

CONGREGATION
BETH AHABAH

THE JEWISH YEAR: CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS

THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS

The Jewish calendar finds its origin in the colorful accounts of the history of the Jewish people. History provides the stories, meaning and direction in the lives of Jewish people. The Jewish year consists of 12 lunar months, with the beginning of every month (*Rosh Chodesh* – the New Moon) being a minor festival.

In biblical times, the Sanhedrin fixed the new moons by actual observation, and the dates were announced by messengers from Jerusalem. Astronomical calculation later determined the dates. While time moves ever forward – time also moves in a circle. Day follows night, spring follows winter.

The Jewish holidays punctuate the yearly cycle. To understand a holiday, we usually examine its historical development, and choose the way in which we are comfortable learning the special customs associated with it. As those who came before us traveled through the calendar, liturgies were created in order to provide us with the meaning and teachings of each biblical text.

This booklet was created in order to provide a deeper understanding of the Festivals and Holy Days that mark the Jewish year.



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THE CALENDAR

S'lichot

Rosh Hashanah

Shabbat Shuvah

Yom Kippur

Sukkot

Simchat Torah

Chanukah

Tu B'Shevat

Purim

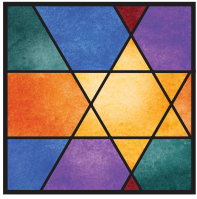
Passover

Yom HaShoah

Yom Ha'atzmaut

Shavuot

Tisha B'Av

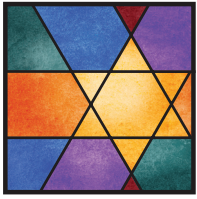


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S'lichot

The *S'lichot* Service takes place during the Hebrew month of *Elul*. The word *elul* (spelled alef-lamed-vav-lamed) is said to be an acronym “*Ani L’dodi V’dodi Li*” (I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is Mine) a quote from Song of Songs. God is the “Beloved” and the “I” is the Jewish people. This moving Service always takes place on the Saturday night preceding Rosh Hashanah. That approximate week between S’lichot and Rosh Hashanah provides us with a “spiritual map” to help us find our way through our hectic lives and back to God. The prayers for forgiveness that emerge during this time are called “*s’lichot*” – penitential prayers. Judaism teaches that for sins we have committed against God, only God can forgive us. However, for sins that we have committed against another human being, only the person whom we have wronged may forgive us.

The prayers of S’lichot provide solitude, introspection, time for reflection, pleas for Divine mercy, private confession and the affirmation of hope. It is during the S’lichot Service that we first hear the blast of the shofar.



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ROSH HASHANAH

Rosh Hashanah begins the 10-day period known as the *Yamim Noraim* – Days of Awe. This time is for serious reflection, self-examination and reconciliation; it is a time for us to consider our past sins and seek forgiveness from God and from individuals whom we have wronged. Rosh Hashanah is also a time of joyful celebration, as it is a time of hopefulness, renewal, good wishes, sweetness and the celebration of God's Creation of the World.

Rosh Hashanah takes place on the first day of the Hebrew month of *Tishrei*. Rosh Hashanah is *Yom Harat Olam* – The Birthday of the World. It is the anniversary of Creation, and therefore a new beginning in the cycle of time that began when God created the world. The commandment to observe Rosh Hashanah is first found in the Torah in the Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus). There it says: “In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, there shall be a rest day for you, a remembrance proclaimed with the blast of horns, a holy convocation. You shall not do any labor and you shall offer a fire-offering to the Eternal.” (Leviticus 23:24-5).

In the Torah, Rosh Hashanah is referred to as *Yom Teruah* – the day of sounding the *shofar*. The *shofar* is the horn of a ram, which is blown like a trumpet. In ancient times, it was used as a call to war and to announce important events, such as the new moon and holidays. It is interesting to note that we are commanded not to blow the shofar but to hear the sound of the shofar. It calls out to us, “Awake all you who are asleep; search your ways and mend them in repentance.” We reflect on those times when we might not have lived up to our best selves.

Rosh Hashanah is also *Yom HaDin* – the Day of Judgment. It is on Rosh Hashanah that each of us stands before God asking for forgiveness. One of the most powerful images used in the liturgy of the Days of Awe is the Book of Judgment that God maintains. We are told that “*Teshuvah, Tefilah and Tzedakah*” – Repentance, Prayer and Charity – can temper divine judgment. This is the idea we express when we greet people on Rosh Hashanah with the words, “May you be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life, *L'shanah Tovah Tikateivu*” It is an opportunity to begin anew.

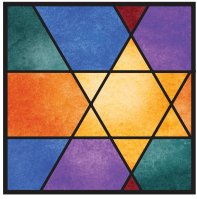
Rosh Hashanah is a festival rich in customs and symbols. Perhaps the most well known and delicious custom is the dipping of apples in honey. This is simply a way of sharing our hopes for a sweet new year.



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SHABBAT SHUVAH

Shabbat Shuvah, which literally means the “Sabbath of Return,” is the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Shabbat Shuvah is also a play on the phrase “Shabbat *Teshuvah*” (Sabbath of Repentance). Because Shabbat Shuvah takes place between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, it is a time for reflection leading up to the atonement of Yom Kippur.



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YOM KIPPUR

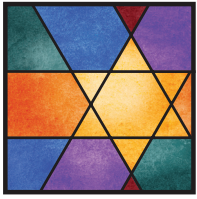
Yom Kippur is the day entirely devoted to prayer. The preceding evening is called “*Kol Nidrei*” (all vows), which nullifies all vows and promises we make to God (during the coming year) that we may not be able to keep. The prayers and liturgy of Yom Kippur include confessional and penitential prayers.

The *Yizkor* Service (from the word *zachor* – to remember) is a special memorial service for those of our loved ones who have died. In memory of those who have died, special *Yahrzeit* candles are lit. These candles are designed to burn safely for an entire day, and should be left to burn throughout Yom Kippur (these candles may be purchased in grocery stores). They are lit prior to the kindling of the Yom Kippur lights. The memories of our loved ones at such a vulnerable a time stir great emotion and promise within us. *Neilah* (the concluding service) is the final service of Yom Kippur and offers a last opportunity for repentance. The *Neilah* service is done at no other time of the year. The word *Neilah* means “locked” and is meant to symbolize the closing and sealing of the Book of Life at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. At the conclusion of this service, the *shofar* is blown again.

A word about fasting: Fasting is not intended to punish ourselves for our sins. Rather, fasting is to help us transcend our physical nature. Without concern for our bodily needs, we can focus on the spiritual. It is believed by some that to fast on Yom Kippur is to emulate the angels in heaven, who have no need to eat, drink or wash.

It is customary for the clergy to wear white on Yom Kippur. White symbolizes purity and recalls the statement in Isaiah (1:18) that our sins shall be made, “as white as snow.”

The confluence of Shabbat and the Sabbath of Sabbaths (Yom Kippur) is a very powerful one. We know that we do not go through this process of repentance alone; we come together, as one community in prayer. The haunting chants of the liturgy and *Kol Nidre* in particular, help to punctuate the intensity of the long day of Yom Kippur. For just one day, we need to turn off the distractions, diversions and disruptions so that we can hear the music of who we truly are and what we want to become.



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SUKKOT

The *Festival of Sukkot* begins on the fifth day after Yom Kippur and lasts for seven days. *Sukkot* is one of the three biblical pilgrimage festivals. In ancient days, pilgrims from all of the land of Israel, would make their journeys to the Temple in Jerusalem three times a year. They brought with them their crops and sacrifices in order to spiritually refresh themselves in the Holy City. The festivals of *Passover*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkot* were considered the three “foot festivals” – presumably because pilgrims journeyed to Jerusalem by foot. These three festivals (*Shalosh Regalim*) are most significant in the Hebrew calendar along with Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Shabbat.

It is a significant transition to move from the most solemn of holidays (Yom Kippur) to one of the most joyous. Due to the fact that Sukkot is so joyous, the holiday is often referred to as “*z’man sim-cha-tei-nu*” – the season of our rejoicing. Sukkot is the last of the “*sha-losh re-ga-lim*” (three pilgrimage festivals). Just as both Passover and Shavuot have dual meanings (agricultural and historical), so it is with Sukkot. Historically, Sukkot commemorates the 40-year period during which the children of Israel wandered the desert and lived in temporary shelters. The word Sukkot literally means “booths” and refers to the temporary homes in which our people lived during their years of wandering. Sukkot is also a harvest festival, which is instituted in the Book of Leviticus, chapter 23, verse 33.

Many people build their own *sukkah* – or *sukkot* (plural). The *Sukkah* must be strong enough for us to obey the commandment to live, eat and sleep in it. The *sukkah* is often decorated with pictures, crafts and other non-perishable items. Because we are so aware of the tremendous problem of hunger, we no longer hang real fruit from the walls and ceiling of the *sukkah*.

Another commandment on Sukkot is to hold the *lulav* and the *etrog*. The *lulav*, or palm branch, consists of two willow branches and three myrtle branches, which are bound together. The *etrog* is a citrus fruit, native to Israel, similar to a lemon but with a sweeter fragrance. Each of those plants represents different parts of the human body: the long, straight palm branch represents the spine; the myrtle leaf, a small oval leaf, represents the eye; the willow leaf, a long oval, represents the mouth; and the *etrog* represents the heart. Holding all four plants (species), we recite a blessing and wave the four plants in six directions: east, south, west, north, up and down. This ritual symbolizes the fact that God is everywhere. All of these parts of us should join together to do mitzvot (commandments).

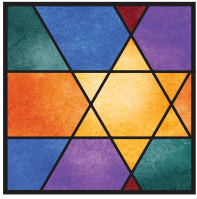


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SIMCHAT TORAH

Simchat Torah literally means “rejoicing in the Torah”. And so we do. The Torah is representative of God’s special Covenant (*brit*) with the Jewish people. It is a huge celebration for the entire community, during which many Congregations dance inside and outside with the Torah scrolls. Most of us do *Hakafot* (circles or parades) in the sanctuary. This joyous celebration concludes the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah. During Simchat Torah service, we do a *hakafah*, which is the circling of the sanctuary holding Torah schools.

We celebrate *Simchat Torah* by giving Torah scrolls to children who are beginning religious school (consecrants) and by waving flags and banners celebrating God’s gift of Torah to the Jewish people. On *Simchat Torah* we read or chant the very end of the book of Deuteronomy and then begin the cycle again by reading the opening of the book of Genesis. The cycle begins again.



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CHANUKAH

Chanukah begins on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev and lasts for eight days. The Hebrew root of the word **CHANUKAH** means education as well as dedication. Chanukah commemorates the victory of Judah Maccabee and his followers over the forces of the Syrian tyrant, Antiochus Euphianes, and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem – which the Syrians tried to destroy. It is a *mitzvah* (commandment) to observe Chanukah for eight days. “Commencing with the twenty-fifth of Kislev, there are eight days upon which there shall be neither mourning nor fasting.” It is a *mitzvah* to light the Chanukah lights in one’s home with the appropriate blessings.

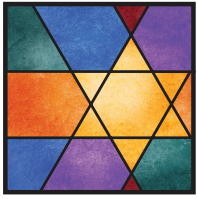
The nightly lighting of the *Menorah* (candlesticks) with its increasingly brighter light has become both our physical and spiritual resistance to tyranny. According to Talmudic legend, when the Hasmoneans got the Temple back and cleansed it, they found only one small cruse of oil with the seal of the High Priest. There was only enough to light the Menorah for one day. But, the story tells us that a miracle occurred and the small cruse of oil burned in the *Menorah* for eight days.

In lighting the candles on the *menorah*, one candle is lit for each night. The candle for the first night is placed on the right side of the eight-branched Menorah. On each of the following nights, an additional candle is placed to the left of the preceding night’s candle. The lighting of the candles is from left to right so that the newest candle is lit first. A special candle, called the *shamash*, is used to light the other candles. On Shabbat, the Chanukah lights are lit before the Shabbat lights in the synagogue. It is customary to place the Menorah – or *Chanukiyah* – where it can be seen from the outside. The public proclamation of Chanukah is part of the observance of the holiday. It is a custom of pride and identity.

It became customary to give children *Chanukah Gelt* – small amounts of Chanukah money – to sweeten the process of the study of Torah.

We often give children coins made of chocolate.

The most popular game of Chanukah is the game of *Dreidel* (*sevivon*). A *dreidel* is a four-sided top with the Hebrew letters *Nun* (N), *gimel* (g), *Hey* (H) and *Shin* (sh) inscribed on its sides. The letters stand for “*Neis gadol Hayah Sham*” – “A great miracle happened there.” We spin the *dreidel* and, depending upon what letters the dreidel lands on, we either put money in the pot or take money out of the pot. This is usually played with pennies.



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CHANUKAH *continued*

It is customary to eat dairy foods during Chanukah, as well as food cooked in oil. Among most Jews, the most popular dish is Latkes (potato pancakes). However, some people observe the custom that is observed by Asian Jews and eat sufganiyot (jelly donuts). Some people enjoy both!

On the first night of Chanukah three blessings are recited:

1. *Ba-ruch Atah A-do-nai, Eh-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam. A-sher ki-di-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav vi-tzi-va-nu l'had-lik ner shel Chanukah.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Who makes us holy through Your commandments and commands us to light the candles for Chanukah.

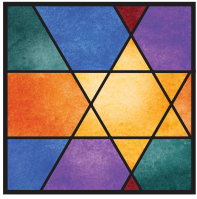
2. *Ba-ruch Atah A-do-nai, Eh-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, she-a-sa ni-ssim l'avotei-nu ba-ya-mim ha-heim baz- man ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Who performed miracles for our ancestors in the days of old at this very season.

3. *Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai, Eh-lo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-o-lam, she-he-che-ya-nu, v'ki-ye-ma-nu, v'hi-gi-ya-nu laz-man ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God. Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, lifted us up and brought us to this season.

After the first night, only the first two blessings are recited. We do not recite the *She-he-che-ya-nu*. We do not have to thank God for allowing us to live to that season because we have already lived to experience it.

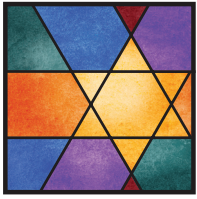


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TU B'SHEVAT

Tu B'Shevat is the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of Shevat. It is a celebration of trees and nature and the cycle of renewal. It is sometimes referred to as *Chag Ha-Ilanot* – the Festival of the Trees. It is customary to plant trees, either in Israel or anywhere in the world, in celebration of Tu B'Shevat. On this day, we remember that all the trees, plants, seeds and fruits were given to us by God.

God said: (Genesis 1:29-31) “See, I give you every seed bearing plant that is upon all the earth and every tree that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food. And it was so.” And God saw that it was done and that it was very good.



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PURIM

The story of *Purim* is written down in the *Scroll of Esther*. It makes no mention of God and has been read for the past 2,000 years. The story is the triumph of good will over evil. Each year we read the *Megillah* to renew the hope that good will triumph over evil – for all of us.

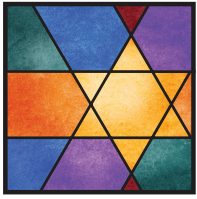
Purim is a celebration of the events described in the Scroll of Esther, or *Megillat Esther*. The holiday, a carnival-like day, focuses on one of the main themes in Jewish history – the survival of the Jewish people despite attempts of our enemies to destroy us.

Purim is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the Hebrew month of *Adar*. It was a day of gladness and feasting, a holiday of sending gifts to one another.

The name *Purim* is derived from the lot (*pur*) cast by Haman to determine the day on which the Jews would be destroyed. In the story, Mordecai, Esther's cousin, refuses to bow down to Haman, an official of King Ahasuerus. Haman was so angry that he devised a plot to have all the Jewish people killed. He said to the King: "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples...their laws are different from those of other people, they do not obey the King's law and the King should not tolerate them." Fortunately, when Esther and Mordecai heard of this plot, they told the King and saved the Jewish people.

Traditionally, *Purim* is a time for exchanging gifts of food or pastries. The sending of these gifts is called *Mishloach Manot* or *Shalach Mones*. It is also a mitzvah to send gifts to the poor on Purim, as it is an act of *Tzedakah* (charity).

Hamantaschen, or three-cornered cookies with fruit jams or poppy seeds, are served on Purim. In many communities these pastries are called "Haman's ears" or *oznai Haman*.



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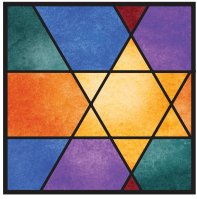
PASSOVER

The Hebrew word *Pesach* comes from the Hebrew root P-S-CH, meaning to pass through, to pass over, to exempt or to spare. It refers to the fact that God “passed over” the houses of the Jewish families when he sent for the “angel of death” to slay the firstborn of Egypt. Passover is referred to as *Chag-He-a-viv* (the Spring Festival), *Z’man Chei-ru-tei-nu* (Festival of Freedom) and *Chag Ha-ma-tzot* (Festival of Matzah).

Passover is one of the three biblical pilgrimage festivals. In ancient days, pilgrims from all of the land of Israel would make their journeys to the Temple in Jerusalem three times a year. They brought with them their crops and sacrifices in order to spiritually refresh themselves in the Holy City. The festivals of *Passover*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkot* were considered the three “foot festivals” – presumably because pilgrims journeyed to Jerusalem by foot. These three festivals (Shalosh Regalim) are most significant in the Hebrew calendar along with Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Shabbat.

The *Seder* is our festive introduction to a week of observance celebrating the birth of the Jewish people, our struggle for freedom and God’s role in our redemption. Deuteronomy 6, verses 20 – 23 explains: “You will say to your child: We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt; and God brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. God gave signs and wonders both great and harmful against Pharaoh and Egypt before our eyes. God brought us out of Egypt to give us the Land that he promised to our ancestors.”

All the foods on the Seder Plate are symbolic. The *chagigah*, or lamb shank, represents the sacrifice of long ago. The *maror* is the bitter herb which represents the bitterness that our people endured while they were slaves in Egypt. The *charoset* is a mixture of apples, nuts, wine and raisins, which represents the mortar that the Israelite slaves used to build the bricks. There is salt water and hard-boiled eggs for everyone and 3 pieces of matzah, which represent creation, revelation and redemption. Each person must drink 4 cups of wine or juice, which represent God’s promises to us; I will *bring you out*, I will *deliver you*, I will *redeem you*, I will *espouse you*. We also set a filled wine cup on the table for Elijah, the prophet, and put an orange on the Seder plate or table (an explanation for why is below).



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PASSOVER *continued*

The most significant observance of Passover is the removal of *chametz*, or leavened products, from our homes. This represents the fact that the Jews were in a hurry when leaving Egypt and did not have time to let their bread rise. Anything made from wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt is considered *chametz*. Some people consider rice, corn, peanuts and beans to be *chametz*. We are told not to eat *chametz* during Passover and traditionally, after one gathered the *chametz* from the house, it was sold. Preparing a household for Passover can be an enormous task if done completely. All the dishes, utensils, pots and pans have to be changed to sets used exclusively for Passover and the house must be “white glove or feather” clean of *chametz*.

On Passover we eat *Matzah* instead of bread. This is the bread that the Jews made when they fled from Egyptian slavery. Cooked very quickly – it is simply flour and water. It can be made into cakes and cookies, matzah meal, breadcrumbs, etc. Today, all these products can be purchased in most grocery stores. Traditional food for Passover includes matzah ball soup, matzah brei (an egg & matzah dish – sort of like an omelet), cookies made from matzah meal, chocolate matzah, etc.

The text of the Passover Seder (ceremonial dinner) is written in a book called the *Haggadah*. The *Haggadah* tells the story of the Exodus from Egypt and explains some of the symbols and customs of the holiday. The word SEDER comes from the three root letters S-D-R. Seder means “order.” Consequently, the Seder follows an order – follows the story. The word *Haggadah* derives from the three root letters – H-G-D – to narrate or tell a story – a *maggid*. There are many versions of *Haggadot* (plural) and a beautiful one for vegetarians. The *Haggadah* is our guide through the evening of the Seder.

We hope to be able to experience the redemption from slavery in Egypt as though we ourselves had been slaves in Egypt. If we think about our world, we are well aware that there are many people who are still enslaved and in bondage. We give thanks to God for redeeming us from slavery and are reminded that the demise of the Egyptians at the coming together of the Red Sea is not to be celebrated. We are grateful that God redeemed us, but Judaism teaches us that God recognizes all people as His children, as well. Therefore, we do not celebrate the deaths of the Egyptians but commemorate our freedom.

Exodus: Chapter 15, verse 20: “and Miriam...took a timbrel in her hand...” Miriam led the women in song and dance. She took her timbrel, or tambourine in her hand as the Jews crossed the divided Red Sea and left Egypt.



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PASSOVER *continued*

THE ORANGE STORY:

Men and women sat around the Seder table one Passover, discussing the possibility of women as cantors and rabbis. One of the older, more traditional men said, “That will never happen! You know when there will be women rabbis and cantors?” he asked confidently. “When there is an ORANGE on the Seder Plate!” (Naturally, an orange is not one of the symbols of the usual Seder plate.)

Today, we include an orange on the Seder Plate, signaling our acceptance of women as members of the clergy.



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YOM HASHOAH

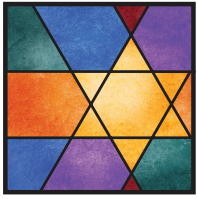
Yom HaShoah is the day when we remember the victims of the Holocaust and are reminded of Hitler's plan to annihilate the Jews. It is the day of remembrance and is observed on the 27th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan, a week after the seventh day of Passover and a week before *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers). The commemoration was selected by the Israeli Parliament (the *Knesset*) on April 12, 1951. American Jews observe Yom HaShoah in various ways, including synagogue services. We generally recite the *Kaddish* (prayer for the dead) and often survivors of the concentration camps themselves speak to us of their experiences. The overwhelming theme is remembering...recalling the victims and remembering so that this tragic atrocity can never happen again.



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YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Yom Ha'atzmaut is Israeli Independence Day. The Declaration of Independence was signed in Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948. In Israel, Yom Ha'atzmaut is celebrated with dancing, festivities, singing – all in the streets. For American Jews, celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut is a way of expressing our solidarity and support of the state of Israel. When we celebrate Israel's independence at a service, we almost always sing *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem. For Jews throughout the world, joining with Israel's celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut continues to be a concrete and strong link in the Jewish connection to the land of Israel.



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SHAVUOT

The literal meaning of *Shavuot* is “weeks.” On reaching the end of the counting of the seven weeks between *Passover* and *Shavuot*, we celebrate our redemption from slavery in Egypt and our journey and preparation for receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai. These seven weeks track the history of the Jewish people from slavery into freedom and a relationship with God. The Torah refers to *Shavuot* as *Yom Habikurim* (day of first fruits) and *Z’man Matan Torateinu* (the time of the giving of the Torah). Historically, farmers would bring their harvest to the holy city of Jerusalem where the people would celebrate their special relationship with God. *Shavuot* is often compared to a wedding between God and the Jewish people. It is at that time that we entered into a covenanted relationship with God.

Shavuot is one of the three biblical pilgrimage festivals. In ancient days, pilgrims from all of the land of Israel would make their journeys to the Temple in Jerusalem three times a year. They brought with them their crops and sacrifices in order to spiritually refresh themselves in the Holy City. The festivals of *Passover*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkot* were considered the three “foot festivals” – presumably because pilgrims journeyed to Jerusalem by foot. These three festivals (*Shalosh Regalim*) are most significant in the Hebrew calendar along with Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Shabbat.

Passover is the birth of the Jewish people into freedom.

On *Shavuot* the people not only inherit the land of Israel but experience the revelation of Torah as well. It’s a three-pronged experience. Ruth, the Moabite, realizes that in order to become Jewish, she has to embrace Judaism as a nationality and as a religion with a connection to the land of Israel. She follows Naomi to *Israel*, leaving her home of Moab saying: “Wherever you go I shall go; your people will be my people and your God shall be my God.”

There is a custom called *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, which involves spending the first night of *Shavuot* studying Torah through the night. This is to remind us that on this night we received the Ten Commandments. It is also customary to eat dairy foods.



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BETH AHABAH

TISHA B'AV

Tisha B'Av – the Fast of the Ninth of Av, is a day of mourning to commemorate the tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people, many of which coincidentally have occurred on the ninth of Av. Tisha B'Av means “the ninth (day) of ^” It usually occurs during August.

Tisha B'Av primarily commemorates the destruction of the first and second Temples, both of which were destroyed on the ninth of the Hebrew month of *Av* (the first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E.; the second by the Romans in 70 C.E.). Although this holiday is primarily meant to commemorate the destruction of the Temple, it is appropriate to consider that the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 took place on this day.

Tisha B'Av is the culmination of a three-week period of increasing mourning, beginning with the fast on the 17th of *Tammuz*, which commemorates the first breach in the walls of Jerusalem, before the First Temple was destroyed. During this three-week period, weddings and other parties are not permitted.