doors. 58There was very great joy among the people, and the disgrace brought by the goyim was removed.

59 Then Yehuda and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev.

<http://www.tsel.org/torah/macab/1MA4.HTM>

From this we can see that there is no account of a miracle oil. Nor is there a command from Yehovah to light personal menorah's for the eight days.

“Blessings over the candles

Typically three blessings (*Brachot* singular *Brachah*) are recited during this eight-day festival. On the first night of Hanukkah, Jews recite all three blessings, on all subsequent nights, they recite only the first two.^[17] The blessings are said before or after the candles are lit depending on tradition. On the first night of Hanukkah one light (candle, lamp, or electric) is lit on the right side of the Menorah, on the following night a second light is placed to the left of the first candle and so on, proceeding from right to left each night.

The first blessing

Recited all eight nights just prior to lighting the candles:

(Note that the 'CH' letter combination is pronounced as 'KH') See [Hebrew Transliteration](#).

(Transliteration:) *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik neir (shel) chanukah.*

Translation: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Hanukkah lights."

The second blessing

Recited all eight nights just prior to lighting the candles:

(Transliteration:) *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-asah nisim la-avoteinu, bayamim haheim, (u)baz'man hazeh.*

Translation: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors, in those days, at this moment."

The third blessing

Main article: [Shehecheyanu](#)

Recited only on the first night just prior to lighting the candles:

(Transliteration:) *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyemanu, vehigi-anu laz'man hazeh.*

Translation: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us in life, sustained us, and brought us to this moment."

After kindling the lights - *Hanerot Halalu*

When the lights are kindled the *Hanerot Halalu* prayer is subsequently recited:^[18]
([Ashkenazic](#) version):

(Transliteration:) *Hanneirot hallalu anachnu madlikin 'al hannissim ve'al hanniflaot 'al hatteshu'ot ve'al hammilchamot she'asita laavoteinu bayyamim haheim, (u)bazzeman hazeh 'al yedei kohanekha hakkedoshim. Vekhol-shemonat yemei Hanukkah hanneirot hallalu kodesh heim, ve-ein lanu reshut lehishtammesh baheim ella lir'otam bilvad kedei lehodot ul'halleil leshimcha haggadol 'al nissekha ve'al nifleotekha ve'al yeshu'otekha.*

Translation: "We light these lights for the miracles and the wonders, for the redemption and the battles that you made for our forefathers, in those days at this season, through your [holy priests](#). During all eight days of Hanukkah these lights are sacred, and we are not permitted to make them

serve except for to look at them in order to express thanks and praise to Your great Name for your miracles, Your wonders and Your salvations."

Singing of *Maoz Tzur* after lighting

Main article: [Ma'oz Tzur](#)

Each night after the lighting of the candles, while remaining within sight of the candles, Ashkenazim (and, in recent decades, some Sephardim and Mizrahim in Western countries) usually sing the hymn *Ma'oz Tzur* written in Medieval [Germany](#). The song contains six stanzas. The first and last deal with general themes of divine salvation, and the middle four deal with events of persecution in [Jewish history](#), and praises God for survival despite these tragedies (the [the exodus](#) from Egypt, the [Babylonian captivity](#), the miracle of the holiday of [Purim](#), and the [Hasmonean](#) victory)."

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanukkah>)

The first blessing is what one would have a problem with in that we are told that Yehovah commanded the lighting of candles. So two problems should be the commanding of something never commanded and a story about a miracle, which was not even stated in the text that is, suppose to document what happened.

Actually a Rabbi even admits in one article that the menorah they use is related to Zoroasterism.

“And what about the fact that the trees are pagan rather than Christian?”

What does that "actually" mean? Hanukkah menorahs are actually Zoroastrian. Tefillin [two leather boxes, containing parchment scrolls with verses from Exodus and Deuteronomy, one worn on the head and the other on the arm of observant Jews when reciting morning prayers] are actually Canaanite. Everything has its roots in something else. “ (http://www.beliefnet.com/story/180/story_18083_1.html)

Also interesting is the same Rabbi admits that they don't keep biblical, Israelite Religion. It was the people who wanted it and so the people got what they wanted.

“How should we think of Hanukkah in relation to Christmas?”

One place to start: Hanukkah is not a minor holiday. The notion that something is "post-biblical" doesn't make it one iota less significant. In truth, we don't practice biblical, Israelite religion. If we did, I'd get up in the morning and slaughter a goat instead of putting on tefillin. So what happened is, Jews, who knew they could never compete in America with Christmas, said, "Actually, there is no competition, because Hanukkah is not very important. Let the gentiles have their important day. We shouldn't try to compete."

And so a terrible thing was done: Some Jews engineered teaching other Jews to think less of an incredibly beautiful holiday. But thank God, American Jews are very smart, and they said to their rabbis and teachers, you're idiots. We know this is an important day, and that's why it's the second-most observed Jewish event in the annual calendar, second only to Passover." (http://www.beliefnet.com/story/180/story_18083_1.html)

So what should we do about Hanukkah? I would say as an extra book outside of the Tanakhic can be no more required than Purim is. It is a remembrance of the rededication of a temple in ruins today. How can we celebrate it rededication, which the Temple still lays in ruins. Should it be an 8 days of mourning for the temple? That would make more sense. Can someone read the account and remember the victory? Yes. Should one exchange gifts, play the dridel, etc... It depend on how much are you trying to make this a substitute for Christmas.

New Years Day

New years is celebrated everywhere and each has something of a new years outside of the Gregorian calendar. Even the Hebrew Aviv Calendar has a form of a new years with out the partying and present exchanges and rivalry. There is also the Rabbanite New years in the Fall (1st day of the seventh month) in which an observance is kept with the Yom Teruah.

For the Gregorian calendar we see that the current observance is January 1st. Wikipedia states in their article.

“The ancient Roman calendar had only ten months and started the year on 1 March, which is still reflected in the names of some months which derive from Latin: September (seventh), October (eighth), November (ninth), December (tenth). Around 713 BC the months of January and February were added to the year, traditionally by the second king, Numa Pompilius, along with the leap month Intercalaris. The year used in dates was the consular year, which began on the day when consuls first entered office — fixed by law at 15 March in 222 BC[1], but this event was moved to 1 January in 153 BC. In 45 BC, Julius Caesar introduced the Julian calendar, dropping Intercalaris; however, 1 January continued to be the first day of the new year.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Year)

So we see that for the most part the setting of the new years for many years was done in the spring. Under another Article on the wikipedia it lists more information on New Years Day and some of the practices.

“Originally observed on March 15 in the old Roman Calendar, New Year's Day first came to be fixed at January 1 in 153 BC, when the two Roman consuls, after whom - in the Roman calendar - years were named and numbered, began to be chosen on that date, for military reasons. However in AD 525, Dionysius Exiguus set the start of the Julian calendar at March 25^[citation needed] to commemorate the Annunciation of Jesus; a variety of Christian feast dates were used throughout the Middle Ages to mark the New Year, while

calendars often continued to display the months in columns running from [January](#) to [December](#) in the Roman fashion.

Among the [7th century druidic](#) pagans of [Flanders](#) and [the Netherlands](#), it was the custom to exchange gifts at the New Year, a pagan custom deplored by [Saint Eligius](#) (died [659](#) or [660](#)), who warned the Flemings and Dutchmen, "[Do not] make vetulas, [little figures of the Old Woman], little deer or iotticos or set tables [for the house-elf, compare [Puck](#)] at night or exchange New Year gifts or supply superfluous drinks [another [Yule](#) custom]." The quote is from the *vita* of Eligius written by his companion Ouen.

Most countries in Western Europe officially adopted [January 1](#) as New Year's Day somewhat before they adopted the [Gregorian calendar](#). This is sometimes called *Circumcision Style*, because this was the date of the [Feast of the Circumcision](#), being the eighth day counting from [25 December](#)." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Year's_Day)

There is a lot more going on in this day as again many practices have been combined to make it what it is today. Some of the practices on New Years and its Eve are steeped in history.

"The month of January was named for their god, Janus, who is pictured with two heads. One looks forward, the other back, symbolizing a break between the old and new. The Greeks paraded a baby in a basket to represent the spirit of fertility. Christians adopted this symbol as the birth of the baby Jesus and continued what started as a pagan ritual. Today our New Year's symbols are a newborn baby starting the next year and an old man winding up the last year." (<http://new-years-day.com/new-years-history.htm>)

Continuing from the same article. Some of the practices are to affect ones luck or make resolution.

"The traditions of the season include the making of New Year's resolutions. Making a resolutions to change some part of one's life also dates back to the early Babylonians. Today most people promise to lose weight or quit smoking.

Our ancestors thought that one could affect the luck they would have throughout the coming year by what they did or ate on the first day of the year. It has become common for folks to celebrate the first few minutes of a brand new year in the company of family and friends.

New Year foods are also thought to bring luck. Many cultures believe that anything in the shape of a ring is good luck, because it symbolizes "coming full circle," completing a year's cycle. Some put coins in black-eyed peas and the person who gets the coin in their meal will be prosperous in the coming year. (<http://new-years-day.com/new-years-history.htm>)

There is some more interesting facts about New Years Day.

“About five hundred years later, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII (AKA "Ugo Boncompagni", 1502-1585) abandoned the traditional Julian calendar. By the Julian reckoning, the solar year comprised 365.25 days, and the intercalation of a "leap day" every four years was intended to maintain correspondence between the calendar and the seasons. Really, however there was a slight inaccuracy in the Julian measurement (the solar year is actually 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds = 365.2422 days). This slight inaccuracy caused the Julian calendar to slip behind the seasons about one day per century. Although this regression had amounted to 14 days by Pope Gregory's time, he based his reform on restoration of the vernal equinox, then falling on March 11, to the date had 1,257 years earlier when Council of Nicaea was convened (March 21, 325 C.E.). Pope Gregory made the correction by advancing the calendar 10 days. The change was made the day after October 4, 1582, and that following day was established as October 15, 1582. The Gregorian calendar differs from the Julian in three ways: (1) No century year is a leap year unless it is exactly divisible by 400 (e.g., 1600, 2000, etc.); (2) Years divisible by 4000 are common (not leap) years; and (3) once again the New Year would begin with the date set by the early pagans, the first day of the month of Janus - January 1.

On New Years Day 1577 Pope Gregory XIII decreed that all Roman Jews, under pain of death, must listen attentively to the compulsory Catholic conversion sermon given in Roman synagogues after Friday night services. On Year Years Day 1578 Gregory signed into law a tax forcing Jews to pay for the support of a "House of Conversion" to convert Jews to Christianity. On Yew Years 1581 Gregory ordered his troops to confiscate all sacred literature from the Roman Jewish community. Thousands of Jews were murdered in the campaign.

Throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, January 1 - supposedly the day on which Jesus' circumcision initiated the reign of Christianity and the death of Judaism - was reserved for anti-Jewish activities: synagogue and book burnings, public tortures, and simple murder.

The Israeli term for New Year's night celebrations, "Sylvester," was the name of the "Saint" and Roman Pope who reigned during the Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.). The year before the Council of Nicaea convened, Sylvester convinced Constantine to prohibit Jews from living in Jerusalem. At the Council of Nicaea, Sylvester arranged for the passage of a host of viciously anti-Semitic legislation. All Catholic "Saints" are awarded a day on which Christians celebrate and pay tribute to that Saint's memory. December 31 is Saint Sylvester Day - hence celebrations on the night of December 31 are dedicated to Sylvester's memory.

U.S. News and World Report December 23, 1996"
(<http://www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/NewYearsHistory.htm>)

You can see that much has happened ion the history of a January 1 New Years. Much of it not to good for Jews. But we want to see whether we can keep this day of not. It is interesting that this day is also revered by Catholics while the drinking and partying may not be. You might note its origins in the Catholic Encyclopedia.

“The ancient Roman year began in March, but Julius Caesar, in correcting the calendar (46 B.C.), made January the first month. Though this [custom](#) has been universally adopted among [Christian](#) nations, the names, September, October, November, and December (i.e., the seventh, eight, ninth, and tenth), remind us of the past, when March began the year. [Christian](#) writers and councils condemned the [heathen](#) orgies and excesses connected with the festival of the *Saturnalia*, which were celebrated at the beginning of the year: [Tertullian](#) blames [Christians](#) who regarded the customary presents -- called *strenae* (Fr. *étrennes*) from the goddess Strenia, who presided over New Year's Day (cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, 185-90) -- as mere tokens of friendly intercourse (De Idol. xiv), and

towards the end of the sixth century the [Council of Auxerre](#) (can. I) forbade [Christians strenas diabolicas observare](#). The II Council of [Tours](#) held in 567 (can. 17) prescribes [prayers](#) and a Mass of expiation for New Year's Day, adding that this is a practice long in use (*patres nostri statuerunt*). [Dances](#) were forbidden, and [pagan](#) crimes were to be expiated by [Christian fasts](#) (St. Augustine, Sermon, cxcvii-viii in P.L., XXXVIII, 1024; [Isidore of Seville](#), *De Div. Off. Eccl.*, I, xli; [Trullan Council](#), 692, can. lxii). When [Christmas](#) was fixed on 25 Dec., New Year's Day was sanctified by commemorating on it the [Circumcision](#), for which [feast](#) the Gelasian Sacramentary gives a Mass (*In Octabas Domini*). [Christians](#) did not wish to make the celebration of this [feast](#) very solemn, lest they might seem to countenance in any way the [pagan](#) extravagance of the opening year.” (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11019a.htm>)

Some of the original celebrations are being carried out today. Read on the practices being done in Scotland even today in this 2002 article.

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2002/12/1230_021231_hogmanay.html

Clearly many of the practices we associate with the secular are very religious in origins. There fore should we be attaching ourselves to the practices of other Elohim?

Bamidbar/Numbers 25:1-3

1 While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people profaned themselves by whoring with the Moabite women, 2 who invited the people to the sacrifices for their god. The people partook of them and worshiped that god. 3 Thus Israel attached itself to Baal-peor, and Yehovah was incensed with Israel.

When one practices the ways of another Elohim they attach/join themselves to that Elohim.

We as Karaites need to be aware what we are doing that might be offensive to Yehovah. We are to serve him and him alone.