

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR

THE SABBATH: The Divinely appointed Day of Rest, beginning 18 minutes before sundown Friday with the kindling of the Sabbath Lights. On the Sabbath - prayer, reading of the Torah and festive meals. Sabbath ends at nightfall on Saturday, followed by the lighting of the Havdalah candle.

ROSH CHODESH: The first day of each month. The Jewish calendar months are determined by the new Moon and all Holidays and Festivals are calculated by Rosh Chodesh.

ROSH HASHANAH: The New Year is celebrated on the 1st and 2nd days of Tishrei. This is a solemn holiday observed by prayer, blowing of the Shofar, reading of the Torah, festive meals and Tashlich.

YOM KIPPUR: Day of Atonement- the 10th day of Tishrei, beginning on the 9th day at sundown. The Holiest Day of the Year, observed in the Synagogue. A day of fasting, prayer, reading of the Torah, charity and Yizkor prayers for the departed. Yom Kippur ends with the blowing of the Shofar at night fall.

SUKOS: Begins on the 15th day of Tishrei. A Season of Joy and ingathering of the harvest. Observed by eating in a Sukkah and blessing over the 4 Species: The Esrog and the Lulav, the Hadasim and the Arovos - bound together. **Hashanah Rabbah:** The 7th day of Sukos observed by encircling the Bima in the Synagogue 7 times with the 4 Species. Prayer, reading of the Torah and Hoshanos.

SHEMINI ATZERES: The 8th Day of Solemn Assembly, Prayer, reading of the Torah, reading of Koheles, Yizkor services and festive meals.

SMICHAS TORAH: The 9th day of the Festival. The Rejoicing with the Torah and the climax of the "Season of our Joy". Hakofos and processions with the Torah. Singing and Dancing, prayer, completion of the 5 Books of Moses and a new beginning with the reading in the 1st Book of the Torah.

PESACH- PASSOVER: Beginning on the eve of the 15th day of Nisan for 8 days. Commemorating the redemption of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage and known as the Festival of Freedom and the Festival of Matzos. After the Almighty inflicted the 10 plagues upon the Egyptians, Moses, at the direction of G-d led the Israelites out of Egypt. The miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea into the Sinai Desert and the creation of the Children of Israel into a Nation. Symbolic of the Pesach Festival are the cleaning out of the chometz, the Siyum of the First Born, the prohibition of eating leavened bread beginning at the early hours on the 14th day of Nisan and ending at nightfall on the last day of the holiday; the 22nd of Nisan, the changing of dishes and utensils used all year for those especially set aside for Passover use only and the mitzvah of eating matzos. On the eve of the 15th and 16th of Nisan the highlight of the Holiday is reached by families getting together for the Seder ceremony. The Seder is symbolized by the matzos, the Haggadah, the 4 cups of wine, the Ma-Nishtana asked by the young child, the bitter herbs, the charoses, etc., the relating of the beginning of Jewish history and the redemption from Egyptian slavery told by the elders of the assembled, the cup of Eliyahu HaNavi, the eating of the Afikomen and the singing of Pesach songs. The Festival is the most impressive of all the holidays of the year. On each day there are prayers and reading of the Torah. On the Sabbath of Chol HaMoed we read the Shir HaShirim, the Song of Songs, and on the last day of Pesach we observe Yizkor.

SHAVUOS - THE FESTIVAL OF WEEKS: Celebrated on the 6th and 7th of Sivan. Known also as Z'man Matan Torasainu: The time of the giving of our Torah. This festival commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments to the Children of

Israel at Mt. Sinai and marks the greatest spiritual event in the history of Mankind. It was at this time in Jewish History when the Children of Israel accepted the Laws of G-d and became a Religion. At the Synagogue and in homes there are flowers and greens to celebrate the first harvest. This festival is marked with prayers, reading of the Torah, reading of the Book of Ruth and Yizkor services on the 7th day of Sivan. Also, festive meals at home.

CHANUKAH: The 25th of Kislev. Its beginning was in the year 165 B.C.E. A victory of the Maccabees over the Hellenists, of G-dliness over idolatry, and the re-dedication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Observed by lighting the candles or oil for 8 nights and celebrating many festivities.

PURIM: The 14th day of Adar, or the 14th day of Adar 2 when it is a leap year. Historically about 25 centuries ago. Commemorates the saving of the Jews from annihilation by Haman in the Persian-Medean Empire. The Megillah of Esther relates the story of the miracle and the principals: Mordecai, Esther, Achashverosh and Haman. Festival begins on the eve of the 14th of Adar by reading of the Megillah, which is read also on the 14th. Purim is a day of great rejoicing, feasts, giving shalach monos and charity.

CHAMISHA OSOR-TU BI-SHEVAT, The 15th day of Shevat: Known as the New Year for the trees. Celebrated by eating the fruits which grow in Eretz Israel and by planting trees in the soil of the Holy Land.

LAG B'OMER: The 33rd day of the Omer - the 18th day of Iyar. A day of joyous occasions, weddings and celebrations. Traditionally, on this day, the plague which destroyed many students of Rabbi Akiva stopped.

FAST DAYS

FAST OF GEDALIA: 3rd day of Tishrei, Governor of Judah was killed in the year 586 B.C.E. bringing a halt to the rebuilding of Jewish life in Eretz Israel.

THE 10th DAY OF TEVES: Marks the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by the King of Babylon.

THE 17th DAY OF TAMUZ: Marks the day when the wall around Jerusalem was breached.

THE 9th OF AV: To commemorate the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem.

THE 13th OF ADAR: Fast of Esther. A day before Purim to pray for the lives of the Jewish people whom Haman wished to destroy.

DAYS OF JOY

YOM HA-ATZMAUT: Independence Day in Israel. On the 5th day of Iyar, 1948th the STATE OF ISRAEL was established. The Law of Return opened the gates of Israel unto the Land of Israel for all the Children of Israel as prescribed by G-d in the Torah.

YOM YERUSHOLAYIM: Day of Jerusalem. On 28 Iyar, June 7, 1967, the Holy City became a United Jerusalem after 2000 years, when Israeli troops broke the enemy defenses in the Old City and Jews were again free to visit and pray at the Kotel HaMarovi, the Western Wall of the Holy Temple.