

Welcome students to the course on World Religions: Concepts and

Practices - Part One. I am Cinderella Sequeira, assistant

professor in the Department of Philosophy, Dhempe College of

Arts and Science, Panjim, Goa. The title of the unit is Judaism

and the name of the module is significance of important

Festivals - Part one. In this module we will be looking at

the introduction to Jewish

festivals. The three important festivals are Rosh

Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover. The learning outcomes:

In this unit you will be able to acquaint oneself with important

Jewish festivals. Explore the significance of Jewish festivals

and understand them in their context. Understand and

appreciate festival and ritualistic practices, and open

one's horizons to foreign cultures and develop tolerance

and respect for various religions and promote religious

harmony. Introduction to important Jewish Festivals.

Jewish identity relies largely on religious practices. Rituals

mark the important stages in one's life and Jews celebrate

many festivals throughout the year to remember important

events in Jewish history. Worship of God is central to the

Jewish faith. Many Jews place great importance on prayer and

worship in the synagogue.

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot are important festivals

and are also called the high Holidays. In this unit or module we will be looking at Rosh

Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover. But remember that

Sukkot is also one of the most important Holidays or festivals

in the Jewish religion.

Rosh Hashanah

It is the birthday of the universe, the day God created

Adam and Eve and it is celebrated at the as the head of

the Jewish year. Candle lighting in the evenings, festive meals

with sweet delicacies during the night and day, prayer services

that include the sounding of the Ram's horn that is shofar on

both mornings and desisting from creative work. These are the important

activities that would take place on a Rosh Hashanah festival.

The Jewish New Year Rosh Hashanah actually means Head of

the Year. Just like the head controls the body, our

actions on Rosh Hashanah have a tremendous impact on the

rest of the year.

This is the shofar used during the festival of Rosh Hashanah.

It's made of a Ram's horn.

As we read in the Rosh Hashanah prayers each year on this day,

all inhabitants of the world pass before God like a flock of sheep and it is decreed in the heavenly court who shall live and who shall die, who shall be impoverished and who shall be enriched, who shall fall, and he shall rise. It is a day of prayer, a time to ask the Almighty to grant us a year of peace, prosperity and blessing.

But it is also a joyous day when the Jews proclaim God, King of the universe, the cabalist, each, that the continued existence of the universe depends on God's desire for a world, a desire that is renewed when the Jews accept his kingship he knew each year on Rosh Hashanah.

Now the first priority of this festival is to hear the shofar, that is the sound of the Ram's horn. The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is the sounding of the Shofar. The Ram's horn on both days of the holiday, except the first day is Shabbat, in which case the Jews blow the shofar only on the second day.

The first thirty blasts of the Shofar are blown following the Torah reading during morning services, and as many as 70 additional are blown during and immediately after the musaf service adding up to 100 blasts over the course of the Rosh Hashanah Morning services. Some Communities sound another round

of 30 blasts after service as

well. For someone who cannot come to the synagogue, the

Sofar may be heard the rest of the day.

The blowing of the shofar represents the trumpet blast

that is sounded at a King's

Coronation. It's plaintive cry also serves as a call

to repentance. The shofar itself recalls the Binding

of Isaac, an event that occurred on Rosh Hashanah,

in which our Ram took Isaac's place as an

offering to God.

Yom kippur Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year when one

is closest to God into the essence of once souls.

Yom Kippur means day of atonement as the verse states,

“for on this day he will forgive you to purify you, that you

be cleansed from all your sins

before God.” For nearly 26 hours, Jews afflict their souls, they

abstain from food and drink, they do not wash or apply lotions or

creams. Do not wear leather footwear and abstain from

marital relations. Instead they spend the day in the synagogue

praying for forgiveness.

Now the history of Yom Kippur. Why do we celebrate Yom Kippur?

Just months after the people of Israel left Egypt, they sinned by worshipping a Golden calf.

Moses ascended Mount Sinai and prayed to God for forgiveness or to forgive them.

After 240 days on the mountain, full divine favor was obtained. The day Moses came down, the mountain was to be known forever as the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur that here the people built the Tabernacle. That is a holy place that is built for God. That is a portable home for God that's called a Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle was a Center for prayers and sacrificial offerings. The service in the Tabernacle climaxed on Yom Kippur when the High Priest would perform, especially prescribed service. Highlights of the service included offering incense in the Holy of Holies where the Ark was housed and the lottery with the two goats, one of which was brought as a sacrifice, the other being sent out the wilderness. How Yom kippur is observed? No work is to be done on Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur the Jews afflict themselves by avoiding the following five actions, that is eating or drinking, wearing leather shoes, applying lotions or creams, washing or bathing, and engaging

in conjugal relations.

Beyond specific actions, Yom Kippur is dedicated to introspection, prayer and asking God for forgiveness.

Even during the breaks between services, it is appropriate to recite Psalms at every available moment. Let us look at the next festival, Pesach or Passover.

The eight day the Festival of Passover is celebrated in the early spring from the 15th to the 22nd of the Hebrew month of Nissan.

Passover or pesach commemorate the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. Pesach is observed by avoiding leaven, and highlighted by the Seder meals that include four cups of wine, eating matzah and bitter herbs, and retelling the story of the Exodus. In Hebrew, It is known as Pesach, which means to Pass-over, because God passed over the Jewish homes when killing the Egyptian First born on the very first Passover.

The Passover story in a nutshell. After many decades of slavery to the Egyptian Pharaohs, during which time the Israelites were subjected to backbreaking labor and too unbearable horrors, God saw the people's distress and sent Moses

to Pharaoh with a message “send forth my people, so they so that they may serve me.”

But despite numerous warnings, Pharaoh refused to heed God's command. God then sent upon Egypt 10 devastating plagues afflicting them and destroying everything from their livestock to their crops.

At the stroke of midnight, God visited the last of the 10 plagues. On the Egyptians, killing all their first born while doing so, God spared the children of Israel passing over their homes, hence the name of the holiday. Pharaoh's resistance was broken and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land. The Israelites left in such a hurry that the bread they baked as provisions for the way did not have time to rise. 600,000 adult males plus many more women and children left Egypt on that day and began the trek to Mount Sinai, and they're both as God's chosen people. In ancient times, the Passover observance included the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb Which was roasted and eaten on the first night of the holiday. This was the case until the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. In the 1st century, now the Passover is divided into

2 parts. The first 2 days and last two days. That is, the later commemorating the splitting of the Red Sea are full fledged Holidays. Holiday Candles are lit at night and Kiddush and sumptuous holiday meals are enjoyed as in on both nights and days.

The Jews don't go to work, drive write or switch on or off electric devices. They are permitted to cook and to carry outdoors. Chol Hamoed, semi-festive "intermediate days," when most forms of work are permitted.

Now important practices to commemorate the Passover are as follows.

Eating unleavened bread and eating bitter herbs to commemorate the bitter slavery endured by the Israelites drinking 4 cups of wine or grape juice are oil ring true celebrate the Israelites' new found freedom. The recitation of the Haggadah, liturgy that describes in detail the story of the exodus from Egypt. The Haggadah is the fulfillment of the Biblical Obligation to recount the future generations the story of the Exodus on the night of the Passover. These are my references.

Thank you.