

Course Syllabus and Coursepack – JC 501-502 Jewish Calendar, Holidays, Liturgy and Celebration I and II

July 2024-April 2025
Faculty: Rabbi Adam Chalom, Ph.D.

COURSE TEXTS TO OWN

- *Tanakh/Hebrew Bible* – any translation, also online at <https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Tanakh>
- *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (tr. Avrohom Davis) (Metsudah Publications, 1996 or 2006 editions) – worth owning, also online at https://www.sefaria.org/Kitzur_Shulchan_Arukh?tab=contents.
- *The ArtScroll Siddur – Ashkenaz Edition* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1984).
- Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development*. (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1995).
- Barbara Rushkoff, *Jewish Holiday Fun for You!* (New York, NY: Universe Publishing, 2003)
- Hayyim Schauss, *The Jewish Festivals: A Guide to the History and Observance* (also published as *Guide to Jewish Holy Days: History and Observance*) – any edition.
- Arthur Waskow, *Seasons of our Joy: A Modern Guide to the Jewish Holidays* (1982, 2012).

ONLINE RESOURCE FOLDER SOURCES – sources labeled by unit number

Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (Jewish Publication Society, 1993).

Marcia Falk, *The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

Peter Schweitzer, *The Liberated Haggadah: A Passover Celebration for Cultural, Secular and Humanistic Jews* (Center for Cultural Judaism, 2003)

The Complete Artscroll Machzor – Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot (Mesorah, 1985-1989).

Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays (Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1994).

The Holy Bible – New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha (Oxford Univ. Press, 1989).

Kol Haneshama (Wyncote, PA: The Reconstructionist Press, 1994).

Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur (NY: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2007)

Mishnayoth – Order Moed (New York, NY: The Judaica Press, 1963).

Siddur Sim Shalom – A Prayerbook for Shabbat, Festivals, and Weekdays (The Rabbinical Assembly and United Synagogue of America).

The Soncino Talmud (tr. Isidore Epstein) (London: Soncino Press, 1960).

Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship (Central Conf. of American Rabbis, 1961 – orig. 1940).

Issues of journal *Humanistic Judaism*

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| • <i>Shabbat</i> | • <i>Sukkot</i> | • <i>Passover</i> |
| • <i>High Holidays</i> | • <i>Tu BiShevat</i> | • <i>Shavuot</i> |
| • <i>Hanukka</i> | • <i>Purim</i> | |

ONLINE RESOURCE FOLDER LINK: <https://1drv.ms/f/s!AkG9gAgI9D2ftBNchOnHE044Mor7>

ONLINE DEMO SERVICES FOLDER LINK – to review examples for each holiday

<https://1drv.ms/f/s!AkG9gAgI9D2fgdVptZ4wvjW32eygCg?e=dwzxF6>

ASSIGNMENTS

1) Pre-Class: Choose your two favorite traditional Jewish holidays and prepare a 10 minute discussion about the challenges and benefits of celebrating each from a Secular Humanistic perspective.

2) For Each Holiday as we begin exploring them: search online for a creative way to celebrate or respond to the holiday (e.g. a new symbol for the Passover seder plate).

3) JC 501 Paper: Students should complete one 10-20 page paper (12 point font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor, related to material covered in JC 501 (Unit 1 through Unit 5 below). This paper is due by **April 29, 2020**.

4) JC 502 Paper: Students should complete one 10-20 page paper (12 point font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor, related to material covered in JC 502 (Unit 6 through Unit 10 below). This paper is due by **April 29, 2020**.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS (all times Central US)

UNITS 1-3 – in person in suburban Chicago (all times Central US)

July 8th: 1:30pm-3:30pm

July 10th: 9am-noon, 1:30pm-3:30pm

July 9th: 9am-noon, 1:30pm-3:30pm

July 11th: 9am-noon, 1:30pm-3:30pm

Remaining class sessions – select Thursdays 7pm-10pm Central US time ONLINE – 17 sessions

September 12, 19

December 12, 19

March 13, 20

October 24

January 16, 23, 30

April 10, 17 (4/24 in case of

November 14, 21

February 13, 20, 27

session cancellation

Zoom link for online sessions

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83265271108?pwd=SWR6OHoyTFoydjREak9XSUo3SUU1UT09>

Meeting ID: 832 6527 1108

Passcode: 268315

Unit 1

A: Jewish Calendar: structure, historical calendars, relations to other calendars

B: Jewish Celebrations, Prayers, and the *Siddur*

Debate/Discussions: What day to celebrate the holiday? Convenience or Tradition?
Do we need a Siddur?

READING: *Bible* – Exodus 23 and 34, Leviticus 23, Numbers 28-29
ArtScroll Siddur, p 1-181, 232-295 (*skimming permissible*)
Kitzur Shulchan Arukh, chapters 103-104
Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy*, begin through p127.
Waskow, *Seasons*, Introduction, How to Read this Book, Preface
Coursepack Unit 1 (see below)

Online Resource Folder – Halkin, “Endless Devotion” *Jewish Review of Books* (2010). “A Merry 5773 To All” *Forward*. Secular Jewish Schools calendar. Auslander, “It Ain’t Easy Bein’ Supremey”.

Unit 2

A: Shabbat and Havdallah I

B: Shabbat and Havdallah II

Debate/Discussion: Balance of foreign languages (Hebrew, Yiddish, others) with English

READING: *Bible* – Genesis 1:1 – 2:4, Exodus 20 and 35, Deuteronomy 5.
ArtScroll Siddur, p 296-629.
Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy*, p128-157.
Schauss, *Festivals*, “Sabbath” – all sections
Home Shabbat Service - http://kolhadash.com/judaism/Home_Shabbat_Chalom.pdf.
Coursepack Unit 2 (see below)

Online Resource Folder – Torah Portion chart. IFSHJ Havdallah service, *Humanistic Judaism* – *Shabbat*. Secular Shabbes handbook. Examples of Havdallah services.

Online Demo Services: services on Shabbat and Havdallah.

Unit 3

A: Shabbat and Havdallah III

B: Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur I

Debate/Discussion: Shabbat shtick on Sunday Mornings?
Children Holidays, Adult Holidays, Family Holidays – what balance?

READING: *Bible* – review Exodus 34, Leviticus 23, Numbers 29
Kitzur Shulchan Arukh chapters 128-129.
Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy*, p205-248
Schauss, *Festivals*, “Rosh Hashonoh” “Yom Kippur” “Days of Awe” – all sections
Waskow, *Seasons*, Chapters 1 and 2 (Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur)
Coursepack Unit 3 (see below)

Online Resource Folder – Rosh Hashana Mahzor selections. HH Reading Choices spreadsheet

Online Demo Services – Rosh Hashana services

Unit 4

A: Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur II

B: Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur III

Debate/Discussion: Vocabulary and Liturgy – if we’re blessed, by whom?

READING: *Bible* - Leviticus 16
Kitzur Shulchan Arukh, chapters 131-133
Coursepack Unit 4 (see below)

Online Resource Folder – YK Mahzor Selections. Tashlikh service

Online Demo Services – Yom Kippur services

Unit 5

- A: Sukkot/Sh'mini Atzeret/Simchat Torah
- B: Creating Humanistic Jewish Holiday Celebrations I

Debate/Discussion: Bicultural Holidays – Xmas/Hanukkah, Easter/Passover

READING: *Bible*, Nehemiah 8
Kitzur Shulchan Arukh, chapters 134-136
Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy*, p188-204
Schauss, *Festivals*, “Sukkos” – all sections
Waskow, *Seasons*, Chapters 3, 4, 5 (Sukkot, Sh'mini Atzeret, Simchat Torah)
Coursepack Unit 5 (see below)

Online Resource Folder – Sukkot Mahzor selections. *Humanistic Judaism – Sukkot* – all
Online Demo Services – Sukkot and Simchat Torah services

Unit 6

- A: Hanukkah
- B: Tu B'Shevat and Rosh Khodesh

Debate/Discussion: Our representation of Judaism to the non-Jewish world

READING: *Bible* - II Kings 18, 21 and 23; Numbers 28:11-15
Artscroll Siddur, 613-617
Kitzur Shulchan Arukh, chapters 97 and 139
Schauss, *Festivals*, “Chanukkah” – all sections and “The Minor Festivals”
Waskow, *Seasons*, Chapters 6 and 7 (Hanukkah, Tu B'Shevat), Appendix II “The Moon”
Home Hannu. Service - http://kolhadash.com/judaism/Home_Hanukkah_Chalom.pdf
Coursepack Unit 6 (see below)

Online Resource Folder – Hanukkah songs and texts. *Humanistic Judaism – Hanukkah*. MI-COEJL Tu B'Shevat Seder. *Humanistic Judaism – Tu B'Shevat*.

Online Demo Services – Hanukkah and Tu B'Shevat

Unit 7

- A: Purim
- B: Passover I

Debate/Discussion: Participation in Jewish Community events – what are our limits?

READING: *Bible* - Esther, Exodus 1-15, Deuteronomy 16
Kitzur Shulchan Arukh chapters 111, 118-119, 141-142
Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy*, p173-187
Schauss, *Festivals*, “Purim” – all sections and “Pesach” – all sections
Waskow, *Seasons*, Chapters 8 and 9 (Purim, Pesach)
Coursepack Unit 7 (see below)

Online Resource Folder - Purim Megillah School Project. *Humanistic Judaism – Purim*. Maxwell House Haggadah.

Online Demo Services - Passover

Unit 8

A: Passover II

B: Shavuot/Lag B'Omer and Fast Days (Tisha B'Av, Taanit Esther)

Debate/Discussion: Creating new holidays – useful or artificial?

READING: *Bible* - Lamentations.

Kitzur Shulchan Arukh, chapters 120-121.

Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy*, p249-257.

Schauss, *Festivals*, “Shovuos” and “Tishoh B'Ov”

Waskow, *Seasons*, Chapters 9-12 (Pesach, Counting the Omer, Shavuot, Tisha B'Av)

Coursepack Unit 8 (see below)

Online Resource Folder - Boardmaker Passover and Chad Gadya. Haggadah powerpoint. Hashomer Hatzair Haggadah and Liberated Haggadah. *Humanistic Judaism – Passover*. Alternative symbols and Who Knows One.

Online Demo Services – Shavuot, Tisha B'Av

Unit 9

A: Modern Jewish Holidays – Israeli Memorial + Independence Day, Yom ha-Shoah, Secular/Humanistic Holidays

B: Liturgy of other liberal Jewish movements/Blessings and their uses

Debate/Discussion: Citation out of context – nice phrasing vs. original intent?

Jewish literacy and liturgical change – same song, different lyrics?

READING: *Artscroll Siddur*, p182-231.

Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy*, p268-300.

Coursepack Unit 9 (see below)

Online Resource Folder – Article on Reform liturgy by Ismar Elbogen. *Union Prayer Book* (selections). *Sim Shalom* (selections). *Gates of Prayer* (selections). *Kol Hanesama* (selections). *Mishkan T'filah* (selections). Falk's *Book of Blessings* (selections). Review Halkin, “Endless Devotion,” from Unit 1.

Online Demo Services – Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, Yom HaAtzmaut services

Unit 10

Creating Humanistic Jewish Holiday Celebrations II and Conclusion

Debate/Discussion: Intellectual Property, “Adaptation,” and Fair Use.

Unit 1 – Calendar and Siddur

BT Beitzah 4b – On the Second Day of Festivals

R. Zera said: Logic supports R. Assi; for we are now well acquainted with the fixing of the new moon and, nevertheless, we do observe two days. Abaye said: Logic supports Rab; for we have learnt: In early times they used to light bonfires, but on account of the mischief of the Samaritans the Rabbis ordained that messengers should go forth. Now if the [mischief of the] Samaritans ceased we would [all] observe only one day; and [even during the Samaritan mischief] wherever the messengers arrived they observed [only] one day. But now that we are well acquainted with the fixing of the new moon, why do we observe two days? — Because they sent [word] from there [Palestine]: Give heed to the customs of your ancestors which have come down to you; for it might happen that the government might issue a decree and it will cause confusion [in ritual].

Mishnah Shabbat 19:5 – Circumcision and Holidays

A child can be circumcised on the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, or twelfth day, but never earlier nor later. How is this the case? According to the principle,¹ the 8th day; if born at twilight, it is circumcised on the 9th day. If at twilight of the eve of Shabbat, it is circumcised on the 10th day; if a Festival day fall after Shabbat, it is circumcised on the 11th day; if on the two festival days of the New Year, it is circumcised on the 12th day. A child that is ill may not be circumcised until it is well.

Mishnah Rosh Hashana 1:1-3 – Rabbinic Calendars

There are four New Years. On the first of Nisan is the New Year for Kings and for festivals; on the first of Elul is the New Year for the tithe of animals – R. Eliezer and R. Simon say, On the first of Tishri – on the first of Tishri is the New Year for the years, for Sabbatical Years, for Jubilee Years, for planting and for vegetables; and on the first of Shevat is the New Year for Trees according to the view of the Shammai, but the School of Hillel say, On the fifteenth thereof. The world is judged at four periods in the year: on Passover, for grain; on the Festival of Weeks, for the fruits of trees; on the New Year, all the inhabitants of the world pass before Him, like flocks of sheep, as it is said, He Who fashioneth the hearts of them all, Who understandeth all their doings; and on the Festival of Tabernacles, they are judged for water. On six months, the messengers go forth: on Nisan, because of *Pesakh*; on Av, because of the Fast; on Elul, because of *Rosh Hashana*; on Tishri, because of the Holy Days; on Kislev, because of *Hanukkah*; and on Adar, because of Purim. And while the Temple still existed, they went forth also on Iyyar, because of the *minor Passover*.

Mishnah Rosh Hashana 2:1-2 – New Moons

If they did not know [the witness], they sent another with him to vouch for him. Aforetimes they used to accept evidence about the New Moon from any man, but after the sectarians caused great harm, they enacted that evidence should be admitted only from those whom they knew. Beforetime they used to light beacons, but after the Samaritans caused great harm, they enacted that messengers should go forth.

Mishnah Taanit 4:8 – The 15th of Av

Rabban Simon ben Gamaliel said, There were no happier days for Israel than the fifteenth of Av and the Day of Atonement, for on them the daughters of Jerusalem used to go out dressed in white garments which were borrowed in order not to shame the one who had none. All the garments required immersion. The daughters of Jerusalem used to go forth to dance in the vineyards. And what did they say? – ‘Young man, lift up thine eyes and see what thou wilt select for thyself; set not thine eyes on beauty but fix thine eyes on family; for Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who feareth the Eternal she shall be praised; and it says further, Give to her the fruit of her hands and let her deeds praise her in the gates; and it says moreover, Go forth, ye daughters of Zion, & upon King Solomon, even upon the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him in the day of his espousals & in the day of the gladness of his heart.’ In the day of his espousals – this is ‘the giving of the Law;’ & in the day of the gladness of his heart – this is ‘the building of the Temple.’ May it be rebuilt speedily in our days! Amen!

¹ That circumcision not done on the 8th day cannot override Shabbat or a Holiday

BT - Taanit 30b-31a – the 15th of Av

R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAID: THERE NEVER WERE IN ISRAEL GREATER DAYS OF JOY THAN THE 15th OF AB AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. I can understand the Day of Atonement, because it is a day of forgiveness and pardon and on it the second Tables of the Law were given, but what happened on the 15th of Ab? — Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel: It is the day on which permission was granted to the tribes to inter-marry. Whence may this be adduced? — Scripture says, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad etc., (Num. 36:6-7) [meaning] 'this thing' shall hold good for this generation only. R. Joseph said in the name of R. Nahman: It is the day on which the tribe of Benjamin was permitted to re-enter the congregation [of Israel], as it is said, Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying: There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife. (Jud. 11:1) From what was their exposition? Rab said: From the phrase 'any of us' interpreted to mean, 'but not from any of our children'.

Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: It is the day on which the generation of the wilderness ceased to die out. For a Master said: So long as the generation of the wilderness continued to die out there was no divine communication to Moses, as it is said, So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead . . . that the Lord spake unto me. (Deut. 2:16-17) [Only then] came the divine communication 'unto me'.

'Ulla said: It is the day on which Hosea the son of Elah removed the guards which Jeroboam the son of Nebat had placed on the roads to prevent Israel from going [up to Jerusalem] on pilgrimage, and he proclaimed, Let them go up to whichever shrine they desire. R. Mattenah said: It is the day when permission was granted for those killed at Bethar to be buried. R. Mattenah further said: On the day when permission was granted for those killed at Bethar to be buried [the Rabbis] at Jabneh instituted [the recitation of] the benediction, 'Who art kind and dealest kindly etc.:'; 'Who art kind': Because their dead bodies did not become putrid; 'And dealest kindly': Because permission was granted for their burial. Rabbah and R. Joseph both said: It is the day on which [every year] they discontinued to fell trees for the altar. It has been taught: R. Eliezer the elder says: From the fifteenth of Ab onwards the strength of the sun grows less and they no longer felled trees for the altar, because they would not dry [sufficiently]. R. Menashya said: And they called it the Day of the Breaking of the Axe. From this day onwards, he who increases [his knowledge through study] will have his life prolonged, but he who does not increase [his knowledge] will have his life taken away. What is meant by 'taken away'? — R. Joseph learnt: Him his mother will bury.

ON THESE DAYS THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM etc. Our Rabbis taught: The daughter of the king borrows [the garments] from the daughter of the High Priest, the daughter of the High Priest from the daughter of the deputy High Priest, and the daughter of the deputy High Priest from the daughter of the Anointed for Battle, and the daughter of the Anointed for Battle from the daughter of an ordinary priest, and all Israel borrow from one another, so as not to shame one who may not possess [white garments].

ALL THE GARMENTS REQUIRE RITUAL DIPPING: R. Eleazar said: Even though they lay folded in a box.

THE DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL CAME OUT AND DANCED IN THE VINEYARDS. A Tanna taught: Whoever was unmarried repaired thither.

THOSE OF THEM WHO CAME OF NOBLE FAMILIES EXCLAIMED, 'YOUNG MAN etc.' Our Rabbis have taught: The beautiful amongst them called out, Set your eyes on beauty for the quality most to be prized in woman is beauty; those of them who came of noble families called out, Look for [a good] family for woman has been created to bring up a family; the ugly ones amongst them called out, Carry off your purchase in the name of Heaven, only on one condition that you adorn us with jewels of gold.

Unit 2 – Shabbat and Havdallah

Mishnah Shabbat 7:2 – Labors forbidden on Shabbat

The main categories of work are forty save one: sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing or beating or dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying [a knot], loosening [a knot], sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, hunting a gazelle, slaughtering or flaying or salting it or curing its skin, scraping it or cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters, building, pulling down, putting out a fire, lighting a fire, striking a hammer and taking anything from one domain into another. These are the main categories of work: forty save one.

Mishnah Shabbat 12:3-6 – Writing on Shabbat

One who writes two letters, whether with the right hand or with the left, whether the same letter or two different letters, whether with different pigments, in any alphabet—is liable. One who writes two letters at one time, inadvertently, is liable. If one wrote with ink, caustic, red dye, gum, or copperas, or with anything that leaves a mark, on two walls forming a corner, or on two leaves of a tablet, which are read with one another—is liable. One who writes on his flesh is liable. One who scratches a mark on his flesh—Rabbi Eliezer declares him liable to a sin offering [he must bring a sacrifice in the Temple to atone for his sin], while Rabbi Joshua declares him exempt.

If one wrote with fluids, fruit juice, dirt from the street, writer's sand, or with anything that does not leave a lasting mark, he is exempt (from punishment). If one wrote with the back of his hand, with his foot, mouth, or elbow; if he wrote one letter alongside a letter already written; if he wrote a letter on top of a letter [already written]; . . . if he wrote one on the ground and one on the beam; if he wrote two letters on the two walls of the house, on the two sides of a leaf of paper, so that they cannot be read with one another, he is exempt.

Whoever writes two letters on two occasions of forgetfulness, once in the morning and once towards the evening, Rabban Gamliel would render him culpable, but the Sages exempt.

Mishnah Shabbat 16:8 – The “Shabbes Goy”

If a non-Jew lit a lamp, a Jew may make use of the light, but if for the sake of the Jew, it is forbidden. If he filled with water to give his cattle to drink, a Jew may water his cattle after him, but if for the sake of the Jew, it is forbidden. If a non-Jew made a gangway to go down by it, a Jew may descend after him, but if for the Jew's sake, it is prohibited. It happened that Rabban Gamliel and the elders were traveling in a ship and a non-Jew made a gangway by which to descend, and Rabban Gamliel and the elders came down by it.

BT Berakhot 13a – The Language of Prayer

Our Rabbis taught: The Shema' must be recited as it is written. So Rabbi. The Sages, however, say that it may be recited in any language. What is Rabbi's reason? — Scripture says: and they shall be (Deut. 6:6), implying, as they are they shall remain. What is the reason of the Rabbis? — Scripture says 'hear' (Deut. 6:4), implying, in any language that you understand. Rabbi also must see that 'hear' is written? — He requires it [for the lesson]: Make your ear hear what your mouth utters. The Rabbis, however, concur with the authority who says that even if he did not say it audibly he has performed his obligation. The Rabbis too must see that 'and they shall be' is written? — They require this to teach that he must not say the words out of order. Whence does Rabbi derive the rule that he must not say the words out of order? — He derives it from the fact that the [text says] 'ha-debarim' [the words] when it might have said simply debarim [words]. And the Rabbis? — They derive no lesson from the substitution of ha-debarim for debarim

May we assume that Rabbi was of opinion that the whole Torah is allowed to be read in any language, since if you assume that it is allowed to be read only in the holy tongue, why the 'and they shall be' written by the All-Merciful? — This was necessary, because 'hear' is written. May we assume that the Rabbis were of opinion that the whole Torah is allowed to be read only in the holy tongue. Since if you assume that it is allowed to be read only in any language. Why the 'hear' written by the All-Merciful? — It is necessary because 'and they shall be' is written.

BT Shabbat 35 – Shofar Shabbat

Our Rabbis taught: Six blasts were blown on the eve of the Sabbath. The first, for people to cease work in the fields; the second, for the city and shops to cease [work]; the third, for the lights to be kindled: that is R. Nathan's view. R. Judah the Nasi said: The third is for the tefillin to be removed. Then there was an interval for as long as it takes to bake a small fish, or to put a loaf in the oven, and then a teki'ah, teru'ah, and a teki'ah were blown, and one commenced the Sabbath. Said R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, What shall we do to the Babylonians who blow a teki'ah and a teru'ah, and commence the Sabbath in the midst of the teru'ah? (They blow a teki'ah and a teru'ah [only]: but then there are five?-Rather they blow a teki'ah, repeat the teki'ah, and then blow a teru'ah and commence the Sabbath in the midst of the teru'ah.) — They retain their fathers' practice. (minhag avot). . . .

The School of R. Ishmael taught: Six blasts were blown on the eve of the Sabbath. When the first was begun, those who stood in the fields ceased to hoe, plough, or do any work in the fields, and those who were near [to town] were not permitted to enter [it] until the more distant ones arrived, so that they should all enter simultaneously. But the shops were still open and the shutters were lying. When the second blast began, the shutters were removed and the shops closed. Yet hot [water] and pots still stood on the range. When the third blast was begun, what was to be removed was removed, and what was to be stored away was stored away, and the lamp was lit. Then there was an interval for as long as it takes to bake a small fish or to place a loaf in the oven; then a teki'ah, teru'ah and a teki'ah were sounded, and one commenced the Sabbath. R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: I have heard that if one comes to light after the six blasts he may do so, since the Sages gave the hazzan of the community time to carry his shofar home. Said they to him, If so, your rule depends on [variable] standards. Rather the hazzan of the community had a hidden place on the top of his roof, where he placed his shofar, because neither a shofar nor a trumpet may be handled [on the Sabbath].

Unit 3 – Shabbat/High Holidays

High Holidays Questionnaire *Respond Promptly*

As a special aid to our members we have enlisted the service of COMPU-SEAT, a computer firm specializing in High Holiday seating arrangements for synagogues. In order for us to place you in a seat which will be best suitable for you, we ask you to complete the following questionnaire and return it to the Vaad HaMidabrim of our Shul as soon as possible.

1. I wish to be placed in a seat next to someone who wishes to discuss the following topics:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> stock market | <input type="checkbox"/> my neighbors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> N.Y. Giants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fashion news | <input type="checkbox"/> your relatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> general gossip | <input type="checkbox"/> the Rabbi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> specific gossip | <input type="checkbox"/> the Cantor |
| (specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> the Rabbi's wife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the Cantors wife | |

2. I wish to be seated in a seat where:

- I can see my spouse over the mechitza
- I cannot see my spouse over the mechitza
- My spouse cannot see me seeing my friend's spouse over the mechitza
- No one on the Bimah can see me talking during the services
- I can sleep during services*
- I can sleep during the Rabbi's sermon*

(* Special reclining seats are available for additional charge)

3. I wish to be located next to the following so that I may obtain free professional advice:

lawyer accountant stockbroker
 chiropractor real estate agent doctor

4. Please do not place me anywhere near the following people: _____

5. If you want to inform your in-laws that no seats are available next to you, please check this box:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Unit 4 – High Holidays Continued

Mishnah Yoma 8:9

If a person said, "I will sin and repent, and sin again and repent," he will be given no chance to repent. If one said, "I will sin and the Day of Atonement will effect atonement," then the Day of Atonement effects no atonement. For transgressions that are between a person and God the Day of Atonement effects atonement, but for transgressions that are between persons the Day of Atonement effects atonement only if one has appeased his fellow. This did R. Eleazar b. Azariah expound: "From all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord (Leviticus 16:30) – for transgressions that are between a person and God the Day of Atonement effects atonement; but for transgressions that are between persons the Day of Atonement effects atonement only if one has appeased his fellow." R. Akibah said: "Blessed are you, O Israel. Before whom are you made clean and who makes you clean? Your parent in heaven; as it is written, and I will sprinkle clean water upon you & you shall be clean (Ez. 36:25)."

AVINU MALKEINU – a Re-visioning

Original Words:

"Our father our king," our fathers said.

"Our father our king, we have sinned before you.

Our father our king, pity us and our babies and our children.

Our father our king, keep sickness, violence and hunger from upon us.

Our father our king, keep all oppression from upon us.

Our father our king, write us in the book of good life

Our father our king, renew us for a good year.

Our father our king, hear our voice."

New Words:

"Our father our king," our fathers said.

We create our own life, we carve our own fate.

We create our own life, best for us, and for our children

We create our own life, despite the sickness, violence and hunger we face.

We create our own life, despite the oppression and difficulty we face.

We create our own life, we have written the book of good life.

We create our own life, we renew among us a good year.

We create our own life, let us hear our own voice.

“AH-VEE-NOO MAL-KAY-NOO,” KAR-OO AH-VO-TAY-NOO.

AH-SEE-NOO KHEL-KAY-NOO, KHA-KAR-NOO GO-RA-LAY-NOO

AH-SEE-NOO KHEL-KAY-NOO, MAY-TAV AH-LAY-NOO V'-AL-OH-LA-LAY-NOO V'-TA-PAY-NOO

AH-SEE-NOO KHEL-KAY-NOO, LAM-ROT DEVER V'KHE-REV V'-RA-AV SHEH-AH-LAY-NOO

AH-SEE-NOO KHEL-KAY-NOO, LAM-ROT KHOL TSAR OO-MAS-TEEN SHEH-AH-LAY-NOO

AH-SEE-NOO KHEL-KAY-NOO, AH-SEE-NOO KHEL-KAY-NOO, KA-TAV-NOO ET SAY-FER KHA-YEEM TO-VEEM

AH-SEE-NOO KHEL-KAY-NOO, N'-KHA-DESH BAY-NAY-NOO N'-KHA-DESH BAY-NAY-NOO SHA-NA TO-VAH

AH-SEE-NOO KHEL-KAY-NOO, NEESH-MA KO-LAY-NOO NEESH-MA KO-LAY-NOO NEESH-MA KO-LAY-NOO.

General Substitutions:

“Avinu Malkeinu” > Asinu Khelkaynoo

“kaley” (dever etc.) > lamrot

“chadesh” > n' chadesh

“sh'ma” > “neesh'ma”

Unit 5 – Sukkot and Simhat Torah

Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIII, ch. 13, sec. 5 available at: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-13.htm>

5. As to Alexander, his own people were seditious against him; for at a festival which was then celebrated, when he stood upon the altar, and was going to sacrifice, the nation rose upon him, and pelted him with citrons [which they then had in their hands, because] the law of the Jews required that at the feast of tabernacles every one should have branches of the palm tree and citron tree; which thing we have elsewhere related. They also reviled him, as derived from a captive, and so unworthy of his dignity and of sacrificing. At this he was in a rage, and slew of them about six thousand. He also built a partition-wall of wood round the altar and the temple, as far as that partition within which it was only lawful for the priests to enter; and by this means he obstructed the multitude from coming at him. He also maintained foreigners of Pisidia and Cilicia; for as to the Syrians, he was at war with them, and so made no use of them. He also overcame the Arabians, such as the Moabites and Gileadites, and made them bring tribute....

Unit 6 – Hanukkah and Tu B'Shevat

BT Shabbat 21b – Rabbinic Hanukkah

Our Rabbis taught: The precept of Hanukkah [demands] one light for a man and his household; the zealous [kindle] a light for each member [of the household]; and the extremely zealous, — Beth Shammai maintain: On the first day eight lights are lit and thereafter they are gradually reduced; but Beth Hillel say: On the first day one is lit and thereafter they are progressively increased. 'Ulla said: In the West [Palestine] two amoraim, R. Jose b. Abin and R. Jose b. Zebida, differ therein: one maintains, The reason of Beth Shammai is that it shall correspond to the days still to come, and that of Beth Hillel is that it shall correspond to the days that are gone; but another maintains: Beth Shammai's reason is that it shall correspond to the bullocks of the Festival; whilst Beth Hillel's reason is that we promote in [matters of] sanctity but do not reduce.

Our Rabbis taught: It is incumbent to place the Hanukkah lamp by the door of one's house on the outside; if one dwells in an upper chamber, he places it at the window nearest the street. But in times of danger it is sufficient to place it on the table. Raba said: Another lamp is required for its light to be used; yet if there is a blazing fire it is unnecessary. But in the case of an important person, even if there is a blazing fire another lamp is required.

What is [the reason of] Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [commence] the days of Hanukkah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.

BT Berakhot 23a – Hanukkah Blessing

What benediction is uttered? -This: Who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of Hanukkah. And where did He command us? -R. Awia said: [It follows] from, thou shalt not turn aside [from the sentence Which they shall shew thee](Deut. 17:11). R. Nehemiah quoted: Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; Thine elders, and they will tell thee (Deut. 32:7).

Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 12, Chapter 7, section 6-7

When therefore the generals of Antiochus's armies had been beaten so often, Judas assembled the people together, and told them, that after these many victories which God had given them, they ought to go up to Jerusalem, and purify the temple, and offer the appointed sacrifices. But as soon as he, with the whole multitude, was come to Jerusalem, and found the temple deserted, and its gates burnt down, and plants growing in the temple of their own accord, on account of its desertion, he and those that were with him began to lament, and were quite confounded at the sight of the temple; so he chose out some of his soldiers, and gave them order to fight against those guards that were in the citadel, until he should have purified the temple. When therefore he had carefully purged it, and had brought in new vessels, the candlestick, the table [of shew-bread], and the altar [of incense], which were made of gold, he hung up the veils at the gates, and added doors to them. He also took down the altar [of burnt-offering], and built a new one of stones that he gathered together, and not of such as were hewn with iron tools. So on the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, which the Macedonians call Apeliens, they lighted the lamps that were on the candlestick, and offered incense upon the altar [of incense], and laid the loaves upon the table [of shew-bread], and offered burnt-offerings upon the new altar [of burnt-offering]. Now it so fell out, that these things were done on the very same day on which their Divine worship had fallen off, and was reduced to a profane and common use, after three years' time; for so it was, that the temple was made desolate by Antiochus, and so continued for three years. This desolation happened to the temple in the hundred forty and fifth year, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Apeliens, and on the hundred fifty and third olympiad: but it was dedicated anew, on the same day, the twenty-fifth of the month Apeliens, on the hundred and forty-eighth year, and on the hundred and fifty-fourth olympiad. And this desolation came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel, which was given four hundred and eight years before; for he declared that the Macedonians would dissolve that worship [for some time].

Now Judas celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the temple for eight days, and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon; but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices; and he honored God, and delighted them by hymns and psalms. Nay, they were so very glad at the revival of their customs, when, after a long time of intermission, they unexpectedly had regained the freedom of their worship, that they made it a law for their posterity, that they should keep a festival, on account of the restoration of their temple worship, for eight days. And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was, because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to that festival.

ADDITIONAL READING

I Maccabees chapters 1-2 and 4:41-61 – see <http://ebible.org/web/1MA01.htm>

Unit 7 – Purim and Passover

BT Megillah 7b

Raba said: It is the duty of a man to mellow himself [with wine] on Purim until he cannot tell the difference between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordecai'.

Rabbah and R. Zera joined together in a Purim feast. They became mellow, and Rabbah arose and cut R. Zera's throat. On the next day he prayed on his behalf and revived him. Next year he said, Will your honor come and we will have the Purim feast together. He replied: A miracle does not take place on every occasion.

II Maccabees 15:25-39

Nicanor and his men advanced with trumpets and battle songs; and Judas and his men met the enemy in battle with invocation to God and prayers. So, fighting with their hands and praying to God in their hearts, they laid low no less than thirty-five thousand men, and were greatly gladdened by God's manifestation. When the action was over and they were returning with joy, they recognized Nicanor, lying dead, in full armor. Then there was shouting and tumult, and they blessed the Sovereign Lord in the language of their fathers. And the man who was ever in body and soul the defender of his fellow citizens, the man who maintained his youthful good will toward his countrymen, ordered them to cut off Nicanor's head and arm and carry them to Jerusalem. And when he arrived there and had called his countrymen together and stationed the priests before the altar, he sent for those who were in the citadel.

He showed them the vile Nicanor's head and that profane man's arm, which had been boastfully stretched out against the holy house of the Almighty; and he cut out the tongue of the ungodly Nicanor and said that he would give it piecemeal to the birds and hang up these rewards of his folly opposite the sanctuary. And they all, looking to heaven, blessed the Lord who had manifested himself, saying, "Blessed is he who has kept his own place undefiled." And he hung Nicanor's head from the citadel, a clear and conspicuous sign to every one of the help of the Lord. And they all decreed by public vote never to let this day go unobserved, but to celebrate the 13th day of the 12th month -- which is called Adar in the Syrian language -- the day before Mordecai's day.

This, then, is how matters turned out with Nicanor. And from that time the city has been in the possession of the Hebrews. So I too will here end my story. If it is well told and to the point, that is what I myself desired; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that was the best I could do. For just as it is harmful to drink wine alone, or, again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment, so also the style of the story delights the ears of those who read the work. And here will be the end.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Mishnah Pesakhim 10:1-5 – begin at

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Mishnah/Seder_Moed/Tractate_Pesachim/Chapter_10/1

Unit 8 – Passover continued and Shavuot

Lag B'Omer – Shimon Bar Yohai – BT Shabbat 33b

Now, why is he [R. Judah son of R. Ilai] called the first speaker on all occasions?-For R. Judah, R. Jose, and R. Simeon were sitting, and Judah, a son of proselytes, was sitting near them. R. Judah commenced [the discussion] by observing, 'How fine are the works of this people! They have made streets, they have built bridges, they have erected baths.' R. Jose was silent. R. Simeon b. Yohai answered and said, 'All that they made they made for themselves; they built market-places, to set harlots in them; baths, to rejuvenate themselves; bridges, to levy tolls for them.' Now, Judah the son of proselytes went and related their talk, which reached the government. They decreed Judah, who exalted [us], will be exalted, Jose, who was silent, will be exiled to Sepphoris; Simeon, who censured, let him be executed.

He and his son went and hid themselves in the Beth Hamidrash,[and] his wife brought him bread and a mug of water and they dined. [But] when the decree became more severe he said to his son, Women are of unstable temperament: she may be put to the torture and expose us.' So they went and hid in a cave. A miracle occurred and a carob-tree and a water well were created for them. They would strip their garments and sit up to their necks in sand. The whole day they studied; when it was time for prayers they robed, covered themselves, prayed, and then put off their garments again, so that they should not wear out. Thus they dwelt twelve years in the cave. Then Elijah came and stood at the entrance to the cave and exclaimed, Who will inform the son of Yohai that the emperor is dead and his decree annulled? So they emerged. Seeing a man ploughing and sowing, they exclaimed, 'They forsake life eternal and engage in life temporal!' Whatever they cast their eyes upon was immediately burnt up. Thereupon a Heavenly Echo came forth and cried out, 'Have ye emerged to destroy My world: Return to your cave!' So they returned and dwelt there twelve months, saying, 'The punishment of the wicked in Gehenna is [limited to] twelve months.' A Heavenly Echo then came forth and said, 'Go forth from your cave!' Thus.; they issued: wherever R. Eleazar wounded, R. Simeon healed. Said he to him, 'My son! You and I are sufficient for the world.' On the eve of the Sabbath before sunset they saw an old man holding two bundles of myrtle and running at twilight. What are these for?' they asked him. 'They are in honour of the Sabbath,' he replied. 'But one should suffice you'?-One is for 'Remember-' and one for 'Observe.' Said he to his son, 'See how precious are the commandments to Israel.' Thereat their minds were tranquilized.

Sources for Tisha B'Av

Mishnah Taanit 4:6

Five calamities befell our ancestors on the 17th of Tammuz, and 5 on the 9th of Av. On the 17th of Tammuz the Tablets were broken and the daily burnt offering ceased, and the city was breached, and Apostomos burned the scroll of the Torah and set up an idol in the Sanctuary. On the 9th of Av it was decreed against our forefathers that they should not enter the Land, and the Temple was destroyed for the first time and the second time, and Betar was taken, and the City was ploughed up. With the advent of Av we should limit rejoicing.

BT Taanit 28b-29a

FIVE MISFORTUNES BEFELL OUR FATHERS ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF TAMMUZ. Whence is it known that the Tables [of the Law] were shattered [on the 17th of Tammuz]? For it has been taught: On the sixth of the month [of Sivan] the Ten Commandments were given to Israel; R. Jose says: On the seventh of the month. He who says that they were given on the sixth takes the view that on the sixth they were given and on the seventh Moses ascended the mount. And he who says that they were given on the seventh holds that they were given on the seventh and on the seventh Moses ascended the mount. For it is written, And the seventh day he called unto Moses, and it is further written, And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights. The [remaining] twenty-four days of Sivan and the sixteen days of Tammuz make altogether forty. On the seventeenth of Tammuz he came down [from the mountain] and shattered the Tables, as it is written, And it came to pass as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf . . . and he cast the tables out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount.

[THE DAILY OFFERING] WAS DISCONTINUED. This is a tradition.

A BREACH WAS MADE IN THE CITY. Did this then happen on the seventeenth? Is it not written, In the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city etc., and in the following verse it is written, Then a breach was made in the city etc.! — Raba said: This is no contradiction. The one refers to the First Temple and the other to the Second Temple. For it has been taught: In the First Temple the breach was made in the city on the ninth of Tammuz, but in the Second Temple on the seventeenth of Tammuz.

APOSTOMOS BURNED THE SCROLL OF THE LAW. This is a tradition.

AND PLACED AN IDOL IN THE TEMPLE. Whence do we know this? — For it is written, And from the time that the continual burnt-offering shall be taken away & the detestable thing that causeth appalment set up. Was there then only one detestable thing? Is it not written, And upon the wing of detestable things shall be that which causeth appalment? — Raba replied: There were two [idols] & one fell upon the other & broke its hand and upon it was found inscribed: [29a] You desired to destroy the Temple, but I have handed over your hand to Him.

[ON THE NINTH OF AB] THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED THE FIRST TIME. For it is written, Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the King of Babylon, unto Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord etc. And it is further written, Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, who stood before the king of Babylon into Jerusalem etc. With reference to this it has been taught: We cannot say that this happened on the seventh, for it has already been stated that it was 'in the tenth'; and we cannot say that this happened on the tenth, for it has already been stated that it was 'on the seventh'. How then are these dates to be reconciled? On the seventh the heathens entered the Temple and ate therein and desecrated it throughout the seventh and eighth [of Ab] and towards dusk of the ninth they set fire to it and it continued to burn the whole of that day, as it is said, Woe unto us! for the day declineth, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out. And this is what R. Johanan meant when he said: Had I been alive in that generation I should have fixed [the mourning] for the tenth, because the greater part of the Temple was burnt thereon. How will the Rabbis then [explain the contradiction]? — The beginning of any misfortune is of greater moment.

AND [THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED] THE SECOND TIME. Whence do we know this? For it has been taught: Good things come to pass on an auspicious day, and bad things on an unlucky day. It is reported that the day on which the First Temple was destroyed was the eve of the ninth of Ab, a Sunday, and in a year following the Sabbatical year, and the Mishmar of the family of Jehoiarib were on duty and the Levites were chanting the Psalms standing on the Duchan. And what Psalm did they recite? — [The Psalm] containing the verse, And He hath brought upon them their own iniquity; and will cut them off in their own evil. And hardly had they time to say, 'The Lord our God will cut them off', when the heathens came and captured them. The same thing too happened in the Second Temple.

BETHAR WAS CAPTURED. This is a tradition.

Our Rabbis have taught: When the First Temple was about to be destroyed bands upon bands of young priests with the keys of the Temple in their hands assembled and mounted the roof of the Temple and exclaimed, 'Master of the Universe, as we did not have the merit to be faithful treasurers these keys are handed back into Thy keeping'. They then threw the keys up towards heaven. And there emerged the figure of a hand and received the keys from them. Whereupon they jumped and fell into the fire. It is in allusion to them that the prophet Isaiah laments: The burden concerning the Valley of Vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house tops, thou that art full of uproar, a tumultuous city, a joyous town? Thy slain are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle. Of the Holy One, blessed be He, also it is said, Kir shouting, and crying at the mount.

Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Ch. 4, par. 5

So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, & resolved to storm the temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, & to encamp round about the holy house. But as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; & now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the 10th day of the month Lous, [Ab.] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon; although these flames took their rise from the Jews themselves, & were occasioned by them; for upon Titus's retiring, the seditious lay still for a little while, & then attacked the Romans again, when those that guarded the holy house fought with those that quenched the fire that was burning the inner [court of the] temple; but these Romans put the Jews to flight, & proceeded as far as the holy house itself. At which time one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, & without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, & being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, & being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms round about the holy house, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward, the Jews made a great clamor, such as so mighty an affliction required, & ran together to prevent it; & now they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered anything to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing, for whose sake it was that they kept such a guard about it.

Unit 9 – Modern Holidays, Liturgy and Blessings

BT Berakhot 40b – The Language and Phrasing of Blessings

IF HE SAYS, BY 'WHOSE WORD ALL THINGS EXIST' etc. It has been stated: R. Huna said: Except over bread and wine. R. Johanan, however, said: Even over bread and wine. May we say that the same difference of opinion is found between Tannaim? [For it was taught:] 'If a man sees a loaf of bread and says, What a fine loaf this is! Blessed be the Omnipresent that has created it! he has performed his obligation. If he sees a fig and says, What a fine fig this is! Blessed be the Omnipresent that has created it! he has performed his obligation. So R. Meir. R. Jose says: If one alters the formula laid down by the Sages in benedictions, he has not performed his obligation'. May we say that R. Huna concurs with R. Jose and R. Johanan with R. Meir? — R. Huna can reply to you: I can claim even R. Meir as a supporter of my view. For R. Meir went as far as he did in that case only because the bread is actually mentioned, but where the bread is not actually mentioned even R. Meir would admit [that the obligation is not fulfilled]. And R. Johanan can reply to you: I may claim R. Jose also as a supporter of my view. For R. Jose only went as far as he did in that case because he made a benediction which was not instituted by the Sages, but if he says, 'by whose word all things exist', which has been instituted by the Sages, even R. Jose would admit [that he has performed his obligation].

Benjamin the shepherd made a sandwich and said, Blessed be the Master of this bread, [in Aramaic] and Rab said that he had performed his obligation. But Rab has laid down that any benediction in which God's name is not mentioned is no benediction? — We must suppose he said, Blessed be the All-Merciful, the Master of this bread. But we require three blessings? — What did Rab mean by saying that he had performed his obligation? He had performed the obligation of the first blessing. What does this tell us [that we did not already know]? That [he has performed his obligation] even if he says it in a secular language. But we have already learnt this: 'The following may be said in any language: the section of the Unfaithful wife, the confession over tithe, the recital of the Shema', and the Tefillah and grace after food? — It required to be stated. For you might have thought that this is the case only if one says the grace in a secular language in the same form as was instituted by the Rabbis in the holy tongue, but if one does not say it in the secular language in the same form as was instituted by the Rabbis in the holy tongue, he has not performed his obligation. We are therefore told [that this is not so].

Berakhot 32a

R. Simlai expounded: A man should always first recount the praise of the Holy One, blessed be He, and then pray. Whence do we know this? From Moses; for it is written, And I besought the Lord at that time, (Deut 3:23ff) and it goes on, O Lord God, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness and Thy strong hand; for what god is there in heaven and earth who can do according to Thy works and according to Thy mighty acts, and afterwards is written, Let me go over, I pray Thee, and see the good land etc

Unit 10 – Creating Secular Humanistic Jewish Celebrations

OTHER CALENDAR AND HOLIDAY RESOURCES

www.chagim.org.il – The Kibbutz Institute for Jewish Festivals and Holidays website, based on the archive of Kibbutz Holiday materials at Kibbutz Beit Ha-Shitta, Israel. English website at <https://www.eng.chagim.org.il/>.

<http://www.csjo.org/holidays/> - general descriptions of major holidays from the perspective of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations.

www.hebcad.com - Hebrew Interactive Calendar that provides holidays, Hebrew dates, Torah portions for any Gregorian calendar month or year.

<http://www.shj.org/humanistic-jewish-life/about-the-holidays/> - general descriptions of major holidays from the perspective of the Society for Humanistic Judaism.