

Celebration of Festival of Lights all over the World – by Jews

December 31, 2024

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Christmas full of happiness

and a

new Year filled with hope.

Let each one of us contribute towards

establishing a Democratic Government

in her/his country and let every person help

bring the magic of a life with dignity

in a democratic polity, for every citizen, including the poorest.

www.DiGiNews360.com wishes a wonderful holiday season for its Readers!

December 29, 2024: New York, Jerusalem and Wellington: Jews and their friends are celebrating the 8-day festival of Hanukkah by lighting candles in a nine-branched **candelabrum**, called a **menorah** or **hanukkiah**:

- On the first night (at sundown on Kislev 25), one candle is lit.
- On the second night, two candles are lit.
- This continues until all eight candles are lit on the final night.



The menorah lit in front of Independence Hall in the city of Philadelphia

(Reference: https://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/article_cdo/aid/6725653/jewish/10-Menorahs-Around-the-World-That-Make-Us-Proud-to-Be-Jewish.htm)



The Graduate Department of Religion, Vanderbilt University offers work toward the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in religion.

Starting in **New Zealand** and rapidly making its way west, the Chanukah lights were kindled around the world for the first time in 2024. Menorahs were lit at home by young and old, and in public places in front of crowds numbering in the thousands, spreading their light in every corner of the globe.

This year Chanukah—from nightfall on Wednesday, Dec. 25 until nightfall on Thursday, Jan. 2—marks 50 years since the first-ever public menorah was lit in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia in 1974 as a part of the worldwide Chanukah awareness campaign spearheaded by the Rebbe—**Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson. The Chanukah campaign brought the “Festival of Lights” into homes, hospitals, army bases and wherever else Jews find themselves, and the public menorah brought Chanukah’s message of the victory of light over darkness directly onto streets around the world.**

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson explained the idea on Dec. 15, 1973 at a **farbrengen**.

(A **farbrengen** is a meeting with a Rabbi. In this case, it was like a Press Conference.)

This year once again, **Chabad-Lubavitch** will make arrangements to get more than 15,000 **menorahs** lighted, in public squares around the world. The locations would include displays at iconic places like the **Plymouth Rock** in **Massachusetts**, the **Gateway Arch** in **St. Louis**, the **White House**, the **Eiffel Tower**, the **Brandenburg Gate** and the **Independence Hall** in **Philadelphia**—where it started 50 years ago. An additional 5,000 menorahs are expected to be mounted on vehicles this year

creating awareness in cities, towns and rural areas around the world about the holiday.

Moreover, Chabad will distribute more than 700,000 **menorahs**, 30,800,000 candles and 2,500,000 holiday guides (*in 13 languages*) around the world this Chanukah.

Vanderbilt University (VU) opened its gates for students in Fall 1875. Founded in 1873, It was named in honor of shipping and railroad magnate **Cornelius Vanderbilt**, who provided the school its initial \$1 million endowment, in 1873, in the hopes that his gift and the greater work of the university would help to heal the sectional wounds inflicted by the American Civil War (April 12, 1861 – May 26, 1865).

VU is a private research university in Nashville, Tennessee, United States. (<https://tinyurl.com/2uzep5h3>)



25th of December 2024: St Kilda Town Hall, Melbourne, Australia: CHANUKAH celebrations

(https://www.chabad.org/news/article_cdo/aid/6724499/jewish/Chanukah-2024-Begins-Around-the-World.htm)



December 25, 2024: Seoul, Korea: Mr. Philip Goldberg, the U.S. Ambassador to Korea lights the menorah

BALTIC STATES: In the three small Baltic countries of **Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania**, and, in the **Russian Exclave of Kaliningrad**, a large number of citizens came together for lighting the **menorahs** in **Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius and Kaliningrad** (*the 4 capitals, with Populations of 0.46 Mn; 0.61 Mn; 0.61 Mn and 0.71 in Metro, and, city respectively; 0.5 Mn and 1.03 Mn for Kaliningrad harbour city and oblast resp.*).

---- A BRIEF BACKGROUNDER on the Russian Exclave of KALININGRAD ----



The MAP.1. The Kaliningrad Exclave of Russia in the Baltic region

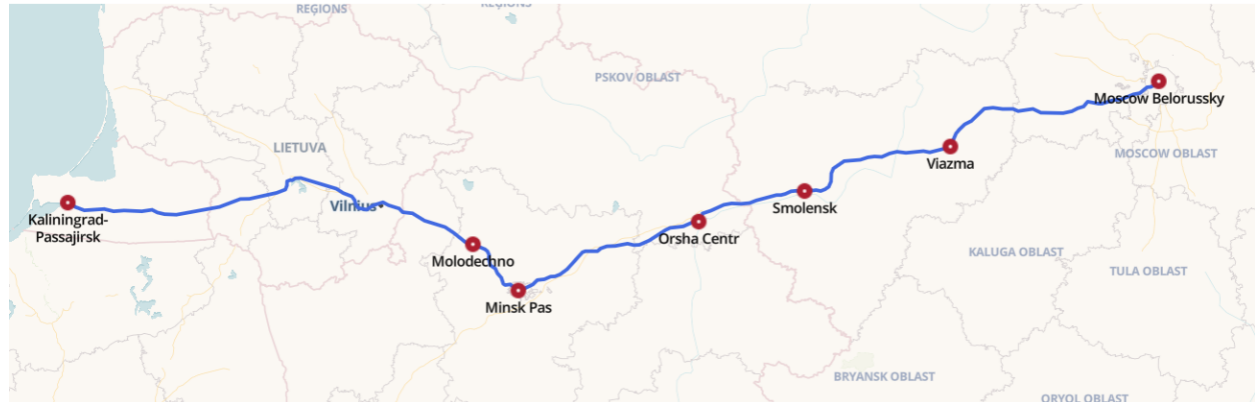
The Population of Kaliningrad (Estimate January 1, 2023): 498,000;

Population of Kaliningrad Oblast: 1.03 Mn.

Russia's Kaliningrad Exclave is of 5,800 square miles.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaliningrad_Oblas)

Kaliningrad Oblast is 140 miles from Russian mainland. Kaliningrad receives supplies by rail through Lithuania and Belarus. A 600-mile sea route connects Kaliningrad's port to St. Petersburg.



The MAP.2.: Russian Rail from **Moscow** to **Kaliningrad**: through **Belarus** and **Lithuania**

BALTIC STATES: Despite its extensive agriculture, the Baltic region remains more than one-third forested. Trees that adapt to the often poorly drained soil are common, such as birches and conifers. Among the animals that inhabit the region are elk, boar, roe deer, wolves, hares, and badgers.

In all three countries virtually everyone among the titular nationalities speaks the native tongue as their first language, which is remarkable in light of the massive Russian immigration to the Baltic States **after WW II**. Initially, attempts to Russify the Baltic peoples were overt, but later they were moderated as Russian immigration soared and the sheer weight of the immigrant numbers simply served to promote this objective in less-blattant ways.

Independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 allowed the Baltic states to place controls on immigration, and, in the decade following, the Russian presence in Baltic life diminished.



The MAP.3.: Baltic States and the Baltic SEA: KALININGRAD is wedged between **Lithuania** and **Poland**.

South-West: The dark green part between **Sweden** and **Germany** is DENMARK.
North-The dark green part is FINLAND.

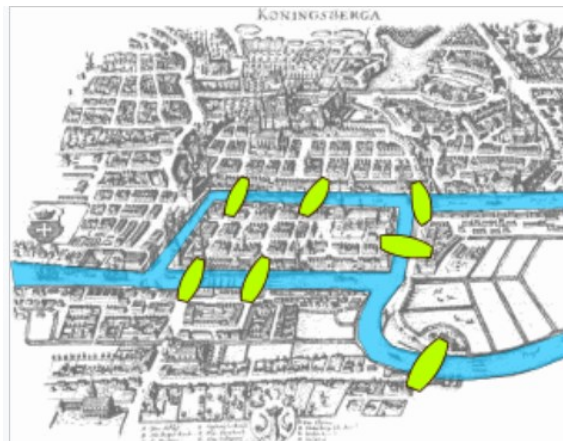
At the beginning of the 21st century, the titular nationalities of **Lithuania** and **Estonia** accounted for about 88% and 67% of the countries' populations, respectively, while ethnic **Latvians** made up just less than 60% of their nation's population. Around this time, Poles eclipsed Russians as the largest minority in **Lithuania**.

Urban dwellers constitute more than two-thirds of the region's population, with the largest cities being **Vilnius** and **Kaunas** in South-Eastern **Lithuania**, the **Latvian capital of Riga**, and **Tallinn** on the North-Western coast of **Estonia**.

---- A BACKGROUNDER on the SEVEN BRIDGES of Königsberg: GRAPH THEORY ----

Königsberg, now known as Kaliningrad, has gone through a great deal of turbulence. It was the Easternmost port of Germany and it was an important industrial town. The city was incorporated into the Kingdom of Poland after the Prussian Confederation rebelled against the Teutonic Knights. For many decades, the city remained as a Polish fief held by the Teutonic Order and the Duchy of Prussia.

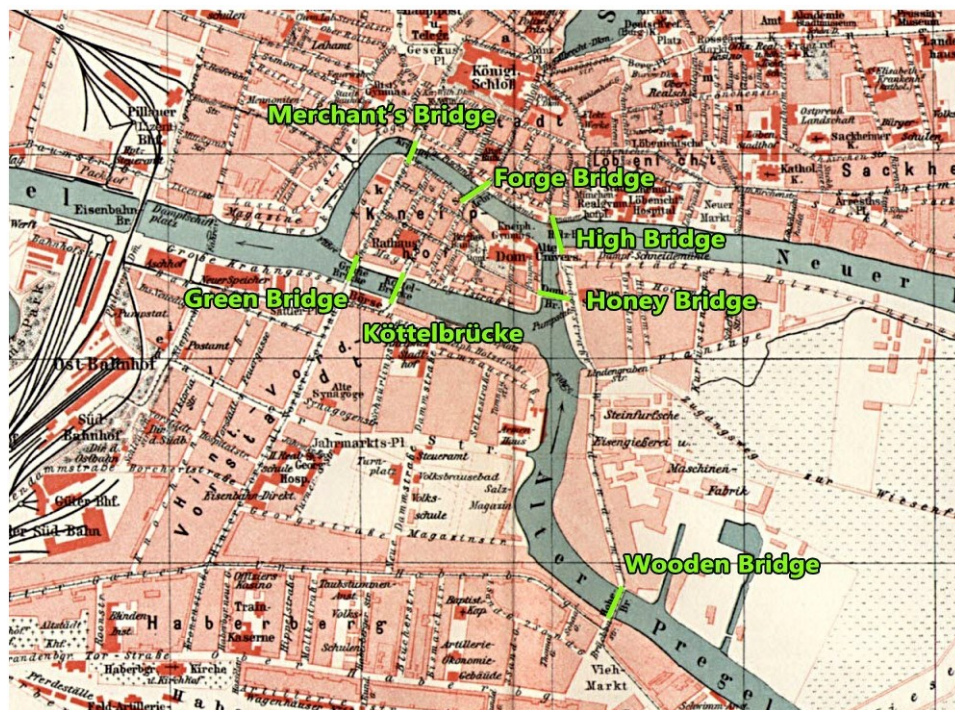
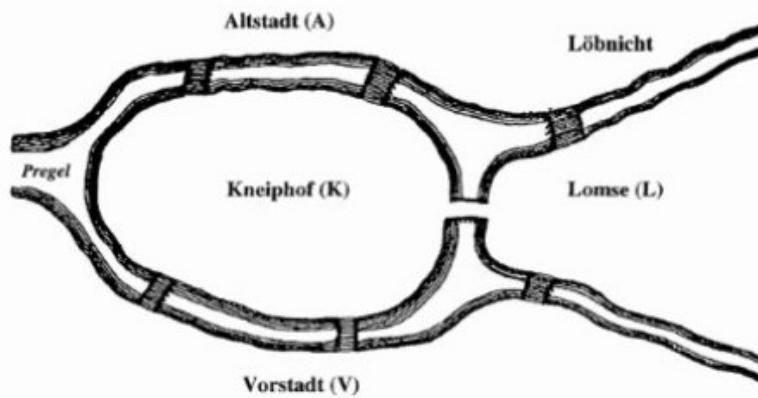
Socially, Königsberg was the center of **Polish Lutheranism during the Protestant Reformation**. It was home to the **University of Königsberg** (Albertina), which was considered one of the most prestigious universities in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.



*The MAP. 1. Königsberg in 1736 CE, showing the actual layout of the seven bridges, highlighting the river **Pregel** and the bridges*

The **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)** took over the city at the end of WW II. The changeover from Germany to USSR changed the character of **Königsberg**. About 400,000 Germans were expelled by USSR. They were replaced by Russian-speaking persons. The city's name was changed from **Königsberg** to **Kaliningrad**. After the Soviet Union collapsed, **Kaliningrad** became a **part of Russia**, making it an **exclave**, wedged between **Poland** and **Lithuania**.

The city of **Königsberg** in **Prussia** (renamed as **Kaliningrad, Russia** in **1945 CE**) was set on both sides of the **Pregel River**, and included two large islands—**Kneiphof** and **Lomse**. **There were seven bridges:**

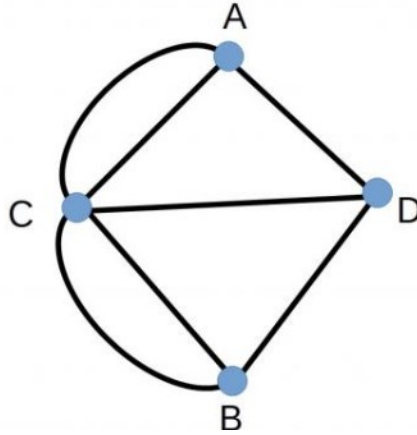


The MAP. 2. 1736 CE: **Königsberg**: The Names of Bridges

<https://www.amusingplanet.com/2018/08/the-seven-bridges-of-konigsberg.html>

AN INTERESTING PROBLEM: The problem was to devise a walk through **Königsberg** that would cross each of those bridges once and only once. When the **Mayor of Königsberg** could not find a solution, he requested the **Swiss Mathematician Leonhard Euler** (b.: 15 April 1707; d.: 18 September 1783) for help. At that time, Euler was in **St. Petersburg University**.

He worked out the problem by re-writing the problem as a graph, as follows:



Euler's Graph for 7 bridges of Königsberg

Euler represented each landmass by a vertex and each bridge as an edge, which joins two vertices.

Two parallel Edges AC: The **Merchant's** bridge and the **Forge** Bridge;

Two parallel Edges CB: The **Green** bridge and the **Kottelbrücke** Bridge;

Edge AD: The **High** Bridge;

Edge CD: The **Honey** Bridge;

Edge BD: The **Wooden** Bridge.

Vertex A: The **Altstadt** landmass;

Vertex C: **Kneiphof** (the central island);

Vertex B: The **Vorstadt** (Southern) landmass;

Vertex D: **Lomse** (the island on the East side)

Altstadt means "old town" or "historic city center." It refers to the original, often medieval, part of a city that was typically surrounded by walls.

Löbenicht (also spelled Löbnicht) was one of the three original settlements that made up the city of Königsberg, along with **Altstadt** and **Kneiphof** (the central island). It was considered the weakest of the three towns and is now part of the Leningradsky District of Kaliningrad, Russia.

Vorstadt translates to "suburb" or "suburban area" in German. It refers to an area outside the city center (Altstadt) but still closely connected to it and densely populated. Historically, Vorstadt areas were often located just outside the city walls.

Altstadt and **Löbnicht** (A) located on the North shore of the **Pregel**. **Vorstadt** (B) is located on the South shore. The two islands - **Kneiphof** and **Lomse** are vertices **C** and **D**.

In 1736, **Euler** proved that the problem had no solution. The difficulty, he faced, was the development of a suitable technique of analysis, and of subsequent tests that established this assertion with mathematical rigor. For developing a proof, **Euler** laid the foundations of **Graph Theory** and prefigured the idea of **Topology**. **Graph Theory proved to be useful to Computer Scientists of 20th century**.

-- A BACKGROUNDER on the KALININGRAD PORT on the **Baltic Sea** and OBLAST --
(Reference: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaliningrad>)

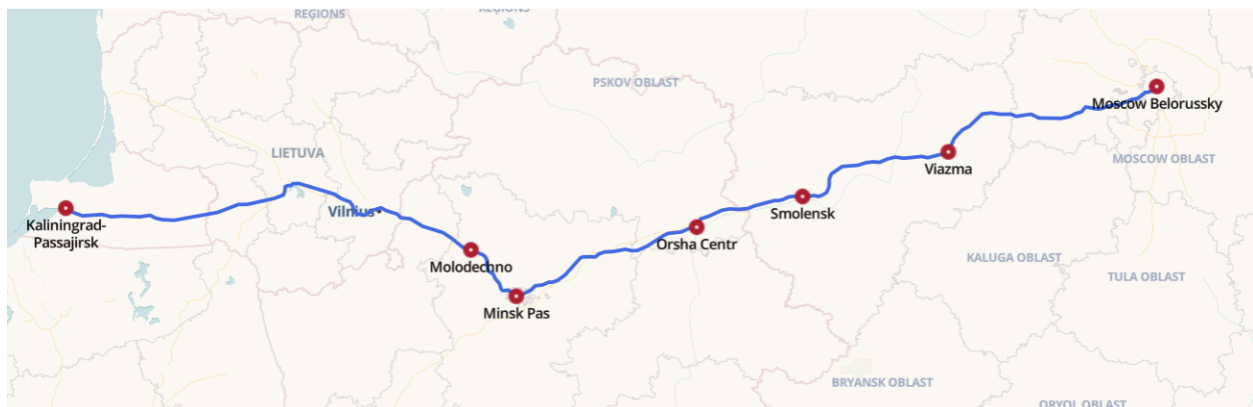
DATA: The Population of Kaliningrad (Estimate January 1, 2023): 498,000; Estimate (2020): 489,359; Estimate (January 2018): 475,056; Population (2010 Census): 431,402. The data shows that the city receives immigrants from the rest of Russia. Population of Kaliningrad Oblast: 1.03 Mn; Time zone: UTC+2.

Kaliningrad Exclave is of 5,800 square miles; Population Density: 1,900/Km².

A 600-mile sea route connects Kaliningrad's port to St. Petersburg.

The city is situated on the Pregolya River, at the head of the Vistula Lagoon on the Baltic Sea, and is the only ice-free Russian port on the Baltic Sea.

Kaliningrad Oblast is 140 miles from the **Russian mainland**. The Railway line, which connects Kaliningrad with Russian mainland, passes through **Lithuania** and **Belarus**. The city sits about 663 Km (412 mi) West of **Moscow**. A 600-mile sea route connects Kaliningrad's port to St. Petersburg.



*Russian Rail from **Moscow** to **Kaliningrad**: through **Belarus** and **Lithuania***
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaliningrad Oblas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaliningrad_Oblas))

A Brief HISTORY: Kaliningrad, known as Königsberg until 1946, is the largest city and administrative centre of Kaliningrad Oblast, a Russian exclave on the Baltic Sea. The city sits about 663 Km West of Moscow. Kaliningrad is the second-largest city in the Northwestern Federal District, after Saint Petersburg.

Kaliningrad is the largest city in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad Oblast, which is located on the Baltic Sea between Lithuania and Poland.

Location: Kaliningrad is situated on the Pregolya River, at the head of the Vistula Lagoon. It's the only ice-free Russian port on the Baltic Sea.

Economy: Kaliningrad has industries for fishing, engineering, lumber, machinery, and papermaking. The Government has established a Special Economic Zone for attracting investment to the Exclave.

Its population in 2020 was 489,359.

DEMOGRAPHICS: Königsberg itself had been founded in 1255 on the site of the ancient Old Prussian settlement Twangste by the Teutonic Knights during the Northern Crusades, and named Königsberg in honor of King Ottokar II of Bohemia.

USSR CHANGED THE CHARACTER OF THE CITY: In October 1945, the original German population fled or was expelled after the end of World War II, when the territory was annexed by the Soviet Union. Only Russian speaking persons and Lithuanians were permitted to stay back in the city. In October 1945, only about 5,000 Soviet civilians lived in the territory. Between October 1947 and October 1948, approximately 100,000 persons of German origin were forcibly moved to Germany, and by 1948 about 400,000 Soviet civilians had arrived in the Oblast.

A table of demographics after punishing every person of German origin, including children and women and sick, was as follows:

Ethnicity	total population	% of the population
Russians	351,186	87.4%
Ukrainians	16,053	4.0%
Belarusians	15,077	3.7%
Armenians	3,062	0.8%
Tatars	2,075	0.5%
Lithuanians	1,789	0.4%

Germans	1,676	0.4%
Polish	1,114	0.3%
Other ethnicities	10,041	2.5%
All	401,649	100.0%

Today the overwhelming majority of Kaliningrad's residents are Russians settled after 1945, and their descendants. A minority of the population are from other Slavic ethnic groups, including Belarusians and Ukrainians. Kaliningrad today is also home to small communities of Tatars, Germans, Armenians, Poles, and Lithuanians.

Central Europe and the areas of Prussia, Palestine and Mesopotamia have gone through forcible transfer of population of the kind that was done by USSR in KALININGRAD. In all these cases, traces of those cruelties remain in the form of a few thousand or more persons living in incompatible areas. The result is that even after a thousand years, violence based on a continuous basis may continue, based on age-old issues.

In the industrial age, Hitler tried to kill all the Jews, since the world could not get rid of age-old prejudices against the Jews. In 2,000 years, in spite of Renaissance, wide spread education, elimination of poverty and a way of living, that had never before been achieved by humanity in any large area, 7th October 2023 could happen. Neither UNO nor any other organization could intervene to stop the suffering of the civilians in Gaza. The Ivy-League universities, those who are going to build the world of tomorrow, have been shouting the 'River to Sea' slogans. In other words, they are unashamedly saying in these Temples of Learning that a genocide of Jews in Israel, many times more cruel as compared with the Holocaust of 1942-45 was their solution to the Palestine issue.

The world has 'spiritual leaders' in Iran, in Hezbollah of Lebanon and among the leaders of worshippers of every single religion, who are not preaching love and who are not asking for cleansing our minds and hearts of prejudices against other groups of human beings, but who are trying to make Atom Bombs or are trying to train terrorists, who can kill more children, who can rape more women and who can convert whole areas into new killing—fields of innocent civilians (or even of those human beings, they perceive to be not of their kind and therefore of being evil.)

www.DiGiNews360.com prays for grant of wisdom and good will, of humane milk of kindness in every one's heart and of a passion to make the world free from hatreds and prejudices, which have afflicted the humanity for thousands of years.

WE CAN HAVE A MUCH BETTER WORLD FOR EVERY ONE.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kaliningrad has been governed as the administrative centre of Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast, the westernmost oblast of Russia. As a major transport hub, with sea and river ports, the city is home to the headquarters of the Baltic Fleet of the Russian Navy, and is one of the larger industrial centres in Russia. Kaliningrad has been a major internal migration attraction in Russia over the past two decades and was one of the host cities of the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

HISTORY of the EIGHT-DAY FESTIVAL: In 168 BCE, Antiochus IV Epiphanes dispatched his troops to Jerusalem, resulting in the killing of thousands of people and the defilement of the revered Second Temple. According to historical records, an altar to Zeus was erected, and pigs were sacrificed within the sacred temple.

Mattathias, a Jewish priest, along with his five sons, spearheaded a significant uprising against Antiochus IV. Following Mattathias' demise, his son Judah Maccabee assumed leadership in the ongoing battle.

In 164 BCE, the Jewish people, led by Judah, managed to expel the Syrian monarchy from Jerusalem. Judah then instructed his followers to purify and renovate the Second Temple, recommitting it to their religious beliefs.



A reconstruction of the menorah of the Temple in Jerusalem, manufactured by the Temple Institute

They lit the menorah, a seven-candle candelabrum symbolizing knowledge and creation. The menorah was supposed to be kept lit, but they only had enough oil to keep it going for a day. symbolizing knowledge and creation.

Model of the tabernacle in Timna Valley Park, Israel

According to the Hebrew Bible, the tabernacle (literal meaning in Hebrew: 'residence, dwelling place'), also known as the Tent of the Congregation was the portable earthly dwelling of God used by the Israelites from the Exodus until the conquest of Canaan. Moses was instructed at Mount Sinai to construct and transport the tabernacle with the Israelites on their journey through the wilderness and their subsequent conquest of the Promised Land. After 440 years, Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem superseded it as the dwelling-place of God.

--- FESTIVALS of JEWS in 2025 ----

(Reference: <https://tinyurl.com/2r2estfn>)

Each of the festivals have a history, associated with them. For the festivals, described in the Old Testament of the Christian Bible or in the festivals of the modern age, one should know the story.

In the Classical Studies Department of every University, the Bible is the basis on which all religions, ancient or modern, are studied. These are places, where the history of every festival is studied.

Amy-Jill Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University. She is also an **Affiliate Faculty at the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations in Cambridge, UK.** Levine is the author of **The Misunderstood Jew** and has served as co-author of **The Meaning of the Bible: What the Jewish Scriptures and Christian Old Testament Can Teach Us.**

Levine points out the following:

- **The synagogue's canon ends with Second Chronicles, the Edict of King Cyrus of Persia saying, "okay, you Jews who were in Babylon: go back home to Judea, let whoever among you is able go up. Let him make *aliyah* [return up to Israel] and then go build a temple to God."**

- **Christian readers of the Old Testament are directed to the coming of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew, the next book in the Christian Bible.**

1. Purim: Begins sunset Thursday, March 13, 2025. Ends evening Friday, March 14, 2025. Work is generally avoided.

2. Passover: Begins sunset Saturday, April 12, 2025. Ends evening Sunday, April 20, 2025. According to traditional Jewish law, no work is permitted during the first two and last two days.

3. Lag BaOmer: Begins sunset Thursday, May 15, 2025. Ends evening Friday, May 16, 2025.

4. Shavuot: Begins sunset Sunday, June 1, 2025. Ends evening Tuesday, June 3, 2025. According to traditional Jewish law, no work is permitted.

5. Tisha B'Av: Begins sunset Saturday, August 2, 2025; Ends evening Sunday, August 3, 2025

6. Rosh Hashanah: Begins sunset Monday, September 22, 2025; Ends evening Wednesday, September 24, 2025. According to traditional Jewish law, no work is permitted.

7. Yom Kippur: Begins sunset Wednesday, October 1, 2025; Ends evening Thursday, October 2, 2025. According to traditional Jewish law, no work is permitted.

8. Sukkot: Begins sunset Monday, October 6, 2025; Ends evening Monday, October 13, 2025. According to traditional Jewish law, no work is permitted during the first two days.

9. Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah: Begins sunset Monday, October 13, 2025; Ends evening Wednesday, October 15, 2025. According to traditional Jewish law, no work is permitted.

10. Hanukkah: Begins sunset Sunday, December 14, 2025; Ends evening Monday, December 22, 2025.

11. Shabbat: Begins every Friday at sunset; Ends every Saturday evening

Modern holidays

12. Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day): Begins sunset Wednesday, April 23, 2025; Ends evening Thursday, April 24, 2025.

13. Yom Hazikaron (Israel's Memorial Day): Begins sunset Tuesday, April 29, 2025; Ends evening Wednesday, April 30, 2025.

14. Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day): Begins sunset Friday, May 2, 2025; Ends evening Saturday, May 3, 2025.

15. Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day): Begins sunset Sunday, May 25, 2025; Ends evening Monday, May 26, 2025.

---- A Brief NOTE on the TEMPLE INSTITUTE ----

The Temple Institute, known in Hebrew as Machon HaMikdash is an organization in Israel focusing on establishing the Third Temple. Its long-term aims are to build the third Temple in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount—the site occupied by the Dome of the Rock—and to reinstate korbanot and the other rites described in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish legal literature. It aspires to reach this goal through the study of the previous Temples' construction and rituals and through the development of Temple ritual objects, garments, and building plans suitable for immediate use in the event conditions permit the Temple's reconstruction.

It runs a museum in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. It was founded and is headed by **Rabbi Yisrael Ariel**. Its current director-general is **Dovid Shvartz**. The New York billionaire **Henry Swieca** has supported the Institute. The Israeli government has also provided funding.

(Reference: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Institute)
