

## Abstract

Jewish festivities make an important part of Jewish culture. Their form has long stabilized and become fixed through years. This thesis would ascertain the importance of these festivities within the community of the Czech Union of Jewish Students, The community comprises persons from fifteen to thirty-five years of age. During my research there were sixty one members. These youths gather to celebrate important feasts in the Jewish year, and sometimes even to celebrate together the weekly feast of Sabbath with the community of Moishe house, as I was allowed to witness. This work examines the feasts through the concept of "performance", concept known from Victor Turner and widely used by Richard Bauman. The research was conducted by the means of empirical evaluation, structured dialogues, questionnaires. The study concludes the performance of these festivities shows signs of the so called "emergent quality", a term invented by Richard Bauman. This creative aspect is an important way of expressing and confirming the identity of the given community. It also reflects and reacts to the actual facets of the community, and so keeps its culture "alive". This work shows that celebrating the feasts with the Union may provide Jewish persons who do not belong to any strict division of Judaism with a sense of community they would otherwise miss.

The thesis also examines the ability of these festivities to create a structure of time, separating the ordinary time from the liminal space of the festive hours. The members can understand time cyclically through this space, even though the passage of time in Torah is linear. In case of the celebration of more recent, historical feasts, different attitudes towards their importance, reflecting different backgrounds of the individuals, are also noted.

Keywords: Jewish festivals, performance, Jewish identity, community, emerging quality of performance, modern festivals, Czech Union of Jewish Students, Czech Republic