

## Unit 2: Cycle of the Year

1. Students should have knowledge of all the key dates and events that take place in a Jewish year.
2. Understanding of what is Rosh Chodesh
  - How it used to take place with the Sanhedrin?
  - Why the system could not continue?
  - Who fixed the calendar we have today?
  - How many days in a Jewish month – 29 or 30.
3. Understanding of what we do on a Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh
  - What we do on Rosh Chodesh – Musaf / Yaaleh Vayavo in Amidah prayer + Bentsching / Hallel /
4. Kiddush Levana
  - What is it? and when is it traditionally recited?
5. Understanding the difference between Yom Tov and Chol Hamoed

### Pesach

6. What takes place on the Shabbat before Pesach?
  - Bedikas Chametz – When it occurs? And with what?
  - Taanit Bechorot – When? Who? Why? How?
  - Biur Chametz – What takes place?
  - Dates of celebration in Israel and outside of Israel.
  - Different names of Pesach – Pesach / Chag Hamatzot / Zman Cheruteinu / Chag Ha'Aviv
  - Origins – Story and how it is the first of the three foot festivals.
  - Celebration – Seder – Haggadah , Shir Hashirim in Synagogue , Seder plate and its meaning, 4 cups of wine + cup of Elijah.
7. 16<sup>TH</sup> Nissan – Counting the Omer
  - Barley offering on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Pesach – known as the Omer / sheaf which permitted the eating of the new harvested grain.
  - 49 days to Shavuot.
  - Counting days and the weeks of the Omer + Recite a blessing.
  - Mourning for the first 33 days of the Omer – No weddings / no music / no hair cuts because of Rabbi Akiva's students passed away at this time.

## 8. 4<sup>th</sup> Iyar

- Understanding the importance of Yom Hazikaron
- Memorial prayers recited.

## 9. 5<sup>th</sup> Iyar

- Yom Ha'Atzmaut – 1948
- Nearly 2,000 years of exile
- Parties and celebration.

## 10. 18<sup>th</sup> Iyar – Lag B'Omer

- Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's Yahrzeit who according to tradition revealed the Zohar to the world.
- Many Jews traditionally visit Meron in the north of Israel where Rabbi Shimon was buried.
- Rabbi Akiva's students stopped passing away on this day.

## 11. 28<sup>th</sup> Iyar – Yom Yerushalayim

- Jews gained back control of the old city of Jerusalem.
- 1967 – Six Day war
- Jews had access to the Kotel.

## 12. Shavuot

- 6<sup>th</sup> Sivan
- Names: Festival of weeks / Giving of the Torah / Festival of first fruits / Harvest Festival
- Customs – Decorate the Shul in flowers as Mount Sinai was covered in flowers.
- Harvest season – Wheat and fruits. Jews would bring Bikurim / First fruits to the Temple to show their gratitude to Hashem .
- Custom to eat dairy foods – two suggested reasons: a) Laws of Kashrut were given at Mount Sinai and it took time for them to prepare the meat. B) Also, in reference to the Torah it is stated that ' it drops from your lips , like honey and milk'..
- Many Jews stay up all night learning Torah

- On the Second day – Jews read Megillah Ruth – Non Jew converted and accepted the Torah just like the Jews did at Mount Sinai. Also, Ruth was the ancestor of King David who was born and died on Shavuot.

### 13. Tammuz

- 17<sup>th</sup> Tammuz – Fast day
- 3 weeks of National mourning up to the 9<sup>th</sup> Av – known as the three weeks.
- Moshe broke the first set of tablets because of the sin of the Golden Calf.
- During the three weeks – No Weddings / Not allowed to listen to music / no haircuts.

### 14. Av

- From Rosh Chodesh - 9<sup>th</sup> Av – known as the 9 days.
- We reduce our joy
- We don't do things that will bring us happiness. Eg. buy new items / improve the house.
- Try not to enter into a court case.
- No meat or wine.
- No washing clothes
- No excessive bathing.

### 15. 9<sup>th</sup> Av

- Fast day – Saddest day in the Jewish calendar.
- 2 Temples were destroyed on this day
- Origins:
  - On this day 10 spies gave a negative report of the Land of Israel
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple was destroyed by the Romans under Titus.
  - Bar Kochba revolt was crushed by Hadrian – Roman Emperor.
  - In the 9 days - Jews were expelled from England.
  - Spanish Inquisition – Jews expelled from Spain in 1492
  - WW1 began – Germany declared war on Russia.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> Av :

- No eating or drinking
- No washing / bathing
- No marital relationships
- No leather shoes
- No studying of Torah texts except those that relate to the 9<sup>th</sup> Av / Mourning.
- Sit on low chairs and do not greet each other.
- Read Megillah Eicha – Jeremiah’s Prophecy over the destruction of the first Temple.
- Special prayers are recited entitled – Kinot.

#### 16. Ellul

- Reflection
- Blow the Shofar the entire month
- Originally Moshe ascended Mount Sinai to receive the second set of tablets following the events of the Golden calf.
- Selichot prayers are recited ‘ Prayers of forgiveness’ prior to Rosh Hashanah.

#### 17. Tishrei

- Rosh Hashanah celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of Tishrei.
- Rosh Hashanah known as the: Head of the Year / Day of Blowing the Shofar – Yom Teruah / Yom Hazikaron – Day of remembrance / Yom Hadin – Day of Judgement.
- Referred to as the High Holy days
- Celebration of the Jewish new year / creation of Adam and Eve.
- Use a Machzor
- Cover the Shul in white.
- Sound the Shofar – 100 notes – additional resons suggested: awaken us to improve / Avraham and sacrifice of Yitzchak took place on Rosh Hashanah.
- Dip Challah and apple in honey.
- Greet everyone with Shanah Tova.

- Perform Tashlich on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashanah near a pool of running water – cast away our sins.

#### 18.10 days of repentance

- 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
- Repentance and trying to improve our actions.

#### 19.3<sup>rd</sup> Tishrei

- Fast of Gedalia
- Tragic murder of Gedalia
- Gedalia was an important leader after the destruction of the first Temple and was killed by his opponents.
- Fast from dawn to nightfall.

#### 20. Shabbat Shuva

- The Shabbat before Yom Kippur
- Rabbi gives special sermon in preparation for Yom Kippur.

#### 21.10 Tishrei – Yom Kippur

- Both inside and outside of Israel.
- Holiest day of the year.
- Originally Moshe came down Mount Sinai with the second set of tablets displaying how G-d had forgiven the Jewish people.
- Before Yom Kippur – A special festive meal is eaten.
- 5 restrictions ( Like on 9<sup>th</sup> Av ) :
- No Anointing of oils / Makeup
- No eating or drinking
- No washing / bathing
- No marital relationships
- No leather shoes
- 25 Hour fast takes place.
- 5 services throughout the day.
- At Mincha on Yom Kippur – The story of Jonah is read to encourage the people to do repentance.

- There is a festive meal held after Yom Kippur.

#### 22.15 Tishrei

- The Festival of Sukkot is celebrated in Israel for 8 days and outside of Israel for 9 days.
- Sukkot celebrates how the Jews lived in huts in the desert for 40 years.
- Names: Chag Ha Asif – Ingathering / harvest season / Zeman Simchteinu – Time of rejoicing.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 3 foot festivals.
- 4 species – Lulav / Etrog / Hadassim / Aravot.
- Hoshanot – Everyone takes 4 species and circles the Bimah.
- On Shabbat we read Megillah Kohelet written by King Solomon.
- On 7<sup>th</sup> day of Sukkot – Hoshanah Rabba – walk around the Bimah 7 times.

#### 23. Shmini Ateret

- Separate Festival at the end of Sukkot
- In Israel it is combined with Simchat Torah.
- Outside of Israel – separate day – Shmini = 8<sup>th</sup> and Atzeret = hold back.

#### 24. Simchat Torah

- Completion of reading the Torah
- Chatan Torah – completes reading the Torah
- Chatan Bereishit – Start cycle of reading the Torah again.
- 7 circuits of dancing with the Sefer Torah.

#### 25. Cheshvan

- Mar Cheshvan – Bitter as there are no Festivals in this month.

#### 26. Kislev

- Chanukah lasts for 8 days

- Chanukah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the the Greek army.
- The Greeks ransacked the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple.
- They forbade the Jews from learning Torah / keeping Shabbat / Brit Milah
- A number of Jews became Hellenistic.
- Mattisyahu led a revolt after years and with Hashem's help drove back the mighty Greeks.
- One flask of oil was found in the Temple which lasted for 8 days.
- Light at nightfall which should last for 30 days.
- The Shamash should be set apart and higher.
- One should ideally use olive oil like in the story.
- One should light from far right .
- Knowledge of the 3 blessings recited.
- Ideally light the Menorah outside of the house to the left side of the front door.
- Special prayers recited: Al Hanisim in Amida + Bentching / Hallel.
- Custom to eat oily foods / fried potatoe / doughnuts/ Chanukah Gelt / Spin dreidal.

#### 27. Tevet

- 10<sup>th</sup> Tevet – Fast day
- Remembering the onset of the siege of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon.
- Led to the destruction of the First Temple.

#### 28. Shevat

- Tu b'Shvat – New Year for Trees
- Tithes and taxes were given to the Kohanim , the poor and others.
- It marked the cut of point between each year.
- Custom to eat 15 fruits especially from the 7 species.
- Custom also to plant trees.

#### 29. Adar

- Shabbat Zachor – Remembrance

- In Sul we read the Torah portion that relates to what Amalek did to the Jews when leaving Egypt.

Haman was a descendant from Amalek.

#### 13<sup>th</sup> Adar- Fast of Esther

- Jews fasted and prayed for forgiveness against Haman's evil decree.

#### 14<sup>th</sup> Adar – Purim

- Took place between the first and second Temple era.
- Knowledge of the key events that took place in the story.
- 4 Mitzvot: Megillah –night and day / Festive Meal / Mishloah Manot – 2 items of food to one person / Metanaot La'Evyonim – Giving charity to two poor people.
- Custom to dress up / Eat Hamantashen

#### 15<sup>th</sup> Adar

- Shushan Purim – Festival celebrated a day later as the war only finished in Shushan on the 14<sup>th</sup> Adar.
- Jerusalem also celebrates Purim on the 15<sup>th</sup> Adar because it was walled at the time of the story.

#### Adar Sheini

- 13<sup>th</sup> month in a leap year.
- All events that would have occurred on 1<sup>st</sup> Adar are placed into the second Adar. Eg . Bar Mitzvah / Purim etc.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Purim is called – Purim Katan.