

# A JEWISH VIEW ON CALENDAR REVISION

An Open Letter to certain Jewish Opponents of the  
Indian Proposal for The World Calendar

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*Mr. Sher's "Seven Questions" was published in Geneva, Switzerland, on 13 July 1954 and made available to all persons, official and non-official, concerned with ECOSOC's deliberations on the Indian Resolution concerning The World Calendar.*

**THE WORLD CALENDAR** is now on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council, and this proposal has received by far the greatest amount of support from governments, organizations, and individuals. Apart from your criticism of the scheme, opposition is negligible. Therefore, as a citizen of Israel, I desire to submit for your consideration *seven specific questions*, and make a reasoned appeal to you.

**Question 1: DO YOU BELIEVE** that the overwhelming majority of the human race should be prevented from amending their civil calendar, in order to safeguard a right which is exercised by only a part of the Jewish people outside Israel (a small minority in fact) who claim that they would thereby be inconvenienced in observing certain practices of their own religion in a non-Jewish environment—practices which only a fraction of members of the Jewish faith observe, either in Israel or the Diaspora? If so, do you consider that such an attitude is in keeping with the principles of democracy and justice that have heretofore been part of your own contribution to the development of human dignity and international understanding?

**Question 2: ARE YOU ASKING** the rest of the world to abstain from reforming a calendar, which is now in universal use, on the grounds that such a reform would interfere with the "human and religious rights" of a minority to practice certain religious tenets with greater ease? Would not such a demand jeopardize the very "human and religious rights" on which you base your claim, seeing that such a concession would prevent the majority from observing the calendar which they desire to use, just as you do yours? In other words, is it to be assumed that the "human and religious rights" of the minority include the right to veto a non-religious and non-sectarian reform desired by the majority?

**Question 3: CONCEDED THAT YOU ARE** as far as religion is concerned, within your rights in observing the Jewish calendar, either in Israel or outside, is it honest to invoke *religious arguments* against the reform of a universal civil calendar, which we ourselves do not observe for religious purposes?

**Question 4: IF IT IS THE BASIS** of your case that the *survival of the Jewish people* depends upon the rejection of The World Calendar plan, how do you reconcile this astounding claim with the following considerations:

(a) Are you asserting that Judaism, after giving full proof of amazing vitality for thirty-five centuries, after contributing to so many aspect of civilization, and after establishing the State of Israel against tremendous odds, has now degenerated to such a level that a purely technical amendment of a non-Jewish calendar would jeopardize its very existence?

(b) Do you imagine that the great majority of the Jewish people have so low an estimate of their survival value as to support such a view?

(c) If the danger is so great as you pretend, how does it happen that a growing campaign in favor of The World Calendar, which has now begun *in Israel itself*, is not only permitted, but has already elicited growing support in important quarters? And by claiming, as you are, that the opposition to The World Calendar comes from Jews without distinction of religious or political views—are you aware that many Jews, again without distinction of religious or political views, have already written us from Israel, endorsing The World Calendar?

(d) If the traditionalistic observance of the Sabbath were indeed a matter of survival of the Jewish people, how would you explain the *fact* that in Israel proper such observance is far from complete and is furthermore confined to a minority?

(e) Even if this were truly a question of “survival,” are you insisting that it is the duty of the non-Jewish community, rather than that of the Jews themselves, to put up with inconveniences in the matter of a calendar?

(f) Recalling that the Jewish Diaspora survived for many centuries before the inclusion of the seven-day week under Constantine in the Christian calendar (A.D. 321), why should the Jews not continue to survive, whether or not the week stays without change?

**Question 5: AS ONE OF THE REASONS** given by Jewish opinion for the formation of the State of Israel was that such an event would give an opportunity to all Jews, who so desire, to lead a fully Jewish way of life, are you seriously inviting the non-Jewish world to forego a reform which it requires for the conduct of its common affairs, in order to suit the convenience of a small fraction of Jews living outside Israel, *after* the setting up of the Jewish State? Are you not thus working against the very *raison d'être* of the State of Israel?

Furthermore, do you feel it is really consistent with Jewish honor and dignity to try to capitalize on our six million Martyrs in appealing *on these grounds* against The World Calendar?

**Question 6: IF YOUR CLAIM IS VALID** that the new civic calendar, by provoking the opposition of a small Jewish minority, would *increase international tensions*, is it not more likely that the failure, because of opposition by that minority to carry out

this reform which would be beneficial to the majority of the world, would increase those very tensions?

**Question 7: IF YOU MAINTAIN THAT** The World Calendar should be dropped by the United Nations, because there are bigger international problems of “human survival” to deal with, why not urge that the United Nations drop other items from its agenda, such as, e.g., racial discrimination, rehabilitation of refugees, technical assistance?

Again, your apparent unwillingness to give the reform of the calendar its just and rightful study and careful consideration in an international committee is a strong indication, is it not, that you are afraid of such a study? Does this not suggest a weakness of your premise and a weakness of your arguments?

**FINALLY AN APPEAL:** We would draw your earnest attention to the following realities that strike at the root of your opposition:

(a) Whereas The World Calendar is recognized, by scientist and men of affairs, over many years and in many countries, as scientifically sound, your counter-proposal of adding an entire week once every few years is utterly impracticable and was decisively rejected, after careful scrutiny, in the days of the League of Nations;

(b) The allegedly changeless principles which you proclaim as governing Jewish time-reckoning, and especially the observing of the Jewish Sabbath, are themselves questionable on the grounds of both history and physics and have been authoritatively challenged for many years; so you cannot expect the rest of the world to forego forever the advantages of a valuable reform, merely on the strength of this questionable allegation of yours.

(c) Contrary to you own claim, the rate of correspondence between the Jewish Sabbath and Christian days of rest, because of their permanency as to the day and date of the year, would increase rather than decrease under the reformed calendar.

(d) There is already set out in The World Calendar literature ample evidence in support of the above propositions, and we shall always be willing to explain to you and to others, who have difficulties in accepting the new calendar, how little you will lose and how much you will gain by joining with the majority who wants this change for the common good of all.

**Links to this document:**

[www.TheWorldCalendar.org/AJewishViewOnCalendarRevision.pdf](http://www.TheWorldCalendar.org/AJewishViewOnCalendarRevision.pdf)

[www.TheWorldCalendar.org/AJewishViewOnCalendarRevision.htm](http://www.TheWorldCalendar.org/AJewishViewOnCalendarRevision.htm)

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