

# Circles:

Struggling to Maintain Jewish Tradition & Identity  
During the Holocaust

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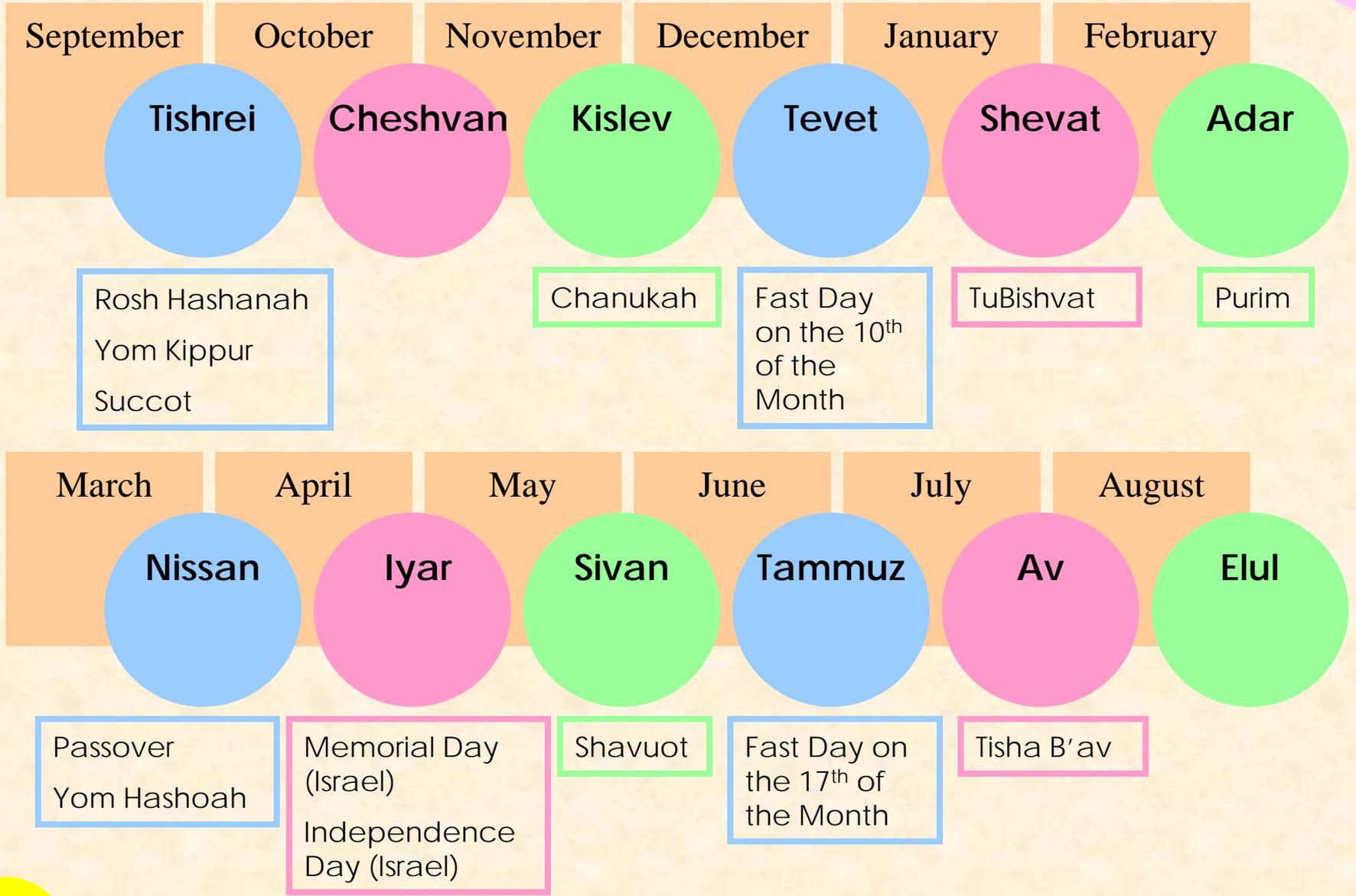
# Jewish Calendar and Life Cycle

- Bible and Hebrew Language
- Ancient Lunar Calendar
- Shabbat and Holidays
- Connection with the Land of Israel and its Seasons
- Multicultural Traditions



Jewish Lunar Calendar

# 12 Months of the Jewish Calendar



# Significance of Jewish Holidays Throughout the Ages

- Observing Holidays Related to a Historical Past
- Passing Down Traditions Over Generations
- Maintaining Personal, Religious and Cultural Identity
- Connection with Family and Community
- Sanctifying Life Despite Hardship and Danger

Warsaw, Poland; A Woman Lighting Sabbath Candles in a Refugee Shelter



# Chanukah

- Festival of Chanukah
- Victory of Light Over Darkness
- Significance of Observing Chanukah during the Holocaust



Westerbork Transit Camp in December, 1943

# Purim

- Festival of Purim
- Hope for Joy and Salvation
- *Zachor*: Commandment to Remember
- Significance of Observing Purim during the Holocaust
- Comparison of Haman and Hitler



Children During a Purim Celebration in the Lodz Ghetto



Silver Megillat Esther Holder from the Lodz Ghetto

# Passover

- Holiday of Passover
- Hope for Redemption from Slavery
- Praying for Freedom in a New Land
- Significance of Observing Passover during the Holocaust



Warsaw Ghetto; New Arrivals Celebrate the Passover Seder in a Shelter on 6 Leszno Street

# Questions Raised during the Holocaust: How Can We Remember and Celebrate?

- Dilemmas about risking one's life to observe Jewish customs
- Nazi policies and actions purposefully enacted on Jewish holidays
- Lack of food, religious articles, places of worship
- Loss of family and community to perform rituals
- Religious observance as spiritual resistance

Ludwigshafen, Germany;  
Jews Being Deported to  
Camp Gurs in October, 1940



# Jewish Life Cycle

- Circumcision (*Brit Milah*)
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Marriage
- Death (*Kaddish*)



Warsaw  
Ghetto,  
Poland;  
A Man in a  
Prayer Shawl  
at a  
Circumcision  
Ceremony



Ponar, Lithuania; Sarel Nechemya,  
About 14 Years Old, Saying  
Kaddish Immediately After  
Vilna is Liberated

# Jewish Life Cycle: Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Rite of Passage, Coming of Age Ceremony
- Transition from Childhood to Adulthood
- Responsibility for One's Actions
- Commitment to Tradition and Continuity



# Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremonies in the Holocaust

- Loss of Childhood
- Ceremony without Family, Community, Gifts, Parties



Jerzy Bader was born in April, 1930, in Kyjov, Czechoslovakia. In April, 1944, when Jerzy was 14, it was finally possible to mark the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah in the Theresienstadt ghetto. Pictured are gifts he received: a Tallit, a hand-sewn Tallit bag, and an album illustrated by Max Placek.

# Questions Raised during the Holocaust: How Do We Celebrate Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

- Dilemmas about risking one's life to uphold Jewish traditions
- Lack of religious articles and supplies
- Loss of family and community
- Religious observance as spiritual resistance



Warsaw, Poland; Recovering  
The "Oneg Shabbat" Archive,  
postwar

# Dialogue with the Past, Present and Future

- Tradition and Change in Observance Throughout the Ages
- Multicultural Melting Pot
- Interweaving Ancient and Modern Hebrew Language
- Jewish Holidays as National Holidays in the State of Israel
- Jewish Identity and Continuity in the Diaspora and in Israel

