Do the Stars Help Determine the New Year?

The new year begins with the first new moon after the ripening barley is sighted in Israel. The first day of the year can begin in the winter as long as the Passover itself will occur in the Spring.

We read, “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and **years**,” (Gen. 1:14). The Hebrew word for seasons here is *moed* (Strong’s # 4150) meaning ‘appointed time, feast.’ The stars play a part in determining the seasons and (the beginning of) years

“Thus saith Yehovah, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and **the ordinances** of the moon and of **the stars** for a light by night” (Jer. 31:35a). The ordinance governed by stars is in regard to the beginning of the year.

The Passover is commanded to be in its season (Spring). “These are the feasts of Yehovah, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons,” (Lev. 23:4). “Remember the commandment which the Lord commanded thee concerning the Passover, that thou shouldst celebrate it in its season on the fourteenth of the first month…” (Jub. 49:1a)

How do the stars play a part in determining the beginning of the year and the start of Spring? Because the first day of Aries (called Taleh in Hebrew, meaning lamb or ram) is always the first day of Spring.

The vernal (spring) equinox marks the exact moment the Sun enters 0 degrees of Aries. In astronomy this exact location of the March equinox is historically called the “First Point of Aries,” serving as the zero-point for celestial coordinate systems.

Aviv may begin before spring if the barley is ripening, but Passover must begin in the spring. Jews have always understood the Passover must occur in Spring, which is always after the Spring (vernal) equinox. ”The *tekufah* of Nisan – denoting the mean sun at the vernal equinoctial point.. [is] the main *reason d’etre* of intercalation…to prevent the lunar Nisan 16 from occurring before the day of the *tekufah* of Nisan.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica* “Calendar”, vol.5, pg.43). This was to prevent the Passover from occurring before the Vernal Equinox.

I hope this explains biblically how Passover must be in the Spring and the how the stars (Aries/Taleh) play a part.