

# DAYS OF THE JEWISH YEAR

I. SHABBAT (The Sabbath) Day of rest from labor. Celebration through prayer, study and fellowship. The most sacred day.

- Creation
- Liberation

II. HIGH HOLY DAYS – YAMIM NORA'IM

1. ROSH HASHANAH – The New Year

(Two days/one among Reform Jews)

- Yom Harat Olam – Renewal of the world
- Yom Hadin – Day of judgment
- Yom Hazikaron – Day of remembrance
- Yom Teruah – Day of sounding of the horn

(Ten days of Repentance/Renewal)

2. YOM KIPPUR – Day of Atonement and Forgiveness  
Day of fasting, prayer and reconciliation

III. THREE PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS (SEASONAL FEASTS)

1. SUKKOT – Festival of Tabernacles or Booths

(Seven days plus one; one extra day among Orthodox Jews in diaspora.)

- Hag Ha'asif (Festival of Ingathering of Fruits)
- Z'man Simhatenu (Season of our Joy)
- Hag (The Feast)
- Hoshana Rabbah (The seventh day of the festival – "Great Hoshana")

- Agricultural: Feast of the Ingathering
- Historical: Journey through desert to Promised Land

1a. SH'MINI ATZERET – Eighth day of "gathering" or "conclusion" of festival

1b. SIMHAT TORAH – Rejoicing with the Torah (Completion and renewal of cycle of Torah reading. Either on eighth day or extra ninth day)

2. PESACH – PASSOVER – Festival of Freedom

(Seven days; eight among Orthodox in diaspora)

- Hag Hamatzot (Festival of Unleavened Bread)
- Z'man Herutenu (Time of our Redemption)
- Hag Ha'aviv (Festival of Spring)

- Shepherds Festival – Pascal lamb (Pesach)
- Agricultural Festival – Grain harvest (Matzot)
- Historical: Freedom from Egyptian bondage

2a. Omer: seven weeks between Passover and Sh'vuot

### 3. SH'VUOT – Festival of Weeks

(One day; two days among Orthodox in diaspora)

- Hag Habikurim (Festival of First Fruits)
- Hag Hakatzir (Feast of the Harvest)
- Z'man Matan Toratenu (The time of the giving of the Torah)
- Atzeret (Concluding Feast)

- Agricultural: Conclusion of grain harvest (wheat)
- Historical: Revelation of Torah (covenant) at Mt. Sinai

## IV. MINOR FESTIVALS

### 1. PURIM – Festival of lots

- Based on Book of Esther – joyous carnival-like celebration of deliverance among the Jews of Persia (5<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE)

### 2. HANUKAH – Feast of Dedication

(Eight days)

- Based on accounts of Books of Maccabees (extra-canonical) and rabbinical sources celebrating Maccabean victory over the Graeco-Syrians and rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem (165 BCE)

## V. OTHER OBSERVANCES

- TISHA B'AV – the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av – Day of mourning and fasting in remembrance of destruction of the First (586 BCE) and second (70 CE) Temples in Jerusalem and other tragic events in Jewish history.
- YOM HASHOAH – Holocaust Remembrance Day (observed on 27 Nisan to mark the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto)
- YOM HA'ATZMAUT – State of Israel's Independence Day Iyar 5 (1948)