

## Nissan 1

### **Creation of man (in thought) (3761 BCE)**

The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 10b-11a) cites two opinions as to the date of G-d's creation of the universe: according to Rabbi Eliezer: "The world was created in Tishrei" (i.e., the sixth day of creation--the day on which Adam and Eve were created--was the 1st of Tishrei, celebrated each year as Rosh Hashanah); according to Rabbi Joshua, "The world was created in Nissan." As interpreted by the Kabbalists and the Chassidic masters, the deeper meaning of these two views is that the physical world was created in Tishrei, while the "thought" or idea of creation was created in the month of Nissan. (see "Links" below)

### **The Patriarchs (1813-1506 BCE)**

According to the Talmud, the three Patriarchs of the Jewish people-- Abraham(1813-1638 BCE), Isaac (1713-1533 BCE) and Jacob (1653-1506 BCE)--all were born and passed away in the month of Nissan.

### **Jewish Calendar Inaugurated (1313 BCE)**

On the first of Nissan of the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE--two weeks before the Exodus), G-d showed Moses the crescent new moon and told him, "When you see the moon like this, sanctify [the new month]." This ushered in the first Jewish month, and commenced the lunar calendar Jews have been following ever since.

### **Mishkan Inaugurated (1312 BCE)**

On the eighth day following a 7-day training and initiation period, the portable Mishkan ("Tabernacle" or "Sanctuary") built by the Children of Israel in the Sinai desert was erected, Aaron and his sons began serving as priests, and the Divine Presence came to dwell in the Mishkan; special offerings were brought, including a series of gifts by Nachshon ben Aminadav, the Prince of the Tribe of Judah (similar offerings were brought over the next 11 days by the other tribes of Israel).

### **Death of Nadav and Avihu (1312 BCE)**

On the day the Mishkan was inaugurated (see above), "Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire in it, and put incense on it, and offered strange fire before G-d, which He commanded them not. A fire went out from G-d, and consumed them, and they died before G-d" (Leviticus 10:1-2).

## Nissan 2

### **First Red Heifer Prepared (1312 BCE)**

On the 2nd of Nissan, one day after the inauguration of the Tabernacle, Moses prepared the very first Red Heifer, in order to ritually purify the Jewish nation in preparation for the bringing of the Paschal Lamb in the newly erected Sanctuary.

## Nissan 3

### **Levites Inducted (1312 BCE)**

Following the procedure G-d prescribed ([Numbers 8:5-22](#)), Moses inducted the Levites into Tabernacle service. The induction ceremony included sprinkling them with the ashes of the Red Heifer which was prepared the day beforehand.

## Nissan 5

### **Spies to Jericho (1273 BCE)**

Two days before the conclusion of the thirty-day mourning period following the passing of Moses on [Adar 7](#) (see Jewish History for the [7th of Nissan](#)), [Joshua](#) dispatched two scouts--[Caleb](#) and [Pinchas](#)--across the Jordan River to Jericho, to gather intelligence in preparation of the Israelites' battle with the first city in their conquest of the Holy Land. In Jericho, they were assisted and hidden by Rahab, a woman who lived inside the city walls. (Rahab later married Joshua).

## Nissan 7

### **Jews Prepare to Enter Canaan (1273 BCE)**

The Jewish nation mourned for thirty days following the passing of Moses. (During this time, Joshua, the new leader of the Jewish nation, sent scouts to spy on the land of Canaan, see Jewish History for the [5th of Nissan](#)).

On the 7th of Nissan, the first day after the mourning period came to an end, Joshua instructed the Jews to stock up on provisions and prepare themselves to cross the Jordan river and begin the conquest of the Promised Land. This was the first time Joshua addressed the nation, and they unconditionally accepted him as their new leader.

The actual crossing occurred on the [10th of Nissan](#).

## Nissan 8

### **War of Egyptian Firstborn (1313 BCE)**

On the Shabbat before the Exodus--Nissan 10th on that year--the first-born of Egypt, who occupied the senior positions in the priesthood and government, fought a bloody battle with Pharaoh's troops, in an effort to secure the release of the Israelites and prevent the Plague of the Firstborn. This "great

miracle" is commemorated each year on the Shabbat before Passover, which is therefore called Shabbat HaGadol, "The Great Shabbat." (This is one of the rare instances in which a commemorative date in the Jewish calendar is set by the day of the week rather than the day of the month.)

#### **Feast Ended in Shushan (366 BCE)**

The grand 180-day feast hosted by King Achashverosh came to an end on this day.

Achasverosh miscalculated the start date of Jeremiah's prophecy which promised the rebuilding of the Holy Temple after 70 years of Babylonian exile. When, according to his calculations, the seventy years had passed and the Jews were not redeemed, he orchestrated this grand party to celebrate the "demise" of the Chosen Nation. During the course of the party he brazenly displayed many of the vessels looted from the Holy Temple by the Babylonian armies.

### Nissan 9

#### **Seven Day Feast Begun (366 BCE)**

Following his 180 day feast for all his international subjects, which ended a day earlier, King Achashverosh began a seven-day feast for his subjects living in Shushan, his capital. This feast ended with the death of his queen, Vashti.

### Nissan 10

#### **Miriam's Passing (1274 BCE)**

Miriam, the sister of Moses, passed away at the age of 126 on the 10th of Nissan of the year 2487 from creation (1274 BCE) -- 39 years after the Exodus and exactly one year before the Children of Israel entered the Holy Land. It is in deference to her passing that the "Great Shabbat" is commemorated on the Shabbat before Passover rather than the calendar date of the miracle's occurrence, Nissan 10.

#### **Israelites Cross Jordan (1273 BCE)**

Three days after the two spies dispatched by Joshua scouted the city of Jericho (see entry for "Nissan 7" above), the children of Israel were ready to enter the land promised by G-d to their ancestors as their eternal heritage. As they approached the Jordan with the Holy Ark carried by the Kohanim (priests) in their lead, the river parted for them, as the waters of the Red Sea had split when their fathers and mothers marched out of Egypt 40 years earlier. (Joshua 4)

### Nissan 11

#### **Mass Circumcision (1273 BCE)**

Following the Jewish nation's crossing of the Jordan into the land of Canaan (see entry for "[Nissan 10](#)"), and in preparation for the bringing of the [Passover Offering](#), all the men were circumcised under the guidance of [Joshua](#).

Due to the weather conditions in the desert which were not conducive for the healing of wounds, throughout the forty year desert sojourn only the Tribe of Levi circumcised their sons.

## Nissan 12

### **Hezekiah Falls Ill (548 BCE)**

On this day, King Hezekiah, the greatest of all the Judean kings, fell seriously ill, and was informed by the [Prophet Isaiah](#) that he would die, for G-d was displeased with the fact that Hezekiah had never married.

Hezekiah had refused to get married because he had prophetically foreseen that his children would lead the Jewish people to sin. He erred, for it is man's job to heed the commandment of procreating, and the rest is in the hands of G-d.

Hezekiah asked the prophet to pray on his behalf, but he refused, insisting that the Heavenly decree was final. The king asked the prophet to leave, saying that he had a tradition from his ancestors that one should never despair, even if a sharp sword is drawn across one's throat. The king prayed to G-d, and his prayer was accepted. G-d sent Isaiah to tell him that he would recover and that his life would be extended for fifteen years. Hezekiah recovered three days later, on the first day of Passover.

The King later married Prophet Isaiah's daughter.

### **Ezra Departs Babylon (348 BCE)**

A year following the building of the second Temple in Jerusalem (see Jewish History for the [3rd of Adar](#)) Ezra gathered many of the Jews who had remained in Babylon and began a journey to the land of Israel. Though he certainly wanted to go earlier, his teacher, Baruch ben Neriah was too frail to travel, and Ezra refused to leave him until his passing.

Ezra was the head of the [Sanhedrin](#), who all traveled together with him.

On the 12th of Nissan, Ezra departed from the river of Ahava, the beginning of the long journey to the land of Israel which would last for nearly five months (see Jewish history for the [1st of Av](#)).

## Nissan 13

### **Abraham's Brit (1714 BCE)**

According to one account in the *Midrash*, on the 13th of Nissan of the year 2048 from creation (1714 BCE), G-d appeared to Abram, changed his name to Abraham ("father of a multitude of nations") and commanded him to circumcise himself and all members of his household--and all future descendants at the age of eight days--so that "My covenant (*brit*) shall be in your flesh, as an eternal covenant." Abraham was 99 years old at the time, and his son Ishmael, 13. (Isaac, who was born a year later, was the first Jew to be circumcised at eight days).

### **Haman's Decree (357 BCE)**

In the 12th year of his reign (357 BCE), King Achashverosh of Persia endorsed Haman's plan "to destroy, kill and annihilate all Jews, from young to old, infants and women, on a single day, on the 13th day of the 12th month, the month of Adar." On Nissan 13 (11 months before the date chosen for the massacre) proclamations of the decree were drafted and dispatched to all 127 countries of the Persian Empire. Mordechai told Esther to go before the king and plead for her people. Esther asked that a three-day fast be proclaimed (Nissan 14, 15 and 16--including the first two days of Passover) in which all Jews would repent and pray for the success of her mission.

## Nissan 15

### **"Covenant Between the Parts" (1743 BCE)**

On the 15th of Nissan of the year 2018 from creation (1743 BCE) G-d forged a special covenant with Abraham in which the destiny of the Jewish people was foretold: the Holy Land was bequeathed to them as their eternal heritage, but first they would have to experience *galut*--exile and persecution. "And He said to Abram: 'Know surely that your descendants shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will be enslaved to them, and they will afflict them four hundred years... and afterwards they shall come out with great wealth.' And when the sun went down and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace and a burning torch which passed between those pieces... On that day G-d made a covenant with Abram, saying: 'To your seed I have given these land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates'" (Genesis 15:13-18).

### **Abraham Battles Four Kings (1738 BCE?)**

When Lot was taken captive by the four kings who conquered the "five cities of the plain" (Sodom, Gomorra, Admah, Zevoim and Zoar), Abraham, aided only by a small band of loyal servants, went to battle to rescue his nephew; "the night divided for them, for him and his servants, and they defeated them, pursuing them to Hovah, which is to the left of Damascus... And he recovered all the property;

also his kinsman, Lot, and his property were recovered, and also the women and the people" (Genesis 14:15-16).

### **Angels Visit Abraham (1714 BCE)**

On the 3rd day following his circumcision at age 99 (see "[Today in Jewish History](#)" for Nissan 13) three angels visited Abraham: Rephael healed him, and Michael informed Abraham and Sarah that, in exactly one year, a son will be born to them. (The third angel, Gabriel, proceeded to Sodom to destroy the wicked city).

### **Isaac Born (1713 BCE)**

"G-d remembered Sarah as He had said; and G-d did to Sarah as He had spoken. And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which G-d had spoken to him... Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah declared: 'G-d has made laughter for me, so that all that hear will laugh ('yitzchak') with me'" (Genesis 21:1-6).

### **Jacob Wrestles with Angel (1556 BCE)**

"And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip, and the socket of Jacob's hip became dislocated as he wrestled with him. And he (the angel) said, 'Let me go, for dawn is breaking,' but he (Jacob) said, 'I will not let you go unless you have blessed me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' and he said, 'Jacob.' And he said, 'Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for you have contended with G-d and with men, and have prevailed'" (Genesis 32:25-29). It was the eve of Nissan 15.

The next morning, Jacob confronted Esau in the flesh. Esau, who had come with a band of armed men with the intention to kill his brother, "ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept". Esau invited Jacob to join him in his mountain kingdom of Se'ir, but Jacob replied, "Please, let my lord go on ahead before his servant; and I will lead on slowly, according to the pace of the cattle that goes before me and the children, until I come to my lord to Se'ir" -- a promise yet to be fulfilled (ibid., 33:4-14).

### **Moses at Burning Bush (1314 BCE)**

On the 15th of Nissan of the year 2447 from creation (1314 BCE) -- exactly one year before the Exodus -- Moses was shepherding the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro, at the foot of Mount Sinai, when G-d appeared to him in a "thornbush that burned with fire, but was not consumed" and instructed him to return to Egypt, come before Pharaoh, and demand in the name of G-d: "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me." For seven days and seven nights Moses argued with G-d,

pleading that he is the wrong person for the job, before accepting the mission to redeem the people of Israel and bring them to Sinai.

### **The Exodus (1313 BCE)**

At the stroke of midnight of Nissan 15 of the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), 210 years after Jacob settled in Egypt and 430 years after the "Covenant Between the Parts," G-d visited the last of the ten plagues on the Egyptians, killing all their firstborn. Earlier that evening, the Children of Israel conducted the first "seder" of history, eating the roasted meat of the Passover offering with matzot and bitter herbs, and sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice on their doorposts as a sign that G-d will "pass over" their homes when inflicting the plague upon the Egyptians. Pharaoh's resistance to free them was broken, and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land. Several million souls-- 600,000 adult males, plus the woman and children, and a large "mixed multitude" of non-Hebrews who joined them -- left Egypt on that day, and began the 50-day trek to Sinai and their birth as G-d's chosen people.

### **Queen Vashti Executed (366 BCE)**

On the seventh day of his royal feast (see Jewish history for 9 Nissan), King Achashverosh demanded that the Queen Vashti appear unclothed to display her beauty before all the attending guests. When Vashti refused this obscene request, the king had her executed.

Her ignominious death on Shabbat was divine retribution for her penchant to force Jewish girls to work on Shabbat, and paved the way for Esther to become queen and save the Jewish nation from Haman's plot.

### **Daniel in Lions' Den (372 BCE)**

Daniel was cast into a den of hungry lions by Darius I of Persia for violating a royal edict that no man may pray to any god save the king for 30 days. Miraculously, the lions did not touch him, and he emerged from the den unscathed (Daniel 6:5-29).

## Nissan 16

### **Sodom Overturned (1714 BCE)**

The wicked cities of the Sodom valley, including Sodom, Gemorrah, Admah and Zevoim, were overturned in punishment of their sins. Only Lot, his wife and two daughters were saved. Lot's wife, however, turned into a pillar of salt when she failed to heed the Divine warning not to look back at the burning cities.

### **Manna Ends (1273 BCE)**

On the 16th of Nissan of the year 2488 from creation (1273 BCE), six days after the Children of Israel entered the Holy Land under the leadership of Joshua, their remaining supply of the miraculous "bread from heaven," which had sustained them since shortly after their exodus from Egypt 40 years earlier, ran out. (The manna had ceased falling on the previous Adar 7, the day of Moses' passing.) After bringing the "Omer" offering (see "Counting of the Omer" in **Laws & Customs** for yesterday, Nissan 15) at the Sanctuary they erected at Gilgal, the people prepared their (unleavened) bread for the first time from the produce of the land.

### **Esther Appears Before Achashverosh (357 BCE)**

On the 3rd day of the fast proclaimed by Mordechai at her behest (see "Today in Jewish History" for Nissan 13), Queen Esther appeared unsummoned before King Achashverosh--a capital offence. The king, however, extended the royal sceptre to her, signifying his consent that she approach him. Esther requested that Achashverosh attend a private wine party with her and Haman (according to one opinion in the Talmud, her plan was to make Achashverosh jealous of her apparent friendship with Haman so that he would kill them both, thus saving the Jewish people from Haman's decree).

### **Haman Hanged (357 BCE)**

At the 2nd wine party she made for King Achashverosh and Haman, Queen Esther revealed her identity to the king and began to plead for her people, pointing to Haman as the evil schemer plotting to destroy them. When Charvonah, a royal servant, mentioned the gallows which Haman had prepared for Mordechai, the king ordered that Haman be hanged on them, opening the door for the Jews' salvation from Haman's decree (Book of Esther, chapter 7).

## Nissan 18

### **Pharaoh Becomes Aware of Escape (1313 BCE)**

Following the Jewish nation's grand exodus from Egypt (see Jewish history for the 15th of Nissan), Pharaoh, who only gave official permission for the Jews to leave for three days, was informed by secret agents whom he sent together with the Jews that they had no intention of returning.

Pharaoh decided to mobilize his army and pursue the Jews, with the intention of bringing them back to Egypt. This led to the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea (see Jewish history for the 21st of Nissan).

## Nissan 20

### **Pharaoh Corners Jews (1313 BCE)**

Pharaoh's pursuit of the Jews (see Jewish History for the 18th of Nissan) ended on this day, on the shores of the Red Sea.



A terrified Jewish nation divides into several factions. Some advocated mass suicide, others wanted to surrender and return to Egypt, the bolder ones prepared to battle the Egyptians, while others advised the nation to pray.

G-d thought otherwise. He instructed the Jews to simply proceed onwards -- despite the sea which stood in their path.

The Jews complied, and the entire following night they went through the parted waters of the Red Sea (see Jewish History for the [21st of Nissan](#))

## Nissan 21

### **Moses Departs Midian (1314 BCE)**

After seven days of contention with G-d at the burning bush (see [entry](#) for "Nissan 15"), Moses assumed the mission of taking the Children of Israel out of Egypt. Taking leave of his father-in-law, Jethro, he placed his wife and children on [adonkey](#) and set out for Egypt to demand of Pharaoh, "Let My people go!"

### **Red Sea Splits (1313 BCE)**

On the eve of the seventh day [after the Exodus](#), the Children of Israel found themselves [trapped](#) between the Egyptian army and cavalry pursuing them from behind and the waters of the Red Sea before them. G-d commanded Moses: "Speak to the Children of Israel, that they should move forward!"

Nachshon ben Aminadav of the tribe of Judah was the first to jump into the sea; the water split, and "the children of Israel walked across [on the dry land in the midst of the sea](#)." All that night, a pillar of fire intervened between the Egyptians and the Israelites. When the Egyptians followed, the waters returned to their [natural state](#) and place and drowned them. The Children of Israel sang the "[Song at the Sea](#)" in praise and gratitude to G-d.

## Nissan 22

### **Isaac Circumcised (1713 BCE)**

Eight days following his birth on the 15th of Nissan (see [Jewish history](#) for that day), Isaac was circumcised; becoming the very first child to enter the covenant with G-d on the eighth day following his birth.

### **Encirclement of Jericho (1273 BCE)**

Shortly after [crossing the Jordan River](#) and entering the Land of Canaan, the Jews set their sights on conquering the walled and heavily fortified city of Jericho. Following Joshua's instructions, on the

22nd of Nissan the Israelites encircled Jericho. The Israelites marched around the city walls, led by the priests who carried the Holy Ark, and sounded the *shofar* (ram's horn).

This performance was repeated for seven days. On the seventh day, the walls of the city collapsed.

## Nissan 24

### **The First Shabbat Celebrated (1313 BCE)**

Two days after the Jews crossed the Red Sea (see Jewish History for the 21st of Nissan) they arrived in Marah. There they received several commandments; one of them was to observe the Shabbat. The first Shabbat was observed on the 24th of Nissan.

## Nissan 26

### **Passing of Joshua (1245 BCE)**

Joshua (1355-1245 BCE), who assumed the leadership of the people of Israel after Moses' passing (see Jewish History for the 5th of Adar) and led them into the Holy Land (see Jewish History for the 10th of Nissan), passed away on Nissan 26. He passed away at the age of 110, in the 28th year of his leadership. He was buried in his own estate in Timnat-Serach, in Mount Ephraim.

## Nissan 28

### **Jericho's Wall Collapses (1273 BCE)**

On the seventh day of the encirclement of Jericho (see Jewish History for the 22nd of Nissan), the Jews, accompanied by the Holy Ark, circled the city seven times. After the blowing of the *shofar*, the walls miraculously crashed and sank, leaving the city open and unprotected. Jericho was easily conquered, becoming the first fortified Canaanite city to fall to the Children of Israel in their conquest of the Promised Land.

## Iyyar 1

### **Construction of 2nd Temple (370 BCE)**

Fifty three years following the destruction of the First Holy Temple (see Jewish History for the 9th of Av), Zerubabel and Joshua the High Priest began construction of the Second Temple, with permission from King Cyrus of Persia.

The offering of sacrifices had actually commenced a few months earlier, on the vacant lot where the 1st Temple stood, however it was only after the construction started on the 1st of Iyyar that the Levites began accompanying the service with song and music.

The construction was later halted after the hostile Samaritans supplied false slanderous information to Cyrus about the Jews' intentions. The construction was resumed many years later, and completed 21 years later under the reign of King Darius (see Jewish History for the Third of Adar).

## Iyyar 5

### **State of Israel Proclaimed (1948)**

The British mandate to govern the Holy Land expired on Friday, May 14, 1948. A United Nations resolution passed six months earlier endorsed the establishment of a Jewish state in the biblical homeland of the Jewish people. That afternoon, the state of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv. The date -- Iyar 5 on the Jewish calendar -- is celebrated in Israel as the Israeli "Independence Day."

## Iyyar 7

### **Jerusalem Walls Dedicated (335 BCE)**

The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was celebrated with great jubilation nearly 88 years after they were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia.

## Iyyar 10

### **Passing of Eli (891 BCE)**

Eli the High Priest died upon learning that the Holy Ark containing the Tablets was captured by the Philistines, and that his two sons were killed in battle. Eli was the 13th in the line of the "*Shoftim*" ("judges") who led the People of Israel during the four centuries between the passing of Joshua in 1245 BCE and the crowning of King Saul in 879 BCE.

## Iyyar 14

### **"Second Passover" (1312 BCE)**

A year after the Exodus, G-d instructed the people of Israel to bring the Passover offering on the afternoon of Nissan 14, and to eat it that evening, roasted over the fire, together with matzah and bitter herbs, as they had done on the previous year just before they left Egypt. "There were, however, certain persons who had become ritually impure through contact with a dead body, and could not, therefore, prepare the Passover offering on that day. They approached Moses and Aaron ... and they said: '...Why should we be deprived, and not be able to present G-d's offering in its time, amongst the children of Israel?'" (Numbers 9).

In response to their plea, G-d established the 14th of Iyar as a "second Passover" (*pesach sheini*) for anyone who was unable to bring the offering on its appointed time in the previous month. The day thus represents the "second chance" achieved by *teshuvah* the power of repentance and "return." In

the words of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch, "The Second Passover means that it's never a 'lost case.'"

## Iyyar 16

### **The Manna (1313 BCE)**

Manna, the "bread from heaven" which sustained the Children of Israel during their 40 years of wandering through the desert, began to fall on the 16th of Iyar of the year 2448 from creation--one month after the Exodus (see "[Today in Jewish History](#)" for yesterday, Iyar 15).

### **Romans Razed Jerusalem Wall (70)**

In the year 70 CE (3830 from Creation), Titus and the Roman army laid siege upon Jerusalem, greatly weakening its defenders. On the 16th of Iyar, the Romans razed the middle wall of Jerusalem. The city was later burned, its inhabitants massacred, and the Temple destroyed on the 9th of Av.

## Iyyar 17

### **Roman Garrison Defeated (66)**

Following the theft of silver from the Holy Temple in Jerusalem on the 17th of Iyar of the year 3826 from Creation (66 CE), the Jewish defense force attacked and defeated the Roman garrison stationed in Jerusalem.

## Iyyar 20

### **Journey From Sinai (1312 BCE)**

On the 20th of Iyar 2449 (1312 BCE)--nearly a year after the [Giving of the Torah](#) on Mount Sinai--the Children of Israel departed their encampment near the Mountain. They resumed their journey when the pillar of cloud rose for the first time from over the "[Tabernacle](#)--the divine sign that would signal the resumption of their travels throughout their encampments and journeys over the next 38 years, until they reached the eastern bank of the Jordan River on the eve of their entry into the Holy Land.

## Iyyar 22

### **Shabbat Commanded (1313 BCE)**

Following the descent of the manna (the miraculous "Bread from Heaven" that sustained the Israelites in the desert), G-d commanded the Children of Israel to keep the Shabbat. This Shabbat was the 22nd of Iyar, of the year 2448 from Creation (1313 BCE) (see "[Today in Jewish History](#)" for Iyar 15).

On that Friday morning, enough manna fell for two days' worth of meals, as on the Shabbat it would be prohibited to gather the manna. The "Two Loaves" of challah bread (*Lechem Mishneh*) that form the foundation of our Shabbat meal are in commemoration of the double portion of manna.

## Iyyar 23

### **Water from a Rock at Rephidim (1313 BCE)**

The Children of Israel arrived at Rephidim on the 23rd of Iyyar, 1313 BCE -- 38 days after their exodus from Egypt.

Rephidim was desert land and waterless, the people grumbled that they and their flocks were in danger of dying of thirst. G-d commanded Moses to take the elders of the people to a rock which he was to hit with his staff. Moses hit the rock and from the dry stone, a well sprang forth.

## Iyyar 28

### **Passing of Samuel (877 BCE)**

The prophet Samuel (931-877 BCE) was one of the most important figures in Jewish history; our sages describe him as the equivalent of "Moses and Aaron combined." Samuel was the last of the *Shoftim* ("Judges") who led the people of Israel in the four centuries between the passing of Joshua and the establishment of the monarchy, and the author of the biblical books of "Judges", "Samuel" and "Ruth".

Samuel was born in the year 2830 from creation (931 BCE) after his barren mother, Chanah (Hannah), prayed for a child at the Sanctuary at Shiloh and pledged, "O L-rd of hosts... If You will give Your maidservant a man child, I shall dedicate him to G-d all the days of his life..." (I Samuel 1:11). At age two, his mother brought him to Shiloh in fulfillment of her vow, where he was raised by Eli the High Priest; shortly thereafter, Samuel had his first prophetic communication (described in I Samuel 3). In 890 BCE, Samuel succeeded Eli as leader of the Jewish people.

After ten years under Samuel's guidance, the people approached him with the request, "Appoint for us a king... like all the nations around us." Samuel disapproved of their request, believing that the people of Israel should be subject only to G-d and not to any mortal king; but G-d instructed him to do as the people ask. Samuel then anointed (879 BCE) Saul as the first king of Israel. When Saul disobeyed G-d during the war on Amalek, Samuel proclaimed David the legitimate king in Saul's stead.

Shortly thereafter, Samuel passed away in his birthplace, Ramah, in the hills of Judah, on the 28th of Iyyar of the year 2884 from creation (877 BCE).

### **Jerusalem Liberated (1967)**

The Old City of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount were liberated during the 1967 Six-Day War (see "Today in Jewish History" for [Iyar 26](#)). The day is marked in Israel as "Jerusalem Day."

## Iyyar 29

### **Hebron Liberated (1967)**

One day after Israeli forces liberated Eastern Jerusalem in the course of the Six-Day War, another of the holy cities, Hebron, was also liberated.

Following the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, Jordan took over the control of Hebron along with the rest of the West Bank. During this time, Israelis were not allowed to enter the West Bank. The Jewish Quarter was destroyed, Jewish cemeteries were desecrated, 58 synagogues were destroyed and an animal pen was built on the ruins of the Patriarch Abraham Synagogue.

## Sivan 1

### **Flood Waters Recede (2105 BCE)**

150 days after the rains stopped falling in the Great Flood, the raging waters which covered the face of the earth calmed and began to subside at the rate of one cubit every four days (Genesis 8:3; Rashi, *ibid*. See "[Today in Jewish History](#)" for Cheshvan 17.)

### **Encampment at Sinai (1313 BCE)**

On the 1st of Sivan of the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), six weeks after their exodus from Egypt, the Children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai in the Sinai Desert and camped at the foot of the mountain "as one man, with one heart" in preparation for the receiving of the Torah from G-d. On this day, however "Moses did not say anything to them, because of their exhaustion from the journey."

### **Korach Swallowed (1312 BCE)**

Korach, who led a rebellion against the leadership of Moses and Aaron, met his end when, miraculously, "the ground split beneath them... And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained to Korach, and all their possessions" (Numbers 16:31-32).

## Sivan 2

### **Chosen People (1313 BCE)**

Sivan 2 is marked on the Jewish calendar as *Yom HaMeyuchas* ("Day of Distinction"); it was on this day that G-d told Moses -- when Moses ascended Mount Sinai for the first time -- to tell the people of

Israel: "You shall be My chosen treasure from among all the nations, for all the earth is Mine. You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:4-6).

### **Israel Captures Golan Heights (1967)**

Until the Six-Day War (see "[Today in Jewish History](#)" for Iyar 26), the Syrian army was deployed in strong fortifications on the Golan Heights, from which they repeatedly shelled the Israeli settlements below. On the fifth day of the war, the Israeli Army broke through the Syrian front. Facing very difficult topographical conditions, they scaled the steep and rugged heights. The Engineering Corps cleared the way of mines, followed by bulldozers which leveled a route for the tanks on the rocky face. After more than 24 hours of heavy fighting, the Syrian deployment collapsed and the Syrian forces fled in retreat.

## Sivan 3

### **Jews Prepare to Receive Torah (1313 BCE)**

On Sivan 3, G-d instructed Moses to "set boundaries for the people around, saying, 'Beware of ascending the mountain or touching its edge...'" (Exodus 19:10-12) in preparation for the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai three days later. To this day, we mark the "Three Days of Hagbalah ('Boundaries')" leading to the Giving of the Torah on [Sivan 6](#).

### **Vespasian Captures Jericho (68 CE)**

In his advance towards the destruction of Jerusalem, Rome Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasianus ("Vespasian") captures Jericho and massacres all its inhabitants.

## Sivan 4

### **Moses Transcribes (first part of) Torah (1313 BCE)**

On Sivan 4 of the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE)--two days before the revelation at Mount Sinai--Moses wrote down the first 68 chapters of the Torah, from Genesis 1:1 ("In the Beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth") to the Giving of the Torah in Exodus 19 (Exodus 24:4; Rashi *ibid.*).

## Sivan 5

### **Reuben Finds Mandrakes (1568 BCE)**

The incident involving the mandrakes (*dudaim*) which Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, found in the field "during the time of the wheat harvest"--recounted in [Genesis 30:14-18](#)--occurred on the fifth of Sivan of the year 2197 from creation (1568 BCE).

### **Jews Accept Torah (1313 BCE)**

On this day, Moses made a covenant with the Jewish people at the foot of Mount Sinai at which the people declared, "All that G-d has spoken, we shall do and hear" (Exodus 24:7) committing themselves to observe the Torah's commandments ("do") and strive to comprehend them ("hear"), while pledging to "do" also before they "hear."

## Sivan 6

### **Torah Given (1313 BCE)**

On the 6th Sivan of the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), seven weeks after the Exodus, G-d revealed Himself on Mount Sinai. The entire people of Israel (600,000 heads of households and their families), as well as the souls of all future generations of Jews, heard G-d declare the first two of the Ten Commandments and witnessed G-d's communication of the other eight through Moses. Following the revelation, Moses ascended the mountain for 40 days, to receive the remainder of the Torah from G-d.

At Sinai, G-d rescinded the "decree" and "divide" (*gezeirah*) that had been in force since the 2nd day of creation separating the spiritual and the physical into two hermetic worlds; from this point on, "the higher realms could descend into the lower realms, and the lower could ascend to the higher." Thus was born the "mitzvah" -- a physical deed that, by virtue of the fact that it is commanded by G-d, brings G-dliness into the physical world.

### **Passing of King David (837 BCE)**

David, a descendent of Judah the son of Jacob as well as of Ruth, a Moabite convert to Judaism, was anointed King of Israel by Samuel in 878 BCE. All future legitimate kings of Israel were David's descendents, as will be Moshiach (the messiah), who will "restore the kingdom of David to its glory of old."

David fought many wars, defeating Israel's enemies and securing and expanding its borders. He conquered Jerusalem, purchased the Temple Mount from its Yebusite owner, and prepared the foundation for the Holy Temple (which was built by his son, King Solomon). David served as the head of the *Sanhedrin* and the foremost Torah authority of his generation; he is also the "sweet singer of Israel" who composed the Book of Psalms that for 28 centuries has embodied the joys, sorrows and yearnings of the Jewish people.

King David passed away on the 6th of Sivan of the year 837 BCE, age 70.

## Sivan 13

### **Moses Atop Mount Sinai (1313 BCE)**



"Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain...for six days. On the seventh day G-d called to Moses from within the cloud... And Moses came within the cloud, and he went up to the top of the mountain, and Moses was upon the mountain forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 24:15-18).

On the morrow of the giving of the Ten Commandments (see Jewish History for the 6th of Sivan), Moses ascended Mount Sinai in order to receive from G-d the remainder of the Torah -- the remaining commandments and the Oral Law. After being "cleansed" by the cloud for six days, he was ushered into the presence of G-d on the 13th of Sivan.

## Sivan 15

### **Birth and Passing of Judah (1565 and 1466 BCE)**

Judah, the fourth son of Jacob and Leah, was born in Charan on the 15th of Sivan, of the year 2196 from creation (1565 BCE). He passed away on the same date 119 years later, in Egypt.

Judah took the leadership role both in selling Joseph into slavery and in the brothers' later attempts to find him and free him, and to protect Benjamin. On his deathbed, Jacob conferred the leadership of Israel upon Judah, proclaiming: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the legislator from between his feet, until Shiloh (the Moshiach) comes..." The royal house of David, as well as many of the great sages and leaders of Israel throughout the generations of Jewish history, trace their lineage to Judah.

Judah had five sons: Er and Onan, who died without children; Shelah; and his twins from Tamar, Peretz and Zerach. Their descendants formed the Tribe of Judah, the most populous and prestigious of the twelve tribes of Israel.

After the death of King Solomon in 797 BCE, the people of Israel split into two kingdoms: ten tribes formed the Kingdom of Israel in the north, with Shomron (Samaria) as the capital; only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to Solomon's son, Rechavam, and formed the Kingdom of Judea in the south, in the areas surrounding the capitol Jerusalem. Eventually, the Northern Kingdom was conquered by Assyria and the ten tribes living there were exiled and lost to the Jewish people; the inhabitants of Judea were also exiled (to Babylonia) but subsequently returned to the Holy Land and rebuilt Jerusalem and the Holy Temple. Over time, the terms "Judean" and "Jew"-- which originally referred to a member of the tribe of Judah--became synonymous with "Israelite" and was used to refer to the descendants of all of Jacob's twelve sons--i.e., the Jewish people.

## Sivan 17

### **Noah's Ark on Mt. Ararat (2105 BCE)**

Seven months after the beginning of the Great Flood, and 17 days after the waters covering the earth began to subside, the Ark sheltering Noah, his family, and members of all animal species came to rest on the (still submerged) summit of Mount Ararat.

### **Hasmonean Victory (circa 140 BCE)**

The Hasmonean fighters recaptured Migdal Tzur from the Greek enemy and proclaimed this day a holiday (Talmud, Megilat Taanit).

## Sivan 22

### **Miriam Quarantined (1312 BCE)**

Miriam, the elder sister of Moses and Aaron, was afflicted with tzaraat (leprosy) after speaking negatively of Moses, and was quarantined outside of the camp for seven days--as related in Numbers 12

## Sivan 23

### **Jeroboam Barricades Jerusalem (797 BCE)**

After King Solomon's passing in 797 BCE, ten of the twelve tribes of Israel, led by Jeroboam ben Nebat of the tribe of Ephraim, rebelled against Solomon's son and heir, Rehoboam. The Holy Land split into two kingdoms: the "Kingdom of Israel" in the north, with Jeroboam as its king and the city of Samaria as its capital; and the southern "Kingdom of Judah" with its capital Jerusalem, where Rehoboam ruled over the two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) that remained loyal to the royal house of David. The spiritual center of the land, however, remained Jerusalem, where the Holy Temple built by Solomon stood, and where every Jew was obligated to make a thrice-yearly pilgrimage for the festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. Seeing this as a threat to his sovereignty, Jeroboam set up, on Sivan 23 of that year, roadblocks to prevent the people's pilgrimage to Jerusalem, introducing instead the worship of two idols, in the form of gold calves, which he enshrined on the northern and southern boundaries of his realm.

The barricades remained in place for 223 years, until Hoshea ben Elah, the last king of the Northern Kingdom, had them removed on the 15th of Av of 574 BCE. By then, the ten tribes residing there were already being expelled from the land in a series of invasions by various Assyrian and Babylonian kings. The last of these occurred in 556 BCE, when Shalmaneser of Assyria completely conquered the Kingdom of Israel, destroyed its capital, exiled the last of the Israelites residing there, and resettled the land with foreign peoples from Kutha and Babylon. These peoples -- later known

as the "Samaritans" -- assumed a form of Judaism as their religion, but were never accepted as such by the Jewish people; they subsequently built their own temple on Mount Gerizim and became bitter enemies of the Jews. The "Ten Lost Tribes of Israel" were never heard from again, and await the coming of the Moshiach to be reunited with the Jewish people.

### **Haman's Decree Counteracted (357 BCE)**

Even after Haman was hanged on the 17th of Nissan of 357 BCE, his evil decree "to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, from young to old, infants and women, in one day, the 13th day of the 12th month (Adar)" remained in force. Queen Esther pleaded with King Achashverosh to annul the decree, but Achashverosh insisted that "a writ that has been written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's seal, cannot be returned." Instead, he suggested to Esther and Mordechai to "inscribe, regarding the Jews, as you please, and seal it with the king's seal." On the 23rd of Sivan, Mordechai drafted a royal decree giving the Jews the license to defend themselves and kill all who rise up against them to kill them, and dispatched it to all 127 provinces of Achashverosh's empire. (Book of Esther, chapter 8)

## Sivan 25

### **Jews Debate Before Alexander (313 BCE)**

Jewish victory in public debate with Ishmaelites, Canaanites and Egyptians before Alexander the Great. (Megillat Taanit 3)

## Tammuz 1

### **Birth and Passing of Joseph (1562 and 1452 BCE)**

Joseph, the son of the patriarch Jacob, was born in Charan (Mesopotamia) on the 1st of Tammuz of the year 2199 from creation (1562 BCE), the first child of Jacob's most beloved wife, Rachel, born after 7 childless years of marriage. He passed away on the same date 110 years later, in Egypt.

When Joseph was six years old, Jacob and his family returned to the Holy Land, eventually settling in Hebron. Though younger than 10 of his 11 brothers, he was his father's favorite, and a great rivalry existed between him and his brothers, whose animosity toward him increased when he related two dreams he had forecasting that he is destined to rule over them.

When Joseph was 17, he was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt; when he refused the advances of his master's wife, she had him placed in prison, where he languished for 12 years. At age 30, he interpreted a pair of mysterious dreams dreamt by Pharaoh, and was appointed viceroy of Egypt to oversee the gathering and storage of grain in preparation for the seven years of famine

that Pharaoh's dreams had predicted. He married Asnat, and had two children, Menasseh and Ephraim.

The great famine brought his brothers to Egypt to purchase grain; after subjecting them to a series of trials to test their loyalty to each other and their remorse over what they had done to him, Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, was reconciled with them, and settled his father and entire family -- 70 souls in all -- in Egypt.

Joseph passed away in Egypt on his 110th birthday. The first of his brothers to die, he transmitted to them the divine promise to Jacob that his children will be taken out of Egypt and restored to their homeland, and made them promise to take his remains with them when they go.

### Tammuz 3

#### **Joshua Stops the Sun (1273 BCE)**

On the third of Tammuz of the year 2488 from creation (1273 BCE), Joshua was leading the Jewish people in one of the battles to conquer the Land of Israel. Victory was imminent, but darkness was about to fall. "Sun," proclaimed Joshua, "be still at Giv'on; moon, at the Ayalon valley" (Joshua 10:12). The heavenly bodies acquiesced, halting their progress through the sky until Israel's armies brought the battle to its successful conclusion.

### Tammuz 5

#### **Ezekiel's Vision of the "Chariot" (429 BCE)**

On the 5th of Tammuz of the year 3332 from creation (429 BCE), Ezekiel, the only one of the Prophets to prophesy outside of the Holy Land, beheld a vision of the Divine "Chariot" representing the spiritual infrastructure of creation.

### Tammuz 9

#### **Jerusalem Walls Breached (423 BCE)**

The Babylonian armies of King Nebuchadnezzar breached the walls of Jerusalem on the 9th of Tammuz in the year 3338 from creation (423 BCE); King Ziddikiah of Judah was captured and taken to Babylon (Jeremiah 39:5. A month later, the capture of Jerusalem was completed with the destruction of the Holy Temple and the exile of all but a small number of Jews to Babylon). Tammuz 9 was observed as a fast day until the second breaching of Jerusalem's walls (by the Romans) on the 17th of Tammuz, 3829 (69 CE), at which time the fast was moved to that date.

## Tammuz 10

### **King Zedekiah captured (423 BCE)**

When the Babylonians breached the walls of Jerusalem on the 9th of Tammuz, King Zedekiah fled the city. He was captured by Babylonian troops in the plains of Jericho on the 10th of Tammuz and was taken to King Nebuchadnezzar, who forced him to witness the slaughter of his sons, and then ordered his eyes gouged out.

## Tammuz 16

### **Golden Calf Made; Hur Killed (1313 BCE)**

In the year 2448 from Creation (1313 BCE), Tammuz 16 was the 40th day following the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and the people of Israel wrongly expected Moses' return from the mountain (he would actually return on the following day). When their leader failed to return, they demanded from Aaron: "Make us a god that shall go before us". Hur (Moses' nephew, the son of Miriam and Caleb) tried to stop them and was killed by the mob. Aaron fashioned a calf of molten gold.

## Tammuz 17

### **Moses Breaks Tablets (1313 BCE)**

The Talmud (Taanit 28b) lists five tragic events in Jewish history that occurred on Tammuz 17, on account of which a fast was instituted on this day (see Laws & Customs).

The first of these occurred in 1313 BCE, forty days after the Giving of the Torah on Sivan 6. Upon descending Mount Sinai and witnessing Israel's worship of the Golden Calf (see "Today in Jewish History" for yesterday, Tammuz 16), Moses smashed the Tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments which he was carrying down from the mountain.

### **Temple Service Disrupted (423 BCE)**

The daily sacrificial offerings (*Korban Tamid*) in the Holy Temple were discontinued, three weeks before the Babylonians' destruction of the First Temple in 423 BCE.

### **Jerusalem Walls Breached (69 CE)**

The other three national tragedies mourned on Tammuz 17 are connected with the Roman conquest of Jerusalem and their destruction of the Second Temple in the year 69 CE:

--The walls of the besieged city of Jerusalem were breached.

--The Roman general Apostomus burned the Torah and,

--placed an idol in the Holy Temple.

The fighting in Jerusalem continued for three weeks until the 9th of Av, when the Holy Temple was set aflame.

## Tammuz 18

### **Golden Calf Destroyed (1313 BCE)**

Moses destroyed the Golden Calf, and re-ascended Mount Sinai to plead G-d's forgiveness for the Jewish people. (Exodus 32:20; Talmud Taanit 30b. See "Today in Jewish History" for Tammuz 16 and Tammuz 17)

## Tammuz 24

### **Jews of Jerusalem are set aflame (1099)**

When the crusaders captured Jerusalem during the First Crusade, the Jews of Jerusalem fled into a synagogue. The crusaders then set flame to the synagogue, burning alive all the Jewish men, women, and children who had taken refuge there. All Jews were barred from living in the city of Jerusalem for the following 88 years.

## Av 1

### **Passing of Aaron (1274 BCE)**

Aaron the first High Priest, brother of Moses and Miriam, passed away at age 123 on the 1st of Av of the year 2487 from creation (1274 BCE). This is the only yahrzeit (date of passing) explicitly mentioned in the Torah (Numbers 33:38).

### **Ezra Arrives in Israel (348 BCE)**

Following their long journey from Babylon (see Jewish history for the 12th of Nissan), Ezra and his entourage arrived in the land of Israel to be near the newly built second Holy Temple in Jerusalem. A relatively small group came together with Ezra, the majority of Jews, including great Torah scholars, choosing to remain in Babylon due to the harsh conditions that were then prevailing in Israel.

## Av 7

### **First Temple Invaded (423 BCE)**

After nearly a month of fierce fighting inside Jerusalem (see "Today in Jewish History" for Tammuz 9), the armies of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia broke through into the Temple compound, where they feasted and vandalized until the afternoon of Av 9, when they set the Holy Temple aflame.

## Av 8

### **Spies Return (1312 BCE)**

The Spies dispatched 40 days earlier by Moses to tour the Promised Land return to Israel's encampment in the desert, bearing a huge cluster of grapes and other lush fruits. But even as they praise the land's fertility, they terrify the people with tales of mighty giant warriors dwelling there and assert that the land is unconquerable.

### **Civil War in Jerusalem (67 CE)**

Fighting breaks out inside the besieged city of Jerusalem between Jewish factions divided on the question of whether or not to fight the Roman armies encircling the city from without. One group sets fire to the city's considerable food stores, consigning its population to starvation until the fall of Jerusalem three years later.

## Av 9

### **Exodus Generation Condemned to Die in Desert (1312 BCE)**

On the Ninth of Av of the year 2449 from creation (1312 BCE), the generation of Jews who came out of Egypt under Moses' leadership 16 months earlier were condemned to die in the desert and the entry into the Land of Israel was delayed for 40 years.

As related in Numbers 14, when the Spies that Moses sent to the Land of Canaan returned with their disheartening report (see "[Today in Jewish History](#)" for yesterday, **Av 8**), the people wept all night -- the night of Av 9th -- proclaiming that they'd rather return to Egypt than attempt to conquer and settle it; G-d decreed that the entire generation would wander in the desert for 40 years until the last of them died out, and that their children, under the leadership of Joshua, will enter the land He promised as Israel's heritage.

This is the first of five national tragedies that occurred on Av 9 listed by the Talmud (Ta'anit 4:6), due to which the day was designated as a fast day. The other four are: the destruction of the two Temples, the fall of Betar, and the plowing over of Jerusalem. (see below)

### **Holy Temples Destroyed (423 BCE and 69 CE)**

Both the first and second Holy Temples which stood in Jerusalem were destroyed on Av 9: the First Temple by the Babylonians in the year 3338 from creation (423 BCE), and the second by the Romans in 3829 (69 CE).

The Temples' destruction represents the greatest tragedy in Jewish history, for it marks our descent into *Galut*--the state of physical exile and spiritual displacement in which we still find ourselves

today. Thus the Destruction is mourned as a tragedy that affects our lives today, 2,000 years later, no less than the very generation that experienced it first hand.

Yet the Ninth of Av is also a day of hope. The Talmud relates that Moshiach ("anointed one"--the Messiah), was born at the very moment that the Temple was set aflame and the *Galut* began. [This is in keeping with the teachings of our sages that, "In every generation is born a descendent of Judah who is worthy to become Israel's Moshiach" (Bartinoro on Ruth); "When the time will come, G-d will reveal Himself to him and send him, and then the spirit of Moshiach, which is hidden and secreted on high, will be manifested in him" (Chattam Sofer).]

## Av 10

### **Holy Temple Burns (69)**

The Romans set the Temple aflame on the afternoon of Av 9 (see yesterday's [Today in Jewish History](#) and it continued to burn through Av 10. For this reasons, some of the mourning practices of the "Nine Days" are observed through the morning hours of Av 10

## Av 15

### **End of Dying in Desert (1274 BCE)**

In wake of the incident of [the "Spies,"](#) in which the generation that came out of Egypt under Moses' leadership demonstrated their unpreparedness for the task of conquering and settling the Holy Land, G-d decreed that entire generation would die out in the desert (see "Today in Jewish History" for [Av 8](#) and [Av 9](#)). After 38 years of wandering through the wilderness the dying finally ended, and a new generation of Jews stood ready to enter the Holy Land. It was the 15th of Av of the year 2487 from creation (1274 BCE)



### **Ban on Inter-Tribal Marriage Lifted (13th century BCE)**

In order to ensure the orderly division of the Holy Land between the twelve tribes of Israel, restrictions had been placed on marriages between members of two different tribes. A woman who had inherited tribal lands from her father was forbidden to marry out of her tribe, lest her children -- members of their father's tribe -- cause the transfer of land from one tribe to another by inheriting her estate (Number 36). This ordinance was binding only on the generation that conquered and settled the Holy Land during the 14-year period 2488-2503 from creation (1273-1258 BCE); when the restriction was lifted, on the 15th of Av, the event was considered a cause for celebration and festivity.

### **Tribe of Benjamin Re-Admitted (circa 1228 BCE)**



Av 15 was the day on which the tribe of Benjamin, which had been excommunicated for its behavior in the incident of the "Concubine at Givah," was readmitted into the community of Israel (as related in Judges 19-21). The event occurred during the judgeship of Othniel ben Knaz, who led the people of Israel in the years 2533-2573 from creation (1228-1188 BCE).

#### **Jeroboam's Roadblocks Removed (574 BCE)**

Upon the division of the Holy Land into two kingdoms following the death of King Solomon in the year 2964 from creation (797 BCE), Jeroboam ben Nebat, ruler of the breakaway Northern Kingdom of Israel, set up roadblocks to prevent his citizens from making the thrice-yearly pilgrimage to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judea. These were finally removed more than 200 years later by Hosea ben Eilah, the last king of the Northern Kingdom, on Av 15, 3187 (574 BCE).

### Av 24

#### **Hasmonean Holiday (circa 100 BCE)**

The Hasmoneans reinstated the rule of Jewish civil law, replacing Hellenist secular law, and declared this day a holiday.

### Av 30

#### **2nd Tablets Hewn (1313 BCE)**

On the last day of Av of the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), Moses carved, by G-d's command, two stone tablets -- each a cube measuring 6x6x6 *tefachim* (a *tefach*, "handbreadth", is approximately 3.2 inches) -- to replace the two divinely-made tablets, on which G-d had inscribed the Ten Commandments, which Moses had smashed 42 days earlier upon witnessing Israel's worship of the Golden Calf.

### Elul 1

#### **Moses ascends Sinai for 3rd 40 days (1313 BCE)**

On the early morning of the 1st of Elul of the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE) Moses ascended Mount Sinai, taking with him the stone tablets he had hewn by divine command (see "Today in Jewish History" for yesterday, Av 30), for G-d to re-inscribe the Ten Commandments. On the mountain, G-d allowed Moses to "see My back, but not My face" (which Maimonides interprets as a perception of G-d's reality but not His essence) -- the closest any human being ever came to knowing G-d -- and taught him the secret of His "Thirteen Attributes of Mercy" (Exodus 33:18-34:8).

Moses remained on the mountain for 40 days, until the 10th of Tishrei (Yom Kippur), during which time He obtained G-d's whole-hearted forgiveness and reconciliation with the people of Israel following their betrayal of the covenant between them with their worship of the Golden Calf. This was the third of Moses' three 40-day periods on Mount Sinai in connection with the Giving of the Torah. Ever since, the month of Elul serves as the "month of Divine mercy and forgiveness."

## Elul 7

### **Moses' parents remarry (1394 BCE)**

Amram and Jocheved had separated because of Pharaoh's decree that all male Jewish babies be killed. Prompted by their six-year-old daughter Miriam's rebuke ("Pharaoh decreed against the males; you decreed against the males and the females") they remarried on the 7th of Elul of the year 2367 from creation (1394 BCE). Moses was born six months and one day later on Adar 7, 2368 (Talmud, Sotah 12b).

### **Spies die (1312 BCE)**

The Spies who slandered the Land of Israel died in the desert (Talmud, Sotah 35a; see Numbers 13-14 and text and links for Av 9 and Av 15).

## Elul 10

### **Noah Dispatches Raven (2105 BCE)**

On the 10th of Elul of the year 1656 from creation (2105 BCE), as the Great Flood neared its end, Noah opened the window of the Ark and dispatched a raven to determine if the flood waters had begun to recede (Genesis 8:1; Rashi). For a discussion of the deeper significance of this event,

## Elul 17

### **Noah Dispatches Dove (2105 BCE)**

Following the failed attempt to dispatch a raven from the ark (see "Today in Jewish History" for Elul 10), Noah sent a dove from the window of the ark to see if the great Flood that covered the earth had abated. "But the dove found no resting place for the sole of its foot" and returned to the ark; Noah waited seven days before making another attempt.

## Elul 23

### **Dove brings Olive Leaf (2105 BCE)**

On the 301st day of the great Flood, Noah sent a dove for the 2nd time from the ark (see "Today in Jewish History" for Elul 17). This time, the dove stayed away all day; "the dove came in to him in the

evening, and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off; and Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth" (Genesis 8:11).

## Elul 25

### **Creation (3761 BCE)**

The 1st day of creation, on which G-d created existence, time, matter, darkness and light, was the 25th of Elul. (Rosh Hashanah, on which we mark "the beginning of Your works", is actually the 6th day of creation, on which the world attained the potential for the realization of its purpose, with the creation of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Rosh Hashanah is therefore the day from which the Jewish calendar begins to count the years of history; the 1st day of creation thus occurred on the 25th of Elul of what is termed -1 from creation.

### **Jerusalem Walls Rebuilt (335 BCE)**

The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem -- which had been in ruins since the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians 88 years earlier -- was completed by Nehemia on Elul 25 of the year 3426 from creation (335 BCE) as related in the Book of Nehemia (ch. 6).

## Tishrei 1

### **Adam & Eve (3760 BCE)**

On Tishrei 1 -- the sixth day of creation -- "G-d said: 'Let us make Man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth...'" (Genesis 1:26). "G-d formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (ibid., 2:7). "And G-d took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to keep it" (2:15). "And G-d said: 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpmeet opposite him' ... G-d caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his sides, and closed up the flesh in its place. And G-d built the side which He had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. And the man said: 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother, and cleaves to his wife; and they become one flesh" (2:18-24).

### **1st Sin & Repentance (3760 BCE)**

On the very day he was created, man committed the first sin of history, transgressing the divine commandment not to eat from the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil." Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden, and mankind became subject to death, labor and moral confusion. But on that day the first man and woman also repented their sin, introducing the concept and opportunities of teshuvah ("return") into the human experience.

### **Dove's 3rd Mission (2105 BCE)**

On the 1st of Tishrei, on the 307th day of the Great Flood, Noah dispatched a dove from the ark, for the third time (see "On This Date" for Elul 17 and Elul 23). When the dove did not return, Noah knew that the Flood's waters had completely drained from the earth. On that day, Noah removed the roof of the ark; but Noah and his family, and all the animals, remained in the ark for another 57 days -- until the 27th of Cheshvan -- when the surface of the earth was completely dry and G-d commanded them to leave the ark and resettle and repopulate the earth.

### **Binding of Isaac; Sarah's Passing (1677 BCE)**

Abraham's supreme test of faith -- his binding of Isaac in preparation to sacrifice him as per G-d's command -- occurred on the 1st of Tishrei of the year 2084 from creation (1677 BCE), and is recalled each Rosh Hashanah with the sounding of the shofar (ram's horn -- a ram was sacrificed in Isaac's stead when an angel revealed that the command to sacrifice Isaac was but a divine test); the Torah's account of the event is publicly read in the synagogue on the 2nd day of Rosh Hashanah. On the day of Isaac's binding, his mother, Sarah, passed away at age 127, and was subsequently buried in the Machpelah Cave in Hebron.

Rosh Hashana

## Tishrei 3

### **Assassination of Gedaliah (423 BCE)**

Tishrei 3rd is a fast day mourning the assassination of the Jewish royal Gedaliah ben Achikam, governor of the Land of Israel for a short period following the destruction of the First Temple. Gedaliah's killing spelled the end of the small remnant of a Jewish community that remained in the Holy Land after the destruction, which fled to Egypt. (According to many opinions, the assassination of Gedaliah actually occurred on Rosh Hashanah, but the commemoration of the event is postponed to the day after the festival).

## Tishrei 8

### **Temple Dedicated (826 BCE)**

The 14-day dedication festivities, celebrating the completion of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem built by King Solomon, commenced on the 8th of Tishrei of the year 2935 from creation (826 BCE). The First Temple served as the epicenter of Jewish national and spiritual life for 410 year, until its destruction by the Babylonians in 423 BCE.

## Tishrei 10

### **Rebecca Born (1677 BCE)**

Birth of Rebecca (1677-1556 BCE), wife of Isaac, mother of Jacob and Esau, and one of the Four Matriarchs of Israel.

### **2nd Tablets (1313 BCE)**

On the 10th of Tishrei of the year 2449 from creation, 82 days after the people of Israel betrayed their newly entered covenant with G-d by worshipping a Golden Calf and after Moses twice spent 40 days atop Mount Sinai pleading on their behalf, "G-d restored His goodwill with the Jewish people gladly and wholeheartedly, saying to Moses 'I have forgiven, as you ask', and gave him the Second Tablets" -- thereby establishing the day as a time for atonement, forgiveness and teshuvah for all generations.

Yom Kippur

Tishrei 15

Sukkot festival

Tishrei 22

Shemini Atzeret

Tishrei 23

Simchat Torah

Cheshvan 7

### **Last Jew comes home (2nd Temple Era)**

During the Second Temple Era (circa 230 BCE), Cheshvan 7 was the date on which the Jew most distant from the Holy Temple -- who resided on the banks of the Euphrates River, a 15-day journey's distance from Jerusalem -- arrived at his homestead upon returning from the Sukkot pilgrimage. All Jews would wait for this before beginning to pray for rain. Cheshvan 7 thus marked the return to everyday activities following the spirituality of the festival-rich month of Tishrei.

Cheshvan 11

### **Passing of Methuselah (2105 BCE)**

Methuselah, the longest-lived human being of all time, died at the age of 969 years on the 11th of Cheshvan of the year 1656 from creation (2105 BCE) -- exactly seven days before the beginning of

the Great Flood. Methuselah was Adam's great-great-great-great-great-grandson and Noah's grandfather.

### **Rachel (1553 BCE)**

The matriarch Rachel died in childbirth on the 11th of Cheshvan of the year 2208 from creation (1553 BCE) while giving birth to her second son, Benjamin.

Rachel was born in Aram (Mesopotamia) approximately 1585 BCE. Her father was Laban, the brother of Jacob's mother, Rebecca. Jacob came to Laban's home in 1576 BCE, fleeing the wrath of his brother Esau. He fell in love with Rachel and worked for seven years tending Laban's sheep in return for her hand in marriage. But Laban deceived his nephew, and on the morning after the wedding Jacob discovered that he had married Rachel's elder sister, Leah. Laban agreed to give him Rachel as a wife as well in return for another seven years' labor.

Rachel was childless for many years, while her elder sister and rival gave birth to six sons and a daughter in succession. Finally, in 1562 BCE, she gave birth to Joseph. Nine years later, while Jacob and his family were on the road to Jacob's ancestral home in Hebron (after a 22-year absence), she gave birth to a second son, but died in childbirth. Jacob buried her by the roadside, in Bethlehem; there, "Rachel weeps over her children, for they are gone [in exile]" (Jeremiah 31:14). Her tomb has served as a place of prayer for Jews for more than 35 centuries.

## Cheshvan 15

### **Passing of Mattityahu (139 BCE)**

In the 2nd century before the common era, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks) who, with the collaboration of the Jewish Hellenists, introduced pagan idols into the Holy Temple and set about to forcefully Hellenize the people of Israel. Mattityahu, the son of the High Priest Yochanan, was already an old man when he picked up a sword and raised the flag of revolt in the village of Modiin in the Judean hills. Many rallied under his cry, "Who that is for G-d, come with me!" and resisted and battled the Greeks from their mountain hideouts.

After heading the revolt for one year, Mattityahu died on the 15th of Cheshvan of the year 3622 from creation (139 BCE). His five sons -- the "Macabees" Judah, Yochanan, Shimon, Elazar and Yonatan -- carried on the battle to their eventual victory, celebrated each year since by Jews the world over with the festival of Chanukah.

## Cheshvan 17

### **Great Flood Begins (2105 BCE)**

The rains began to fall on the 17th of Cheshvan of the year 1656 from creation (2105), flooding the earth and rising above the highest mountains. Only Noah and his family survived, in the ark built to that end by Divine command, and a pair of each animal species, who entered with him into the ark.

The following is a chronology of the Flood, as indicated by the dates and time periods given in the Torah's account and calculated by Rashi:

**Cheshvan 17:** Noah enters ark; rains begin.

**Kislev 27:** Forty days of rain end; begin 150 days of water's swelling and churning, during which the water reaches a height of 15 cubits above the mountain peaks.

**Sivan 1:** Water calms and begins to subside at the rate of one cubit every four days.

**Sivan 17:** The bottom of the ark, submerged 11 cubits beneath the surface, touches down on the top of Mount Ararat.

**Av 1:** The mountain peaks break the water's surface.

**Elul 10:** Forty days after the mountain peaks become visible, Noah opens the ark's window and dispatches a raven.

**Elul 17:** Noah sends the dove for the first time.

**Elul 23:** The dove is sent a second time, and returns with an olive leaf in its beak.

**Tishrei 1:** Dove's third mission. Water completely drained.

**Cheshvan 27:** Ground fully dried. Noah exits ark.

(This chronology follows the opinion of the Talmudic sage Rabbi Eliezer; according to Rabbi Joshua's interpretation, the Flood began on Iyar 17, and all above dates should be moved ahead six months.)

Total time that Noah spent in the ark: 365 days (one solar year; one year and 11 days on the lunar calendar).

## Cheshvan 23

### **Hasmonean Holiday (137 BCE)**

In Talmudic times, Cheshvan 23 was commemorated as the day on which the stones of the altar which were defiled by the Greeks were removed from the Holy Temple.

## Cheshvan 27

### **Flood ends (2104 BCE)**

On the 27th of Cheshvan of the year 1657 from creation (2104 BCE) "the earth dried" (Genesis 8:14) completing the 365-day duration of the great flood that wiped out all life on earth save for the eight human beings and the animals (two of each species) in Noah's ark; on this day G-d commanded Noah to "Come out of the ark" and repopulate, settle and civilize the earth.

## Kislev 13

### **Talmud completed (475 CE)**

In the first decades of the 5th century, Rav Ashi (d. 427) and Ravina I (d. 421) led a group of the *Amoraim* (Talmudic sages) in the massive undertaking of compiling the Babylonian Talmud -- collecting and editing the discussions, debates and rulings of hundreds of scholars and sages which had taken place in the more than 200 years since the compilation of the Mishnah by Rabbi Judah HaNassi in 189. The last of these editors and compilers was Ravina II, who passed away on the 13th of Kislev of the year 4235 from creation (475 CE); after Ravina II, no further additions were made to the Talmud, with the exception of the minimal editing undertaken by the Rabbanan Savura'i (476-560). This date thus marks the point at which the Talmud was "closed" and became the basis for all further exegesis of Torah law.

## Kislev 14

### **Reuben Born (1568 BCE)**

Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob and Leah, was born in Charan (Mesopotamia) on the 14th of Kislev of the year 2193 from creation (1568 BCE). As Jacob's firstborn, he was initially entitled to the leadership of Israel and to a double portion in the Holy Land, but these privileges were taken from him (and given respectively to Judah and Joseph) because he sinned by "violating the bed of his father." Reuben unsuccessfully tried to prevent the persecution of Joseph by his brothers in 2216 (1545 BCE) and subsequently berated them for selling him into slavery (Genesis 37:21; 42:22). In 2238 he relocated to Egypt together with his father, brothers and their children, where he died on his 125th birthday in 2318 (1443 BCE).

## Kislev 16

### **Noah's Ark Comes to Rest (2104 BCE)**

On this day, the bottom of the Noah's ark, submerged 11 cubits beneath the water's surface, touched down and came to rest on the top of Mount Ararat.

(This follows the opinion of the Talmudic sage Rabbi Joshua, who maintains that the Flood began on Iyar 17.)

## Kislev 17

### **Ezra Cries and Prays (348 BCE)**



On this day, Ezra the Scribe went up to the Holy Temple and fasted, prayed, and cried in public. While he prayed and confessed, weeping and prostrating himself in front of the Temple, a large assemblage of men, women, and children gathered around him.

At that time, all of the assembled priests and Israelites swore to send away their non-Jewish wives. Ezra then issued a proclamation that all Jews residing in Israel should assemble in three days' time in Jerusalem (see Today in Jewish History for the [20th of Kislev](#)).

## Kislev 20

### **Ezra's Address (347 BCE)**

Ezra, head of the Sanhedrin and the leader of the Jewish people at the time of the building of the Second Temple, made an historic address to a three-day assemblage of Jews in Jerusalem, exhorting them to adhere to the teachings of the Torah and to dissolve their interfaith marriages (the Jewish people were on the verge of complete assimilation at the time, following their 70-year exile in Babylonia).

## Kislev 21

### **Alexander in Jerusalem (313 BCE)**

On Kislev 21 of the year 3448 from creation (313 BCE), there occurred the historic meeting between Shimon HaTzaddik and Alexander ("the Great") of Macedonia.

The Samaritans, bitter enemies of the Jews, had convinced Alexander that the Jews' refusal to place his image in their Temple was a sign of rebellion against his sovereignty, and that the Holy Temple should be destroyed. The Kohen Gadol ("High Priest") at the time was Shimon HaTzaddik, the last of the "Men of the Great Assembly" who rebuilt the Holy Temple and revitalized Judaism under [Ezra](#). On the 21st of Kislev Alexander marched on Jerusalem at the head of his army; Shimon, garbed in the vestments of the High Priest and accompanied with a delegation of Jewish dignitaries, went forth to greet him. The two groups walked towards each other all night; at the crack of dawn they met. As Alexander beheld the visage of the High Priest, he dismounted his horse and bowed respectfully; to his men he explained that he often had visions of a similar-looking man leading him into battle. Shimon HaTzaddik brought the emperor to the Holy Temple and explained that Judaism prohibits the display of any graven image; he offered to name all the male children born to priests that year "Alexander" as a demonstration of loyalty to the emperor (which is how "Alexander" became a common Jewish name). The Samaritans plot was rebuffed, and Kislev 21 was declared a holiday. (Talmud Yoma 69a)

*According to an alternative version, this episode occurred on the 25th of Tevet.*

## Kislev 24

### **Construction of the Second Temple Resumes (353 BCE)**

In the first year of rule of Cyrus, the King of Persia, Jews were given permission to return to Israel and rebuild the Holy Temple. A group of Jews led by Zerubavel set out for Jerusalem and began working on the second Temple. However, the Cutheans falsely accused the Jews of plotting a rebellion against King Cyrus and were successful in halting the construction of the Holy Temple for the remainder of his reign and throughout the reign of Ahasuerus, his successor. Construction resumed in the second year of the reign of Darius, Ahasuerus's son, on the 24th of Kislev.

## Kislev 25

### **Cain Kills Abel (3720 BCE)**

The first murder in history occurred on the 25th of Kislev in the year 41 from creation (3720 BCE), when Adam and Eve's eldest son, Cain, killed his younger brother, Abel, as recounted in the 4th chapter of Genesis.

### **Mishkan completed (1312 BCE)**

The vessels, tapestries, wall sections and other components of the Mishkan (the portable sanctuary or "Tabernacle" built under Moses' direction to house the Divine Presence during the Israelites' journeys through the desert) were completed on the 25th of Kislev in the year 2449 from creation (1312 BCE). The Mishkan was not assembled, however, until 3 months later, when, beginning on Adar 25 of that year, it was erected and taken down daily for a 7-day "training" period prior to its dedication on the 1st of Nissan. Our Sages tell us that the day of Kislev 25 was compensated 12 centuries later, when the Maccabees dedicated the Holy Temple on Kislev 25, 3622 (139 BCE -- see below).

### **Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)**

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil.

Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

## Kislev 26

### **2nd Day of Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)**

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

## Kislev 27

### **Flood rains cease (2105 BCE)**

The forty days and nights of rainfall which covered the face of earth with water in Noah's time ended on Kislev 27 of the year 1656 from creation (2105 BCE). The flood itself lasted a full year, as related in Genesis 6-8).

### **3rd Day of Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)**

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

## Kislev 28

### **4th Day of Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)**

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

## Kislev 29

### **5th Day of Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)**

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

## Tevet 1

### **Esther made Queen (362 BCE)**

"And Esther was taken to King Achashverosh, to his palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tevet, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won his favor and kindness more than all the virgins; he placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in Vashti's stead" (Book of Esther 2:16-17). This set the stage for the miracle of Purim six years later, on the 13th and 14th of Adar of the year 3405 from creation (356 BCE).

### **6th Day of Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)**

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

## Tevet 2

### **7th Day of Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)**

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

## Tevet 3

### **8th Day of Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)**

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

## Tevet 8

### **Torah translated into Greek (246 BCE)**

In a second attempt to translate the Torah into Greek (after an unsuccessful attempt 61 years earlier), the ruling Greek-Egyptian emperor Ptolemy gathered 72 Torah sages, had them sequestered in 72 separate rooms, and ordered them to each produce a translation. On the 8th of Tevet of the year 3515 from creation (246 BCE) they produced 72 corresponding translations, including identical changes in 13 places (where they each felt that a literal translation would constitute a corruption of the Torah's true meaning). This Greek rendition became known as the Septuagint, "of the seventy" (though later versions that carry this name are not believed to be true to the originals). Greek became a significant second language among Jews as a result of this translation. During Talmudic times, Tevet 8 was observed by some as a fast day, expressing the fear of the detrimental effect of the translation.

## Tevet 9

### **Passing of Ezra (313 BCE)**

Ezra, who led the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel after the Babylonian exile (423-353 BCE), oversaw the building of the Second Temple, canonized the 24 books of the Holy Scriptures ("bible") and, as head of the "Great Assembly" legislated a series of laws and practices (including formalized prayer) which left a strong imprint on Judaism to this very day, passed away on the 9th of Tevet of the year 3448 from creation (313 BCE -- exactly 1000 years after the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai). The passing of Ezra marked the end of the "Era of Prophecy."

## Tevet 10

### **Siege of Jerusalem (425 BCE)**

On the 10th of Tevet of the year 3336 from Creation (425 BCE), the armies of the Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Thirty months later -- on Tammuz 17, 3338 -- the city walls were breached, and on Av 9th of that year, the Holy Temple was destroyed. The Jewish people were exiled to Babylonia for 70 years.

## Tevet 14

### **Purim Hebron**

On this day, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob came to the rescue of the Jewish community of Hebron, after an evil Pasha imprisoned its leaders and threatened to sell the entire Jewish population into slavery.

The Sephardic community of Hebron would celebrate this day to mark the great miracle which occurred.

Among the special Purims celebrated by some Jewish communities on certain days of the year to commemorate a particular miracle, there is also a Purim which the Sephardic Jews of Hebron used to celebrate on the fourteenth day of Tevet. The historical details of this happening are hidden in the mists of the remote past. Our story is based on that event.

Many, many years ago, the old city of Hebron was inhabited by a community of Sephardic Jews who had been driven out of Spain and other Christian lands where Jews were cruelly oppressed.

One day two venerable Jews arrived in Hebron from Jerusalem, for the purpose of collecting money for *pidyon shvuyim* (obtaining the release of Jews from slave-traders).

The two emissaries met with the heads of the community and explained their important mission: to collect not less than five thousand piasters from the Hebron community for their lifesaving endeavor.

The heads of the community knew that, with a vigorous effort, they could manage to raise the required sum, but they claimed that “charity begins at home,” and they had to meet the needs of their own poor people first. So they “bargained” with the emissaries, who insisted, however, that nothing less than the five thousand piasters would be acceptable. And if the Hebron community refused, or were unable to raise the required

sum, the Almighty would show them where the necessary help would be available, and the Hebron Jews would lose the great merit of *pidyon shvuyim*, saving Jewish souls.

The arguments and entreaties of the emissaries proved in vain, and they left empty handed.

Now a new pasha came into power as ruler over Hebron, and he was a Jew-hater. He lost no time in introducing new edicts against the Jewish community, draining them of their hard-earned money. At first he began in a moderate manner, but very soon tired of this slow process, and looked for some way in which he could make a clean sweep and cash in all that the Jews possessed.

The pasha was an educated man, who mastered several languages in addition to Arabic, which was his native tongue. He read in history books accounts of how Christian rulers treated the Jews in their lands, and learned that, in some cases, they threw rabbis and Jewish leaders into prison until such time as their Jewish communities would ransom them for huge sums of money. Some Christian rulers, he found, even went to the extent of driving the Jews out of their country, robbing them of all their possessions.

This latter possibility appealed greatly to this Jew-hating pasha. He quickly issued a call to the rabbis and leaders of the Hebron Jewish community, and told them that he had put a tax on them, in the sum of fifty thousand piasters, which must be paid within the month. Failing which the Jewish leaders would have to pay with their lives, and the rest of the Jews would be sold as slaves! And, to make sure that the leaders would not run away, a few of them were immediately arrested and put in chains.

The pasha then sent the others home, warning them that they had better start at once to raise the demanded fifty thousand piasters. The entreaties of the rabbis and leaders that it was impossible for them, and in so short a time, to produce such a vast sum, fell on the deaf ears and stony heart of the cruel pasha, and they left in great despair.



The heads of the Jewish community now realized that they were being punished by G-d for having refused to find the five thousand piasters asked of them by the emissaries from Jerusalem, to save Jews from being sold as slaves. And now they were being taxed tenfold by the cruel pasha.

The rabbis immediately decreed that the Jewish community must fast and pray to the Almighty for salvation from their desperate situation. At the same time they decided to send a *pidyon* (literally, “ransom,” but in this case, an appeal) to the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were buried in the Cave of Machpelah which is situated in Hebron, to pray to the Almighty on their behalf and intercede for their children in their desperate hour of need.

The rabbis first went to the *mikvah*, and having purified and sanctified themselves, they wrote out their appeal to the Patriarchs on clean parchment, the same as is used for the holy Torah scrolls.

The problem, then, was the matter of the delivery of their appeal. How could it reach the holy Patriarchs? The Cave of Machpelah was then in Arab hands. The Muslims had built a house of worship above the cave, and Jews were not allowed to visit the holy graves. The Jews were allowed only to ascend a few steps of the building and pray at the site of their holy ancestors from a distance. And even for this “privilege” they had to pay the guard.

The only way they could think of was to bribe the guard that he should throw the *pidyon* into the cave, the entrance of which was sealed, so that even he could not enter it. This, they knew. But they also knew that there was a kind of “window” there, through which it would be possible to throw in the *pidyon*. For a sizeable bribe the guard agreed to do them this “favor,” and swore “by the beard of his prophet” that he would attend to the matter without delay.

The night before the due date for payment, the pasha could not sleep; his mind was full of the thought of all the money he would be getting from the Jews. The moon was full, and the following day he hoped his coffers would be equally full. The money-greedy pasha kept his treasures in an iron safe in his bedroom. Whenever he had a sleepless night, he would open this safe and take out a bag of gold coins and count them with great satisfaction. This night, too, being unable to fall asleep, he went to his iron safe and took out a large bag of money and began to count the glittering, golden coins. It totaled fifty thousand piasters exactly, and he gleefully thought that the next day he would be receiving exactly the same amount from the Jewish community.

With a happy smile he returned the bag to the safe, put the key of the safe under his pillow, and fell blissfully asleep.

Suddenly, he was startled to see three old men in his room. "Give us the bag with the fifty thousand piasters, if you value your life," they demanded. In fear and trembling, he got the bag of money and handed it over to them. And, as suddenly as they appeared, they vanished as if into thin air.

The pasha awoke in a cold sweat. What a terrible nightmare! He at once put his hand under his pillow, and was reassured to find the key just where he had left it. So, with a sigh of relief, he went back to sleep.

The following morning the pasha awoke, and completely forgot about his nightmare of the previous night. He did not forget, however, that this was the day when he would be receiving the fifty thousand piasters from the Hebron Jews.

The previous night had also been a sleepless night for all the Jews of Hebron. They had assembled in the *beit hamidrash*. They prayed with all their hearts that G-d would save them, as the "hour of reckoning" had come.

Early the following morning the pasha, accompanied by his soldiers, arrived at the *beit hamidrash*. They began banging on the door, crying: "Open the door for the pasha!"

As the *shammash* walked with faltering steps towards the door and was about to open it, he gazed with unbelieving eyes at a strange bag which lay in the basin in which the congregants washed their hands on entering the *beit hamidrash*. He could hardly lift the heavy bag, which he quickly handed to the head of the community. With unbelieving eyes they saw its precious contents.

The *shammash* rushed back to open the door for the pasha and his soldiers.

"I have come for the fifty thousand piasters which are due today," the pasha demanded.

"Here is your money," said the president of the community, handing over the bag to the pasha.

The pasha looked at the bag of money and could hardly believe the evidence of his eyes.

"Why, this is indeed my bag of gold!" he cried out in a shaky voice, his face turning pale.

"How did it get to you?" But he did not wait for a reply. He knew the answer from his dream. Slowly, he began: "I will tell you how you got the money. Your holy fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob rose from their graves in the Cave of Machpelah and brought it to you. I saw them in my dream. The Guardian of Israel does not sleep, and I beg you now to forgive me for my evil intentions. Pray for me, and I promise I will never again attempt to do you harm in any way."

So, as this particular miracle took place on the fourteenth day of Tevet, when the Jews of Hebron were saved from a dreadful catastrophe, they took upon themselves to celebrate every fourteenth day of Teveth as their Purim, which came to be known as

“Window Purim” in remembrance of the “window” in the Cave of Machpelah which had brought them the miraculous salvation.

*(Note: Now that the Cave of Machpelah has been freed from the Arabs, and Jews can enter the building above the cave, it is possible, still, to see the “window” in the first room, where the tombstones of Isaac and Rebecca are on view. The grated “window” marks the sealed entrance to the Cave, and Jews can now pray there during specific days throughout the year.)*

## Tevet 20

### **Passing of Maimonides (1204)**

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, Talmudist, Halachist, physician, philosopher and communal leader, known in the Jewish world by the acronym "Rambam" and to the world at large as "Maimonides", passed away in Egypt on the 20th of Tevet in 1204.

### **Printing of Talmud (1483)**

The first volume of the Babylonian Talmud, the tractate *Berachot*, was printed in Soncino, Italy, on the 20th of Tevet of the year 5244 from creation (1483)

## Tevet 21

### **Shimon Born (1567 BCE)**

Shimon, the second son of Jacob and Leah and the progenitor of the Israelite tribe of Shimon, was born on Tevet 21 (according to another opinion, on Tevet 28), of the year 2194 from creation (1567 BCE), nine years after Jacob's arrival in Charan.

Simeon (Shimon), the second son of Jacob and Leah, was born on Tevet 21 (according to another opinion, on Tevet 28), of the year 2194 from creation (1567 BCE), nine years after Jacob's arrival in Charan. Jacob was 86 at the time. (By another calculation, Simeon was born in 2193, when his father was 85.) According to *Seder Hadorot*, Simeon also died on this date, at the age of 120, seventy-five years after Jacob's family relocated to Egypt.

Simeon and his younger brother Levi were the most volatile of Jacob's sons. It was they who (age 14 and 13 at the time) killed the inhabitants of [Shechem](#) in response to the rape of their sister Dinah, and who led the brothers' [plotting against Joseph](#). To separate the two, Joseph ordered that Simeon be held as a "hostage" in Egypt until the brothers would bring Benjamin to him. Simeon and Levi were rebuked by Jacob on his deathbed, though he only cursed their "[anger](#)" and "wrath," not their persons or even their actions. Jacob decreed that they be "divided up . . . scattered in Israel": they were the only two tribes not allotted a distinct territory in the Land of Israel. (The tribe of Levi was assigned to serve in the Holy Temple, and were given 48 cities within the other tribes' territories, while the tribe of Simeon became itinerant schoolteachers, and received their portion in the land within the territory of Judah.)

Simeon had six sons—Yemuel, Yamin, Ohad, Yachin, Tzochar, and Saul "the son of the Canaanitess." According to one *midrash*, "the Canaanitess" is Dinah, who refused to leave the home of Shechem until Simeon promised to marry her. A year after the exodus from Egypt, Simeon's descendents numbered 59,300 heads of households (i.e., adult males between the ages of 20 and 60), but they were greatly diminished by the [Peor incident](#); on the eve of the children of Israel's entry into the Holy Land 40 years later, only five of the six Simeonite families survived, with a total population of 22,200 heads of households.

## Tevet 28

### **Birth and Passing of Shimon (1567-1447 BCE)**

According to sources cited in *Seder Hadorot*, Tevet 28 is both the birthday and the day of passing of Shimon the son of Jacob; other sources place the date as Tevet 21. (See the entry for [Tevet 21](#)).

### **Sadducees ejected from Sanhedrin (81 BCE)**

Shimon ben Shetach successfully completed the expulsion of the Sadducees (a sect which denied the Oral Torah and the authority of the Sages) who had dominated the Sanhedrin (Supreme Court),

replacing them with his Torah-loyal Pharisaic disciples, on the 28th of Tevet of the year 3680 from creation (81 BCE).

## Shevat 1

### **Moses Repeats the Torah**

On the first of Shevat of the year 2488 from creation Moses convened the Jewish people and began the 37-day "review of the Torah" contained in the Book of Deuteronomy, which he concluded on the day of his passing on Adar 7 of that year.

## Shevat 8

### **End of the "Elders Era" (1228 BCE)**

The last of the Elders (*z'keinim*) who were contemporaries of Joshua and outlived him, passed away in the year 2533 after creation. They were part of the chain of Torah transmission as listed at the beginning of Ethics of the Fathers: "Moses received the Torah from Sinai and gave it over to Joshua. Joshua gave it over to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets..."

In ancient times, this day was marked as a fast day.

## Shevat 20

### **Asher born (1562 BCE)**

Asher, the son of Jacob, was born on the 20th of Shevat of the year 2199 from creation (1562 BCE). According to some accounts, this is also the date of his passing.

## Shevat 23

### **War on Benjamin (1188 BCE)**

Armies of the Tribes of Israel converged upon the tribe of Benjamin in the aftermath of the "Concubine at Givah" incident, in a war which nearly brought about the extinction of the Benjaminites (as related in the [Book of Judges](#), chapters 19-21).

## Shevat 24

### **Zachariah's Prophecy (351 BCE)**

"On the 24th day of the 11th month, which is the month of Shevat, in the second year of the reign of Darius, the word of G-d came to Zachariah the son of Berechiah the son of Ido the prophet, saying:

'...I will return to Jerusalem in mercy, my house will be built within her...and the Lord shall yet console Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem.'" (Zechariah 1:7-17)

This was two years before the completion of the 2nd Temple on the 3rd of Adar, 3412 (349 BCE).

## Shevat 28

### **Hashmonean Holiday (2nd century BCE)**

On Shevat 28 (134 BCE?), Antiochus V abandoned his siege of Jerusalem and his plans for the city's destruction. This day was observed as a holiday in Hashmonean times. (Megilat Taanit)

## Adar 1

### **Plague of Darkness (1313 BCE)**

The 9th plague to strike the Egyptians for their refusal to release the Children of Israel from slavery - - a thick darkness that blanketed the land so that "no man saw his fellow, and no man could move from his place" (Exodus 10:23) -- commenced on the 1st of Adar, six weeks before the Exodus.

## Adar 3

### **2nd Temple Completed (349 BCE)**

The joyous dedication of the second Holy Temple (*Beit HaMikdash*) on the site of the 1st Temple in Jerusalem, was celebrated on the 3rd of Adar of the year 3412 from creation (349 BCE), after four years of work.

The First Temple, built by King Solomon in 833 BCE, was destroyed by the Babylonians in 423 BCE. At that time, the prophet Jeremiah prophesied: "Thus says the L-rd: After seventy years for Babylon will I visit you... and return you to this place." In 371 the Persian emperor Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Judah and rebuild the Temple, but the construction was halted the next year when the Samaritans persuaded Cyrus to withdraw permission. Achashverosh II (of Purim fame) upheld the moratorium. Only in 353 -- exactly 70 years after the destruction -- did the building of the Temple resume under Darius II.

## Adar 5

### **Moses' Last Day of Leadership (1273 BCE)**

Moses passed away on the 7th of Adar. Following G-d's instruction that Joshua should succeed him and lead the Jewish nation into the Land of Israel, Moses transferred leadership duties to Joshua on the day before he passed away. Thus the fifth day of Adar was the last day of Moses' leadership.

## Adar 6

### **Moses Completes the Torah (1273 BCE)**

Moses completed the book of Deuteronomy, concluding his review of the Torah which he began several weeks earlier, on the 1st of Shevat. He then wrote down the completed Five Books of Moses, word for word, as dictated to him by G-d. This scroll of the Torah was put into the Holy Ark, next to the Tablets of Testimony.

## Adar 7

### **Moses' Birth & Passing (1393 and 1273 BCE)**

Moses was born in Egypt on the 7th of Adar of the year 2368 from creation (1393 BCE) and passed away on his 120th birthday -- Adar 7, 2488 (1273 BCE)

## Adar 9

### **First Torah Dispute (1st century CE)**

The schools of Shammai and Hillel for the very first time disagreed regarding a case of Jewish law. This occurred around the turn of the 1st century. In the ensuing generations, the schools argued regarding many different laws, until the law was established according to the teachings of the "House of Hillel" -- with the exception of a few instances. According to tradition, following the arrival of the Moshiach the law will follow the rulings of the House of Shammai.

All throughout, the members of the two schools maintained friendly relations with each other.

## Adar 12

### **Herod's Temple Dedicated (11 BCE)**

After 334 years, the 2nd Holy Temple in Jerusalem (see "Today in Jewish History" for Adar 3) was in disrepair. In the year 19 BCE, King Herod I floated the idea of rebuilding and renovating the Temple. Though many Jews were wary of Herod's motives, the renovation was completed eight years later. The new structure was magnificent, causing the Talmud to state: "He who has not seen Herod's edifice has not seen a magnificent edifice!"



## Adar 13

### **War Against Persian Jew-haters (356 BCE)**

On the 13th of Adar of the year 3405 from creation (356 BCE), battles were fought throughout the Persian Empire between the Jews and those seeking to kill them in accordance with the decree issued by King Achashveirosh 11 months earlier. (Achashveirosh never rescinded that decree; but after the hanging of Haman on Nissan 16 of the previous year, and Queen Esther's pleading on behalf of her people, he agreed to issue a second decree authorizing the Jews to defend themselves against those seeking to kill them.) 75,000 enemies were killed on that day, and 500 in the capital, Shushan, including Haman's ten sons (Parshandata, Dalfon, Aspata, Porata, Adalia, Aridata, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizata), whose bodies were subsequently hanged. The Jews did not take any of the possessions of the slain as booty, though authorized to do so by the king's decree. (The Book of Esther, chapter 9).

### **Maccabee victory (135 BCE)**

The Maccabees defeated the Syrian General Nicanor in a battle fought four years after the Maccabee's liberation of the Holy Land and the miracle of Chanukah.

## Adar 14

### **Moses' Brit (1393 BCE)**

Moses was born on the 7th of Adar of the year 2368 from creation (1393 BCE); accordingly, Adar 14 was the 8th day of his life and the day on which he was circumcised in accordance with the Divine command to Abraham.

### **Purim Victory Celebrated (356 BCE)**

The festival of Purim celebrates the salvation of the Jewish people from Haman's plot "to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day."

The events of Purim extended over a period of several years, culminating in the victory celebrations of Adar 14-15 of 356 BCE. Below is a timeline of the major events. For the detailed story, see the Book of Esther and The Story of Purim

#### **Event**

#### **Date**

Achashveirosh ascends the throne of Persia

369 BCE

Achashveirosh's 180-day feast; Queen Vashti executed	366 BCE
Esther becomes queen	Tevet, 362 BCE
Haman casts lots to choose date for Jews' annihilation	Nissan, 357 BCE
Royal decree ordering killing of all Jews	Nissan 13, 357 BCE
Mordechai calls on Jews to repent; 3-day fast ordered by Esther	Nissan 14-16, 357 BCE
Esther goes to Achashveirosh; hosts 1st wine party with Achashveirosh and Haman	Nissan 16, 357 BCE
Esther's 2nd wine party; Haman's downfall and hanging	Nissan 17, 357 BCE
Second decree issued by Achashveirosh, empowering the Jews to defend themselves	Sivan 23, 357 BCE
Battles fought throughout the empire against those seeking to kill the Jews; Haman's ten sons killed	Adar 13, 356 BCE
Purim celebrations everywhere, except Shushan where 2nd day of battles are fought	<b>Adar 14, 356 BCE</b>
Purim celebration in Shushan	Adar 15, 356 BCE
Megillah written by Esther and Mordechai; Festival of Purim instituted for all generations	355 BCE

## Adar 15

### **Purim Victory Celebrated in Shushan (356 BCE)**

The battles fought between the Jews and their enemies, which took place on Adar 13 throughout the Persian empire (see "[Today in Jewish History](#)" for that date), continued for two days -- Adar 13 and 14 -- in the capital city of Shushan, where there were a greater number of Jew haters. Thus the

victory celebrations in Shushan were held on the 15th of Adar, and the observance of the festival of Purim was instituted for that day in Shushan and all walled cities. (See [Laws and Customs](#) below).

## Laws and Customs

### **Shushan Purim**

In cities that are surrounded by a wall dating from the days of Joshua (13th century BCE) -- a prominent example is the city of Jerusalem -- the festival of Purim is observed on the 15th of Adar (instead of the 14th), in commemoration of the fact that in the ancient walled city of Shushan, the first Purim was celebrated on this day

## Adar 16

### **Rebuilding of Jerusalem Wall Begun (c. 41 CE)**

Agrippa I, appointed by the Roman Emperor to rule over Judea, was pious and kind to his subjects. During his reign, the Jews began to prosper and live comfortably. The Sages of the time accorded him great respect.

Agrippa I started construction to repair, broaden and heighten the walls around Jerusalem. The Romans, wary of the Jews' rising prosperity, placed many obstacles in his way. Nonetheless, the wall was completed, though the finished product was not as magnificent as originally planned.

The 16th of Adar, the day when the construction commenced, was instituted to be a joyous day.

## Adar 17

### **Torah Sages Escape (c. 75 BCE)**

In the year 91 BCE, Alexander Yannai of the Hasmonean family succeeded his brother Yehuda Aristobulus to the throne of Judea. Alexander Yannai was a Sadducee who virulently persecuted the Pharisees. At one point during his bloody reign, following a victory he scored on a battlefield, he invited all the Torah scholars for a celebratory feast. During this feast he was slighted by one of the guests, which led him to execute all the Torah scholars in attendance.

A few of the sages managed to escape to the town of Sulukus in Syria. There, too, they encountered anti-Semitic enemies who murdered many of the exiled sages. The handful of surviving Torah scholars went in to hiding, finding refuge in the home of an individual named Zevadai. On the night of the 17th of Adar they escaped the hostile city of Sulukus.

Eventually these surviving scholars revived Torah Judaism. The date they escaped the clutches of death was established as a day of celebration.

## Adar 19

### **Israel Secures Ein Gedi (1949)**

Following the War of Independence, Israel needed to secure its borders against the hostile Arab nations which surrounded it. Ein Gedi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea, was secured on Sunday, March 20, 1949.

## Adar 22

### **Earthquake Saves Jews (1430)**

The church and the government of Rome set Wednesday, March 6, 1430, as the day when all the Jews of Rome must convert or face death. On that day a great earthquake shook Rome and many of the archbishops and priests who conceived the decree were killed. Following the earthquake, Pope Martin V annulled the decree.

## Adar 23

### **Mishkan assembled; 7 "days of training" (1312 BCE)**

The Children of Israel began building the "Mishkan" (also called the "Tabernacle"--a portable sanctuary to house the Divine presence in their midst as they journeyed through the desert) on the 11th of Tishrei of the year 2449 from creation (1312 BCE) -- six months after their Exodus from Egypt, four months after the revelation at Sinai, and 80 days after their worship of the Golden Calf. The construction of the Mishkan, which followed a detailed set of instructions issued to Moses on Mount Sinai, lasted 74 days, and was completed on the 25th of Kislev; but the Divine command to erect the edifice came only three months later, on the 23rd of Adar, when Moses was instructed to begin a 7-day "training period."

During the week of Adar 23-29, the Mishkan was erected each morning and dismantled each evening; Moses served as the High Priest and initiated Aaron and his four sons into the priesthood. Then, on the "eighth day" -- the 1st of Nissan -- the Mishkan was "permanently" assembled (that is, put up to stand until the Divine command would come to journey on), Aaron and his sons assumed the priesthood, and the divine presence came to dwell in the Mishkan.

## Adar 25

### **Nebuchadnezzar died (397 BCE)**

Death of King Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian emperor who conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the first Holy Temple 26 years earlier, died on the 25th of Adar of the year 3364 from creation. (Jeremiah 52:31)

## Adar 27

### **Passing of Zedekiah (397 BCE)**

Zedekiah was the last king of the royal house of David to reign in the Holy Land. He ascended the throne in 434 BCE, after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia (to whom the kingdom of Judah was then subject) exiled King Jeconiah (Zedekiah's nephew) to Babylonia . In 425 BCE Zedekiah rebelled against Babylonian rule, and Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem (in Tevet 10 of that year); in the summer of 423 BCE the walls of Jerusalem were penetrated, the city conquered, the (first) Holy Temple destroyed, and the people of Judah exiled to Babylonia. Zedekiah tried escaping through a tunnel leading out of the city, but was captured; his sons were killed before his eyes, and then he was blinded. Zedekiah languished in the royal dungeon in Babylonia until Nebuchadnezzar's death in 397 BCE; Evil Meroduch -- Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor -- freed him (and his nephew Jeconiah) on the 27th of Adar, but Zedekiah died that same day.

## Adar 28

### **Decree Against Ritual Circumcision Rescinded (2nd century)**

In Talmudic times, Adar 28 used to be celebrated to commemorate the rescinding of a Roman decree against ritual circumcision, Torah study and keeping the Shabbat. The decree was revoked through the efforts of Rabbi Yehudah ben Shammai and his fellow rabbis. (Megillat Taanit, Rosh Hashanah 19a)

## Adar 29

### **Jews Commanded 1st Mitzvah (1313 BCE)**

Shortly before sundown on the 29th of Adar, G-d commanded Moses regarding the mitzvah of sanctifying the crescent new moon and establishing a lunar calendar. This is the first mitzvah the Jews were given as a nation.

Moses had difficulty envisaging the moon's appearance at the exact moment of its monthly rebirth. After the sun set, G-d showed Moses the crescent new moon of the new month of Nissan, showing him the precise dimensions of the moon at the moment the new month is to be consecrated.

For the generations that followed, each new month was ushered in when two witnesses testified before the *Sanhedrin* (rabbinic supreme court) that they had seen the *molad*, the new moon. In the 4th century CE, Hillel II foresaw that the Jews would no longer be able to follow a Sanhedrin-based calendar. So Hillel and his rabbinical court established the perpetual calendar which is followed today -- until Moshiach will come and reestablish the Sanhedrin.

Reference : [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org)