


Jewish Literacy #6

The Holidays: Hanukkah, Purim, Sukkot, Pesach & Shavuot

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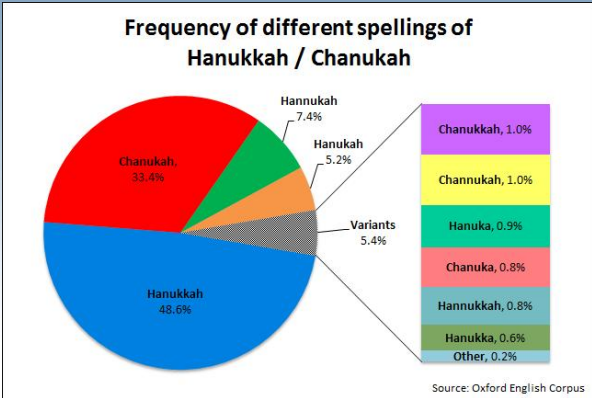
Hanukkah

How do you spell it?

- Chanukah or Hanukkah?

Hanukkah

**Frequency of different spellings of
Hanukkah / Chanukah**



Spelling	Percentage
Hanukkah	48.6%
Chanukah	33.4%
Hannukah	7.4%
Hanukah	5.2%
Variants	5.4%
Chanukkah	1.0%
Channukah	1.0%
Hanuka	0.9%
Chanuka	0.8%
Hannukkah	0.8%
Hanukka	0.6%
Other	0.2%

Source: Oxford English Corpus

Hanukkah

How do you spell it?

- Chanukah or Hanukkah?
- The answer is: חֲנֻכָּה
- Story - 167 BCE - Syrian/Greek rulers who would destroy Judaism. Summary given in Lotker, pages 75-76.
- Hanukkah means “dedication” referring to the re-dedication of the Temple.
- Without Hanukkah, there would be no Christmas (Judaism would have ended some 160 years before the birth of Jesus).
- Without the Christian Church, we would know much less about Hanukkah (the Church preserved the Books of Maccabees).

Hanukkah

- Menorah - 8 candles + shammes. Place from right to left and light from left to right. Menorah should be seen (as from a window). See Handbook, pp. 73-76,
- Latkes – for the oil
- Dreidle: Has the letters for the words nes gadol haya sham (“a great miracle happened there” – in Israel, nes gadol haya po, “a great miracle happened here”). Nun (get none), gimel (take all), hay (get half), shin (put one in). See Handbook pp. 77-78.
- Darkest moment of the year – most religions have a celebration of light
- Halley’s comet connection?
- Check out “Hanukkah Service for the Home” at [<http://scheinerman.net/judaism/Holidays/index.html>]

Hanukkah

- December dilemma discussion
- Deeper meanings
 - You have enough
 - What was impure can be made pure.
 - Note that we don’t celebrate the original dedication of the Temple, only it’s re-dedication that we observe.
- Repeat After Me! **“HANUKKAH IS NOT THE JEWISH CHRISTMAS!”**

Hanukkah Terms

Chanukah (Dedication)	הַחֲנוּכָה
Chanukat Habayit (Dedication of a home)	הַחֲנוּכַת הַבַּיִת
Chanukiah (Chanukah Menorah)	הַחֲנוּכִיָּה
Dreidel (Sevivon) (Top)	דְּרִידֵל (סְבִיבוֹן)
Gelt (Money)	גֵּעַלְט
Latke (Levivah, pl. Levivot) (Dedicated Pancake)	לֶאֱטָקֶע (לְבִיבֹת, לְבִיבֹת)
Menorah (Candelabra)	מְנוֹרָה
Ner Tamid (Continual Light)	נֵר תָּמִיד
Nes Gadol Hayah Sham (A Great Miracle Happened There)	נֵס גָּדוֹל הָיָה שָׁם
Sufganiyot (Jelly Donut)	סֻפְגָּנִיּוֹת

Hanukkah Images

Purim

- The Book of Esther: Story of Haman, Ahasuerus, Mordecai and Esther in Persia. Summary in Lotker, pages 76-77. -- Note that God is not mentioned: this is the way God acts in history in the post prophetic age.
- Name refers to the lots used to select the day of execution.
- In non-Christian lands, Purim is the big children's holiday.
- Customs:
 - Dressing in costumes
 - Reading the Megillah (cheering and booing)
 - Sending gifts to friends and the poor
 - Eating Hamantaschen [Handbook: pp. 366-367]
 - Getting drunk

Purim: Meanings and Lessons

- Deeper meaning: no matter how good you have it in the diaspora – even if a Jew can become queen – at the whim of a government official, all Jews can face death. We are never safe in the diaspora.
- Another lesson – never write off assimilated Jews like Esther and Mordecai
 - Esther from Ishtar (Babylonian goddess); Mordecai from Marduk (Babylonian god). Equivalent to Mary and Christopher
- Another lesson – whosoever would be God must destroy the Jews totally!

Purim Terms

<i>Gragger (Ra'ashan) (Noise maker)</i>	גראגער (רעשן)
<i>Hamantaschen (3 Corned Pastry)</i>	המון טאשן
<i>Megillah (pl. Megillot) (Scroll)</i>	מגילה (מגילות)
<i>Megillat Esther (Scroll of Esther)</i>	מגילת אסתר
<i>Mishlo'ach Mánot/ Shalachmones (To Send Gifts)</i>	משלוח מנות / שלח-מנות
<i>Purim</i>	פורים
<i>Purimspiel (Purim story) play</i>	פורים-שפיל
<i>Shabbat Zachor (The Sabbath of Remembrance)</i>	שבת זכור

Purim Images

The Pilgrimage Festivals

The Pilgrimage Festivals – the *Shalosh Regalim*;

- So called because on these holidays all men were required to go to the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Exodus 23: 14. “Three times you shall keep a feast to me in the year. 15. You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Pesach); you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, in the time appointed in the month Abib; for in it you came out from Egypt; and none shall appear before me empty; 16. And the Feast of Harvest (Shavuot), the first fruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering (Sukkot), which is at the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labors from the field. 17. Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God.”

Sukkot (Booths or Tabernacles)

- Joyful holiday immediately following the solemnity of the HHD
- Living in booths to commemorate the 40 years wandering and the need to live in huts during the harvest.
- Lev.: 23:39 “Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a feast to the Lord seven days; on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. 40. And you shall take on the first day the boughs of goodly trees (the etrog), branches of palm trees (lulav), and the boughs of thick trees (myrtle=hadaism), and willows (aravot) of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.

Sukkot (Booths or Tabernacles)

- The booths are a reminder of the fragility of life itself. [See handbook 65-72, 368-9, 406-7 for more info].
- Biblical reading is the Book of Ecclesiastes.
- On the last day of Sukkot, we pray for rain (now that the rainy season has begun).
 - These were among the most important prayers in Biblical times.
 - This may be the reason for the High Holy Days – to purify our souls so that our prayers for rain will be successful.
- The 8th day of Sukkot is a separate holiday, *Shemini Atzeret* (meaning “gathering on the eighth”), upon which *Simchat Torah* (the rejoicing of the Torah) is celebrated

Sukkot Terms

Aravah - willow	עֲרָבָה
Eitrog - citron	אֵתְרוֹג
Hadas - MYRTLE	הַדָּס
Hakafah (pl. Hakafot) PROCESSION	הַקָּפָה (הַקָּפוֹת)
Lulav - PALM / 4 SPECIES TOGETHER	לִילָב
Sukah (pl. Sukot) - HUT / SMALL SHELTER	סֻכָּה (סֻכוֹת)
Sukot	סֻכוֹת
Ushpizin - GUESTS	אֲשֻׁפִּיזִין

Pesach - Passover

- 8 day holiday commemorating the Exodus.
- Originally two holidays with separate biblical sources;
 - Ex. 23:15 "You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Chag HaMatzot); you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, in the time appointed in the month Abib; for in it you came out from Egypt" Ex 12:14. "And this day shall be to you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever. 15. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16. And in the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation to you; no kind of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, only that may be done by you. 17. And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for in this same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall you observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever.
 - Ex 34:25: " You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover (Chag Ha Pesach) be left to the morning."

Pesach - Passover

- Must eat matzah (at the Seder) and cannot eat chametz (for entire period).
- Haggadah read – it does not contain mention of Moses (concern that Moses would be worshipped as God).
- 90% of Jews attend a Seder (the word means "order")
- Come to our community Seder (2nd night, on Sunday, March 31, 2018) for a unique Seder experience.
- Deeper meaning – live as though you were personally freed from Egypt. Examine your life to see what you are slave to.

Pesach Terms

Afikoman [Hidden Matza]	אפיקומן	Makor [PLACES]	מכות
Arba Kosot [4 cups]	ארבע כוסות	Ma'ot Chittim [LIT. "MONEY FOR WHEAT"]	מעות חטים
Arba Kushiyot [4 QUESTIONS]	ארבע קושיות	Maror - [BITTER HERBS]	מרור
Arba'at Habanim [4 SOUS/עליונות]	ארבעת הבנים	Matzah	מצה
Bedikat Chametz [SEARCHED FOR CHAMETZ]	בדיקת חמץ	Pesach [PASSOVER]	פסח
Beitzah [EGG - VOLUME]	ביצה	Seder 'Ritual Meal'	סדר
Chametz [PROHIBITED ON PESACH]	חמץ	Shabbat Hagadol [SHABBAT before Pesach]	שבת הגדול
Charoset [CROPPED NUTS, WINE, APPLE...]	חרוסת	Zerua - שניאק בונה	זרוע
Doyenu [LIT. "It is enough for us"]	דוינו		
Haggadah (pl. Haggadot) Pesach Prayer (בס)	הגדה (הגדות)		
Karpas [GREEN VEG.]	כרפס		
Kos Eliyahu [SILVER CUP]	כוס אליהו		

Pesach Images



Pesach Images



Shavuot

- Means “weeks” – we count the days from Pesach to Shavuot (the counting of the Omer)
 - Also called the Festival of First Fruits (Chag Habikurim), and the Harvest Festival (Chag Hakatzir)
- Handbook pp. 89-91,
- According to the Talmud, Shavuot celebrates the receipt of the Torah on Sinai.
 - This is the reason for the freedom gained at Pesach
 - Every time Moses says “let my people go” he adds “to worship God”
- What exactly happened at Sinai is the questions that defines the various Jewish Movements.

Shavuot

- God binds Self to Law – the universe can be understood.
- Also celebrate the first harvest.
- Read the book of Ruth (themes of faith and harvest).
- Tradition of *Siyum Leil Shavuot* – an (almost) all night Torah study session.
- Confirmation traditionally celebrated on this day.
- We will read the *Aseret Hadibrot* (the 10 Utterances, commonly called the 10 Commandments).

Shavuot Terms

<i>Aseret Hadibrot</i>	10 Commandments	עשרת הדיברות
<i>Blintzes</i>		בלינצעס
Confirmation		
<i>Mitzvah</i>	COMMANDMENT	מצוה
Revelation		
Shavuot	Let "WEEKS"	שבועות
<i>Tikkun Leil Shavuot</i>		תיקון ליל שבועות
		Study session on Sukkot night

Shavuot Images

Shavuot



For More & For Next Week

- For lots of wonderful information about Judaism and the holidays, go to Rabbi Amy R. Scheinerman's web site <http://www.scheinerman.net/Judaism>.
- Next Class: The Bible. Read Lotker 14-17,
- Handbook look at 130-137, 147-148, 177-178, 279-280, 284-290, 312-315, 323-349, 419-421, 449-451, 468-469, 478-483, 486-496, 502, 528-531, 547-559