

3. Judaism

Beliefs & Practices

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JUDAISM - INTRO

KEY FACTS

Oldest **monotheistic** religion in the world. The Jews are God's chosen people, bound to him by **Covenants** (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David)

Abraham's Covenant introduced **circumcision** as a sign of being God's people. The **Mosaic Covenant** is the most important one, as through Moses, Jews received laws from God (**mitzvots**) to follow. These show their faithfulness and belonging to God in diet, dress, observance of the Sabbath, prayer. - Jewish **rites of passage** include Circumcision, Bar/ Bat Mitzvah, Marriage and Funeral ceremonies.

Judaism is the **mother of Christianity and Islam**, and gave the West ethical and moral laws, that have **shaped Western civilisation**.

BELIEFS ABOUT GOD IN JUDAISM

The God of Judaism is also the **God of Theism**: unique, omnipotent, omniscient, transcendent, non-material Spirit. This understanding of God in fact comes from the Jewish experience of God. But for Jews, the 4 characteristics below are the most important ones.

GOD IS ONE

There is no other God but God. This is the first Commandment. This belief is called **monotheism** (mono = one, theism – god). Jews show this belief by:

1. saying the **Shema** prayer in the morning and in the evening. The Shema says: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One". It emphasises the idea that God is one, and single.
2. not speaking **God's name** out of respect – instead, they write **G-d**, and only refer to him as the LORD. Jews only refer to God by his characteristic eg Father, Master of the Universe, Law-giver, Judge.
3. not having any **images of God** - to show God is unique, and cannot be worshipped through anything in creation.

GOD IS THE CREATOR

- The Torah begins with the Book of **Genesis**, of how God created the world.
- Jews believe that God created everything that exists, and humans were created in His image, and given a task, to care for the earth
- Orthodox Jews take the creation stories as literally true. Reform Jews interpret them symbolically - **God is the reason why anything exists**, and continues to exist, but Genesis is not a scientific account.
- Jews do not work on the **Sabbath**, so as to **appreciate Creation**, and remember God as the Creator. **Rosh Hashanah** (Jewish New Year) specifically celebrates the creation of the world.



TYPES OF JEWS

Most Jews in Europe have descended either from **Ashkenazi Jews**, in Germany and Eastern Europe, or from **Sephardic Jews**, in Spain and Portugal. Jews from N.Africa and the Middle East are called the **Mizrachim Jews**. These different groups of Jews may have different traditions, because of their different cultures (eg Ashkenazi eat potato latkes on Hanukah, Sephardic Jews eat jam doughnuts).

Secular Jews - do not believe in God or in the Jewish religion, but think of themselves as Jewish by birth and by culture. They may be circumcised, eat Jewish foods and celebrate Jewish festivals, but in general, they follow modern fashion and modern ways of life. They do not study Torah or attend synagogue.

Reform Jews - are modern Jews, who have adapted the traditional ways to modern culture. They choose which mitzvots to follow. They may not believe in a Messiah, or in an afterlife. For them, the important thing is living a good life now on earth. They do not interpret the Bible literally, but in a more symbolic and metaphorical way.

Orthodox Jews - are traditional Jews. Their way of life has changed very little from ancient days. They interpret the Torah literally (like Christian fundamentalists do) and strictly keep the Biblical mitzvots about dress, observance of Sabbath. They dedicate a lot of time to studying Torah, have close-knit, family orientated communities, but are isolated from many aspects of the modern world (no TV, internet, little modern education, few job opportunities). There is strict separation between the sexes.



GOD AS LAWGIVER

- Jews believe God gave them rules and guidance about how to live, in the **613 laws (Mitzvots) given through Moses**. Some laws are **moral laws**, to build a just and fair society. These show God's love for his people.
- Other laws allow Jews to **show their faithfulness** by living in a particular way that pleases God- eg to follow dietary laws, ritual cleanliness laws, laws about dress, keeping the Sabbath.



GOD AS JUDGE

The Torah teaches that God hates sin and evil, and he **punishes sin** But God also **rewards good deeds**, and that He is merciful and compassionate, **forgives** evil and sin, and does not punish humans as much as they might deserve.

On Judgement Day, or at the end of life, Jews believe that **God will judge humans** on all their actions.

After death, there are no more chances to say sorry to God, so after the Jewish New Year, there is a period of **10 days**, before the great feast of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), when Jews can repent and make up for any sins committed.

THE SHEKINAH



SHEKINAH

The Shekinah is **God's presence on earth**.

It is referred to as "she", to distinguish it from God himself, who is believed to be completely transcendent. It shows something of God's glory.

Jews experienced this during the Exodus - when they left Egypt, God's Presence accompanied them as a **pillar of cloud** by day, and as a **pillar of fire** by night, guiding them on their way, and resting **over the Temple**, with its tablets of Stone (inside the Ark of the Covenant)

- no-one except Moses would enter the Temple when the Shekinah was over it.

Later, when King Solomon built a permanent stone Temple in the Land of Israel, the Shekinah was believed to dwell within it. After the Temple was destroyed, and Jews went into exile, the **Shekinah was believed to have gone into exile** with them.

Today, the Shekinah can be experienced by Jews, when they feel or recognise God's presence - in **experiences of truth, love, justice, beauty, wholeness and awe**.

Importance of the Shekinah

- as an experience of God, the Shekinah strengthens faith in God, and His presence brings hope
- the Shekinah shows God's faithfulness, as it remained with the Jews, even in exile
- it connect Jews' experience of God today, with experinece of Jews in Exodus times, when the experience of the Shekinah was first seen and felt.

THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES



"Messiah", or Meshiach, in Hebrew, means "the Anointed One".

Kings and prophets were anointed in Biblical times, and this showed that they had a special task or mission from God to fulfil.



THE MESSIAH

ORTHODOX BELIEFS:

Orthodox jews believe and expect the coming of a Messiah.

- the Messiah will be a descendant of King David
- he will be a political ruler, who will bring world peace - a Messianic Age of peace
- he will rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem
- he will judge humanity and bring the world to its end.
- Maimonides included belief in the coming of the Messiah as one of the 13 Principles of Jewish faith.

REFORM BELIEFS:

Reform Jews have varying degrees of belief in the coming of a Messiah.

- some believe that a Messiah will come, but that he will not be a supernatural figure, **only a normal person**, though an inspirational role model.
- other Reform Jews **do not believe in a Messiah at all**. They believe that making the world a place of peace and prosperity is our responsibility. They say that there have been **too many false Messiahs**, so belief in a Messiah is dangerous and unhelpful.
- the **Torah does not speak of the Messiah in clear terms**. There is no indication of who the Messiah might be, or when he will come, if he does. Perhaps he will come when the world needs him most, because the world has fallen so much into sin, or because the world is so good.

COVENANTS

A Covenant is a **life-changing commitment**, of one person to another. Marriage is a covenant. So is the relationship between God and His people. It involves promises of responsibility and faithfulness on both sides.

God made Covenants with his people, and even with His whole creation, through Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. They differed, only in what God expected His people to do.

COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Abraham: God PROMISES Abram

1. Abram will be blessed: he have many **descendants**
2. He and his descendants will have a **land** of their own
3. Abram's **name** will be great. He will be the father of many nations.
4. God will be faithful to all Abram's descendants, and be their God.

In return, Abram must remain faithful to God, and live blamelessly.

The **SIGN** that God has made this covenant and these promises, is that

1. Abram's name (Man of Greatness) is changed to **Abraham** (Father of many nations).
2. The sign, for Abraham's descendants to remember this Covenant by, is the sign of **CIRCUMCISION**.

All Jewish men must be circumcised in their foreskin, and so carry this sign in their flesh, which is life-long. Babies must be circumcised at 8 days old, before a minyan (group) of 10 Jewish men.

STORY OF MOSES

Born to Jewish parents, Moses was put in a basket on the river, to try and save him from Pharaoh's edict to have all Jewish baby boys killed. He was fished out by Pharaoh's daughter, who brought him up as her own son, a Prince of Egypt.

Moses found work in the Sinai desert as a shepherd. While out on the mountain one day, he saw a bush burning ,but not burning up. God spoke to him from the bush, telling him to bring the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt, to worship him on that mountain.

The Hebrews were chased by Pharaoh, up to the shore of the Red Sea. There the sea parted for them, to cross, but the Egyptians were drowned. In the desert, God looked after them, by providing manna from heaven, and water from a rock.

When he was a man, Moses saw a slave-driver beating a Hebrew slave. He killed the man, and then realised he had to flee from Egypt, as the killing showed disloyalty to the Egyptians.

Moses had to strike Egypt with 10 plagues, before Pharaoh finally gave in. The 10th plague, Death of the Firstborn, killed Pharaoh's own son. The Hebrews were spared, if they put a lamb's blood on the doorposts.

At the Burning Bush, God revealed to Moses that he was to be known as "God of your Fathers" and "I am Who I am". This mysterious name shows God is beyond human definition, or human names. God is pure Being,

Covenant with Noah: God promises He will **never destroy creation** or humanity again by water. A **rainbow** is the sign and remembrance of this promise.

In return, Noah must offer worship and sacrifice to God, and live free of sin.



STORY OF ABRAHAM

Abram was already a very old man when God appeared to him, and told him to leave his family for "*land that He would show him*"

Abram and his wife Sarah were unable to have children

originally, his name was Abram, which means "man of greatness".

Abraham wandered as a nomad for 25 years, believing God would fulfil His promises

Abraham had a child by his slave-girl, as Sarah his wife did not think it was possible for her to bear children. He was called Ishmael - Father of the Arabs

God appeared to Abraham as three men, and repeated his promises about Abraham having a son with Sarah. Sarah laughed - so God said the son would be called Isaac - laughter.



WHAT MADE MOSES THE GREATEST JEWISH PROPHET?

- Maimonides calls Moses "**the father of all the prophets**" (Moshe Rabbenu) in his 13 Principles of Faith.
- God chose Moses to free the Hebrews out of Egypt
- Moses was given **God's power** to perform miracles: 10 plagues, parting of the Red Sea, gave the Hebrews water and manna in the desert.
- Moses was given **the Commandments** by God, which are the basis of Jewish religion
- Moses **spoke with God "face to face...as a man speaks with his friend"**. Moses' intimacy with God was unique.
- Moses **led the Jewish people to the Promised Land**, fulfilling the promises made by God to Abraham.

COVENANT WITH MOSES

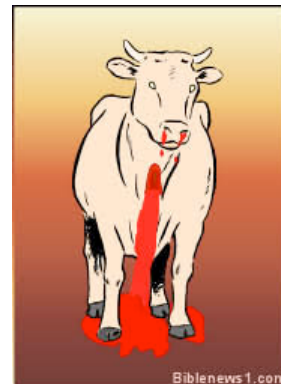
God called Moses up to Mount Horeb, in Sinai. There God spoke to Moses in a thick cloud.

Moses came back down the mountain after 40 days. He had in his arms the **Two Tablets of the Ten Commandments**, and in his mind, all the **other 603 laws** that God wanted his people to follow (= **Written Torah**) - and how they were to be followed (= **Oral Torah/ Mishnah**).

Moses sacrificed a bull, and sprinkled **the bull's blood** on all the people, as a **sign** that they, on their part, were ready to commit to following them.



WE WILL OBEY !



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THE WRITTEN TORAH: THE 613 MITZVOTS

The Torah contains all the mitzvots Jews must follow, so as to find closeness to God. Following the mitzvots is a sign of belonging to God's chosen people.

10 of these mitzvots are the Ten Commandments. They are moral laws. Other mitzvots are religious laws, or laws about hygiene, marriage, food, keeping Sabbath etc.

1 One *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me.*

UNIQUENESS of GOD

2's abused *Do not take the name of the Lord in vain.*

3 my knees *Keep the Sabbath Day holy* **HOLINESS of GOD**

4 front door *Honour your Father and Mother* **FAMILY**

5's alive *Do not kill* **SAVING LIFE**

sexy 6 *Do not commit adultery* **FAMILY**

sticky 7 *Do not steal* **JUSTICE**

8 tell tales *Do not bear false witness* **TRUTH**

9 don't pine *Do not covet your neighbour's wife* **BEING**

CONTENT

10 don't whine *Do not covet your neighbour's goods* **BEING**

CONTENT

} 3 about God
} 7 about others

These commandments protect VALUES that are held in greatest important in Judaism - as in most civilised societies: family, truth, justice, saving life, being content, & respect of God.

NB Protestant Bibles have 4 commandments about God, and 6 about others (join the last two up together)

IMPORTANCE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- Basis for civilised societies - eg UK law: murder, theft is illegal. Not difficult to keep for a person of good will.
- These laws protect important values & rights eg truth, justice, family, right to property, right to life.
- Way for Jews to show their faithfulness to God & the Covenant

BUT some may be difficult to keep eg.

- Difficult not to covet in materialistic society, with media advertising.
- Difficult not to work on the Sabbath, if you have shift work.
- Difficult to keep God's name holy, if routine expression OMG
- For a non-religious person, laws about God are not relevant
- If living in multi-faith society with many different religions that have different "names" for God, difficult to know which name of God should not be used.

THE ORAL TORAH (MISHNAH) & TALMUD

The mitzvots of the Written Torah may not always be clear how to follow. So Moses also taught how they should be kept. Moses' teaching was remembered orally, and called the **Oral Torah**. It was eventually written down as the **Mishnah**.

eg Written Torah Mitzvot = "Keep the Sabbath day holy"... and "The Sabbath is a Day of Rest...do no work". But what is work?

Mishnah/ Oral Torah explains this - no work means you can't carry, can't tear, can't build, can't travel etc

Rabbis spent a lot of time discussing Moses' teachings. Their discussions were written down as the **TALMUD**. The Talmud gives further understanding about the mitzvots.

MITZVAH DAY

Since 2008. A day of doing mitzvots as good deeds, rather than out of duty or as laws.

- *Care for others eg visit elderly
- * Care for the poor eg feed homeless
- * Care for the environment eg compost waste

Part of "tikkun olam" - the attitude that Jews are called by God to help heal and perfect the world.

3 motivations for doing good deeds:

Tikkun olam - to do good deeds for the healing & perfecting of the world

Tzedakah - to do good deeds because it is right and just to do so. A "tzadik", is a righteous man.

Gemulit Hasadim - to do good deeds for no return, but purely out of kindness.



PIKUACH NEFESH

Definition:

Pikuach Nefesh is setting aside certain mitzvots, for the sake of saving life.



SAVE LIFE

Examples of using P.Nefesh:

Mitzvot: To keep the Sabbath day rest, by not working, travelling, switching on electricals, carrying etc.

Situation: someone has fallen ill and needs to go to hospital.

P.Nefesh would allow the Sabbath mitzvots to be broken, so that an ambulance could be called, the person's belongings carried etc - whatever is necessary, to save their life

Example 2:

Mitzvots say that a dead body must not be disturbed. P.Nefesh says that it is allowable to disturb the body to obtain their organs for organ donation, to save another person's life (assuming the deceased had wanted to do this).

3 mitzvots must NEVER be broken, even for pikuach nefesh:

- not to worship another God
- not to kill
- not to commit adultery/ incest



Jewish beliefs about Free Will



Are Jews free, if they feel obliged to keep all the Mitzvots?

Are they free, if they believe God created everything as it should be?

Jews believe that God made humans beings with free will.

Proof from the Torah:

- God gave Adam and Eve the command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. So that means **they had a choice** about doing it - free will.
- When Moses gave the Commandments to the Jews on Mount Sinai, he told them to **"choose" to keep them** (=life) or to refuse to keep them (=curse, death)
- God made human beings **"in his image"** ie. rational and free, not like animals who have to follow their animal natures.



Proof from sin:

- Jews believe that they can be judged for their sins. But also that **they can repent** and ask God for forgiveness - in the 10 day fast of Yom Kippur. This proves they had free will (to sin) and free will (to reject sin).

Masters of our own House

Jews believe we have complete control, or mastery over ourselves. We are **"Masters of our own house"**.

- This is what a Rabbi told the man who wanted to know how to deal with his bad thoughts. He said he had the choice about letting them in - as he is Master of his own house.
- Jews do not believe in **the Devil, or in Original Sin.**
- Jews believe we have equal inclinations to choose between good or bad - we are not more corrupted towards evil.

God as Creator

Some people say that because God created everything, & knows everything that will happen, there is no freedom. Things are what they are. If you are sick, it is your fate, because that is what God planned.

- but Jews reply that God also created medicine: just because things have been made in a certain way, doesn't mean that we don't have **the freedom to change them.**

The Afterlife

Olam Ha Ba

"This world is like a lobby before the Olam Ha-Ba. Prepare yourself in the lobby so that you may enter the banquet hall." (Mishnah)

In general, Jews don't focus too much on the afterlife, but on living a good life, in this life.

Living a good life, will also be a preparation for the life to come.

There is only one afterlife, which is to be **in the Presence of God**. (no separate heaven or hell). Those who prepared themselves well, will enjoy it. Those who didn't, or lived badly, won't.



Who resurrects? Everybody, or only some?

Do they resurrect during the Messianic age, or after?

Is there a Day of Judgement?

Does the body resurrect?

Does the soul live on forever? Or just memories of their good deeds?

Doing good actions in this life is more important than thinking about what might happen after death.

LIFE

The teachings in the Torah about the afterlife are not very clear.

- there are no specific teachings about the afterlife
- there are some references to a place called "**Sheol**" - a shadowy place, which literally means "going down".

Maimonides believed that the soul that lives on spiritually after death in a second life, in the presence of God.

- everybody is resurrected for Judgment Day. Those who are judged worthy, are given an additional life: Olam Ha Ba. The others, die a second death, and do not live any more.

Nahmanides believed the same, the resurrection would only be for those who receive Olam Ha Ba straight away (no second death).

Rabbis disagreed with each other if **everybody** would be resurrected, or just a few. If it would be during or after the **Messianic Age**. And if there would be a **Day of Judgement**, or if that happened every year on Rosh Hashanah.

Orthodox Jews DO believe in the Resurrection.

- some think it includes the resurrection of the body. Therefore they would not cremate the body, or donate organs.

- Others think it is just the soul, which "rests under the wings of the Shekinah".



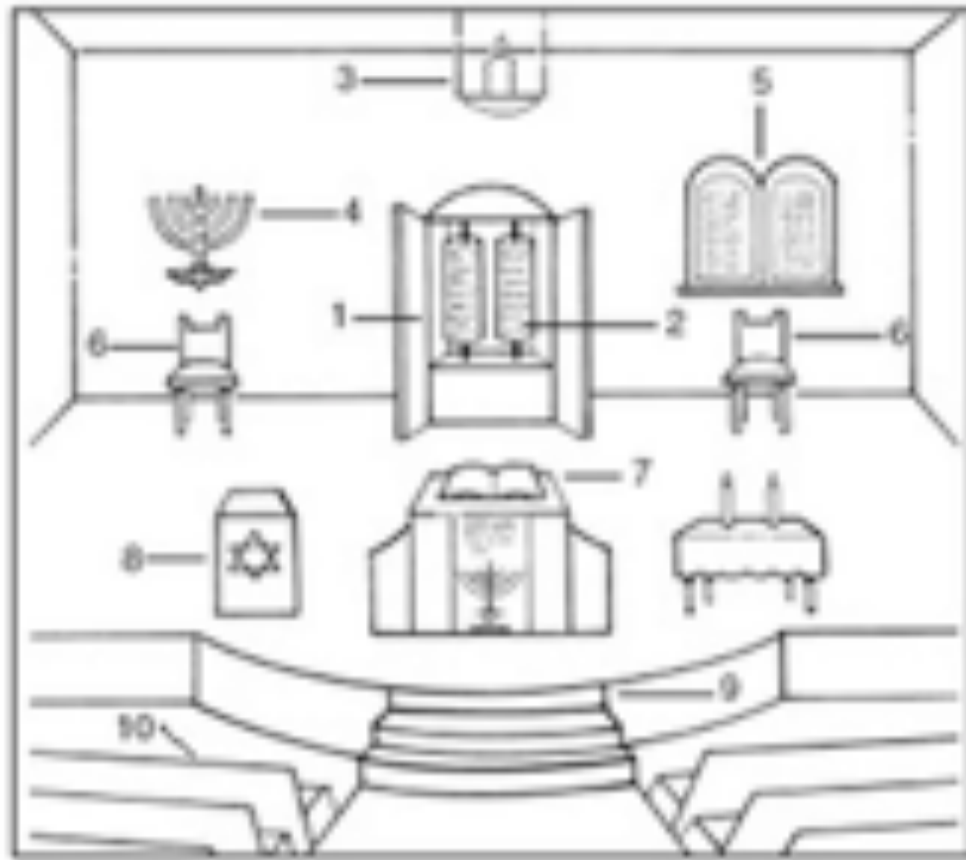
Reform Jews DON'T believe in the Resurrection

- some do not believe that there is a **soul** that lives on. References to resurrection have been removed from Reform Jewish prayer books.

- some think that what lives on, is just the **memory of the good deeds** they have done.

- some believe in **reincarnation**: that God gives some souls a second chance at life, to fulfil all the mitzvots.

The Synagogue: Features & Function



Ner tamid: the eternal flame, perpetually burning, as it did in the Jerusalem Temple

Aron Hadokesh: the Ark (cupboard) where the **Torah scrolls** are kept.

Bimah: the platform where the Torah is read, or chanted, by a cantor. Faces the congregation.
There may be a **separate platform** for the Rabbi's sermon.

Menorah: a reminder of the 7 stick candelabra in the Jerusalem Temple.

Star of David: a symbol of Judaism, usually displayed on the wall.

Tablet of Ten Commandments: usually displayed on the wall.

Men vs. Women's seating area: in an Orthodox synagogue, women and men sit apart, with a dividing partition, or above in the gallery.

A synagogue is a reminder of **the Temple in Jerusalem**, which was destroyed by the Romans in AD70. Its destruction meant that Jews no longer had anywhere to go to perform the sacrifices stipulated in the Torah. Instead of the sacrifices, the Rabbis declared that following the Torah would be the central part of the religion.

Each synagogue faces Jerusalem. It contains reminders of the Temple eg menorah, Ark with the Torah scrolls, ner tamid.

Prayer takes place 3 times a day in the synagogue, like the 3x sacrifices used to be done in the Temple.

Only some Jews attend daily prayer (a **minyan of 10 men** must be present).

Most Jews only go to the Synagogue once a week, for the Shabbat service. That is when the whole Jewish community gets together.

Functions of a Synagogue

Beit Tefilah - House of Prayer

Beit Knesset - House of Assembly (meetings, community discussions)

Beit Midrash - House of Study

Jews often call a synagogue "Shul" (school, as a place of study)

- **provide basic religious education:** and prepare for bar mitzvah, learn hebrew
- **social events:** bar/ bat mitzvahs, wedding receptions, parties. Kosher meals provided.
- **provide meals:** eg weekly lunch club (kosher meals)
- **activity clubs:** , support groups for people with disabilities, advice groups, care and shopping services
- **talks and lectures**

Differences in Orthodox Synagogues

- men & women sit separately
- Rabbis only male
- minyan only for men
- women do not touch Torah or read from it, or lead any prayers
- only chanting, not instruments

Worship in the Synagogue

3 choices of Shabbat service: Fri evening, Sat morning (longest), or Sat afternoon.

- led by a Rabbi.
- **readings** from the Torah, the Haftorah (prophets)
- **a sermon** by the Rabbi
- **prayers:** Shema, Amidah, Kiddush blessing at the end
- music: Orthodox only have chanting; Reform use instruments & prerecorded singing.

THE PRAYERS

Shema: the central declaration of faith. "*Hear, O Israel. The Lord Your God. The Lord is One.*"

Amidah:

- the core prayer in every worship service.
- It is a series of 18 blessings, including praise of God, thanksgiving and requests.
- It is said by each individual standing, in silence, with movements (3 steps forwards & back (entering/ leaving God's presence), bowing down, bowing to both sides, standing on tiptoes, like angels.
- Reform Jews leave out references to resurrection or to the Messiah.

Kiddush: blessing said over a cup of wine after the service

Importance of praying in a synagogue

- Jews are a covenant people, coming together shows that God chose them as a whole people, not as individuals. Synagogue has better focus on prayer, as more religious atmosphere & rituals, no distractions eg as at home. Music and Rabbi's sermon help to explain Torah teachings.

Problems synagogues face today:

- dwindling, ageing congregations. Can't afford to pay for a rabbi. Synagogue may need to be sold.
- if fewer synagogues, harder for old people to get to.
- vandalism and anti-semitic attacks on synagogues

Prayer and Worship

Importance of Prayer at Home

For Jews, prayer is **part of everyday life**. It deepens their covenant relationship with God. Jews pray individually, but also in community, when a *minyan* has to be present. A whole section of the Talmud (Rabbi's teachings) is about prayer.

Prayer has **3 main functions for Jews**: to praise God, to thank God, to ask requests of God.

- **SHEMA** is the key prayer. "*Hear, O Israel, the Lord Our God. The Lord is One*".
- **MODEH ANI** is prayed on waking up, "*I offer you thanks, for you have mercifully restored my soul within me. Your faithfulness is great.*" and they also pray on going to bed
- **BLESSINGS** are said for almost every activity or event eg seeing something unusual (a rainbow), for an event (something good or bad happens), and **before performing a mitzvot**, for success.

Most prayers can be found in the **siddur** (Jewish prayer book) and the prayers are often said in **Hebrew**, as this is considered to be the holy language.

Religious Clothing (worn in synagogue worship)

Tallit: the prayer shawl, with 4 corners. On each corner are tzitzits: 5 knots and 8 strings that symbolise the 613 commandments given by God to Moses, that Jews must obey. The tallit is worn in synagogue services.

- there are 2 types: a **larger one**, worn as a prayer shawl, or a **smaller one** worn all day by Orthodox Jews under their everyday clothes.



Tefillin: are boxes with leather straps. One tefillin is bound to the upper arm, pointing to the heart, & wrapped down to the middle finger. The other is placed on the forehead. The boxes contain texts from the Torah. They are worn by boys and men during synagogue prayer, after their Bar Mitzvah. They remind Jews to **serve God with their mind** with good thoughts, and with **their heart** by acts of compassion and kindness.

Kippah/ Yarmulke/ Skull cap: is worn by Jewish men. It represents the authority of God over them, and a sign of respect for God. Jews disagree on whether it should be worn all the time, or just during prayer.

Religious Items in the Home

Mezuzah: on front doorposts of house, and every door except bathroom. Top points inside the room. Contains a kosher animal skin parchment scroll with Shema written on it. Jews touch it and kiss their fingers - reminds them to live according to words of Shema.



Pushke box: In every home, there is a box for charity donations. Giving to the poor is not considered an act of kindness in Judaism, but an act of justice - tzedakah - it is what the poor are owed.



The Chumash: is extracts from the Torah, that should be read each day - most Jews cannot afford a handwritten Torah. Some extracts may be read for special events eg if someone is sick.

Siddur: prayer book with prayers for home, Shabbat, and for synagogue eg the Shema, the Amidah, the Modeh Ani. It also contains extracts from the Talmud, which are the Rabbis explanations of Torah texts. Considered holy, must not touch the floor, or quickly picked up and kissed.



Should women be allowed to wear religious clothing?

YES

Torah: speaks of wearing a tallit, but does not mention it must only be worn by men.

Talmud: gives an example of a woman wearing a tefillin (a daughter of King Saul)

Mainmonides: said women could wear one if they wanted to, but must not say a blessing when doing so.

Women should be free to do whatever men can do.

NO:

Mishnah (Rabbis commentary on Torah): says women (slaves and minors) are "exempt" from saying the Shema and wearing a tefillin.

The Torah forbids men and women from wearing clothing normally associated with the other gender. Tefillin and tallit are traditionally for males.

Women are drawing attention to themselves by doing something normally not done.



SHABBAT



The Importance of the Shabbat

It is a duty and an obligation for Jews to observe the Sabbath rest because of the 3rd commandment:

"Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy"

This involves 2 actions: **remembering** the meaning of the Sabbath, and **keeping it holy** by taking part in prayer, and resting.

The Meaning of the Shabbat:

1. Celebrates Creation of the World in 6 preceding days
2. Celebrates God's rest, and gift of rest to humans
3. Celebrates God freeing Jews from slavery of work for Egypt

What "resting" means

- Talmud specifies **39 activities associated with work**, that must not be done eg. carry/ push/ pull, cook, tying, tearing, light or put out a fire, write, build, destroy, plant, sort.
- this means that on the Shabbat, Jews are not allowed to turn electricity on or off, must do all their cooking and cleaning before hand, and cannot drive.
- any of these activities may be broken for the sake of Pikuach Nefesh

Jews will not travel outside of an **erev** - an area marked out (eg by zip wires) within which they can walk or carry.

Shabbat in the Synagogue

Jews are a covenant people: they need to come together in prayer, to show this. Some Jews attend synagogue 3x a day, but most Jewish males (and females) attend only the Shabbat weekly service.

In the synagogue service there will be:

- **Torah** readings
- **Haftarah** readings, from the Prophets
- A **sermon** from the Rabbi
- The **Shema** will be said
- The **Amidah** prayer will be said
- There may be singing or chanting
- A **kiddush blessing** after the service concludes the celebration.

Men will wear religious clothing for the Shabbat service (and women may too, in a Reform synagogue).



Shabbat in the Home

Shabbat starts a few minutes **before sunset** on Friday evening, and lasts until sunset on Saturday evening.

The woman of the house **lights the Shabbat candles**, and welcomes in the presence of the Shabbat.

The father usually **attends synagogue**, and when he returns, the family sit down to a special meal. Meal begins with a **blessing over two loaves of challah** (braided loaf)

The **kiddush prayer** over a cup of wine is said, and parents bless their children.

The family sit down to a kosher meal.

On Saturday, there is breakfast. The family may walk to the synagogue. There is another meal at lunch. The family rest. May visit friends, if local.

The end of the Shabbat is celebrated on Sat.evening: the havdallah (=separation) candle is lit, to symbolise the difference, or separation, between the Shabbat and the rest of the week.

A **glass of wine** is passed round, for everyone to sip from, as well as a **sweet-smelling spice box** - hope for a sweet week ahead.



- called the "**standing prayer**"

- is said by each person **silently and individually** - usually in **Hebrew**

- **involves several actions** eg bowing, bending knees, taking 3 steps forward or back (enter or leave God's presence), looking left and right, standing on tiptoes

- involves **18 blessings** (praise of God, thanksgiving, requests). Ends with **prayers for peace**

Differences between Reform and Orthodox Jews in celebrating Shabbat

- Reform synagogues will have prayers in the local language as well as in Hebrew
- Reform Jews remove any mention of Resurrection and the Messiah from the Amidah prayers
- Reform Jews may have recorded or accompanying music - Orthodox only chanting
- Reform Jewish women may wear religious clothing





BRIT MILAH & BRIT BAT



Brit Milah

= "Covenant of Circumcision"

- a Jewish baby boy is circumcised, to show his **full membership of the Jewish people**, as **part of Abraham's covenant** (Abraham was given the command by God to circumcise all his household)

- at 8 days old
- a **minyan** must be present, traditionally **only men** attend the ceremony

- can be done at home, in the synagogue or in a hospital by a **Mohel** (or female Mohelet)

- the child is placed on a **cushion** on an empty chair (symbolises presence of Elijah's spirit) and then on the lap of a **sandek** (godparent)

- the child is given his **Hebrew name** (Jewish identity, to be used in synagogue and formal occasions eg marriage).

- the service ends with a **Kiddush**, to honour and bless the parents.



Brit Bat

- a **naming ceremony celebrated at home** for girls
- only celebrated by Reform Jews
- includes prayers praising and thanking God as creator.

EARLIER - in the synagogue:

The baby girl will already have received her Hebrew name at a **special synagogue service**

- on the first synagogue service after her birth
- father would have read the **blessing** before and after the Torah reading
- the girl's hebrew name was announced in public

Debate: is brit milah unethical? The baby cannot give consent to a permanent operation on his body. Does it go against their human rights, or do parents have the right to make such decisions?

BAR / BAT MITZVAH

Bar Mitzvah = "Son of the Commandments"

- at age 13, marks personally **entering the Covenant with God**

- now has responsibility of **keeping Torah laws for himself**.

- considered a Jewish adult

- can now wear tefillin, can read in synagogue

The Bar Mitzvah Ceremony

- boy has to recite a **blessing and read a portion of Torah** in Hebrew in front of the congregation

- the father then reads out a statement to thank God Party afterwards.

After bar mitzvah, boy gets involved in doing some **charity events**.



Bat Mitzvah = "Daughter of Worth"

- can be one year earlier than boys, as girls mature faster

- considered a Jewish adult, with additional responsibilities for keeping Torah laws & keeping kosher.

- can now form part of a minyan, in Reform synagogues

- preparing for her bat mitzvah means learning to read Hebrew text

The Bat Mitzvah Ceremony

- girl has to rread a **portion of TaNaK** (from the 'Writings') in Hebrew in front of the congregation

- the text is about the virtues of a good Jewish woman Party afterwards.

After bat mitzvah, girl gets involved in doing some **charity events**.

Bat Chayil: Orthodox girls do not have a bat mitzvah.

Instead, they have give a presentation on what they have learnt about Judaism, and say a prayer. Girls cannot be part of a minyan in Orthodox judaism.

Jewish Marriage

“Kiddushin”

Meaning & Importance of Marriage in Judaism

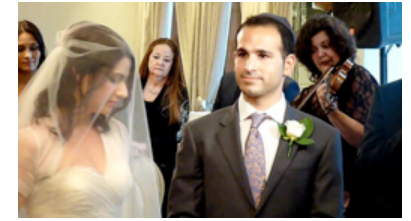
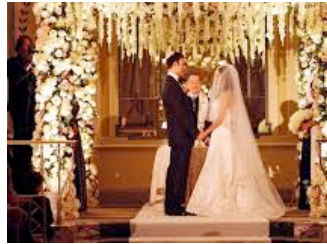
- **consecrates** the couple to each other (kiddushin comes from kiddush, to make holy)
- **fulfils Torah** that "a man will be united with his wife, and they shall become one flesh". The Talmud says that "Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, without goodness" (Talmud)
- a meeting of **soulmates**, a spiritual union.



Ketubah: the bride is given a legal document, signed by the groom, that he will support her throughout the marriage. It is publically read out later under the Chuppah & remains bride's

Explain the importance of the ketubah.

The couple walk down the aisle to stand under a shelter with 4 sides, called a **Chuppah**, which represents the home they will build together.



Under the Chuppah, the bride circles round the groom 7 times, to symbolise breaking down any barriers, and the love that they will build for each other.



The groom places a ring on the bride's **index finger** declaring to all present: "Behold you are consecrated to me according to the rituals of Moses and Israel".

He also reads out the promises he is making to her, from the Ketubah.

"Nisuin": Seven further blessings are said that finalise the marriage. The couple share a sip of kiddush wine for blessing on the commitment they are making to each other.



The groom **stamps on a glass**, as a reminder that marriage is fragile (like the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed). Also as a symbol of the sexual union.

Party and celebration. The couple are congratulated with shouts of "Mazel Tov"!

Orthodox Jews - differences - do not allow same-sex marriage. Do not allow marriages with people of other faiths. Couple fast day before wedding. Only groom gives bride a ring. The couple do not see each other the whole of the week before (Reform: only the night before). Male rabbi conducts the ceremony.

MOURNING RITUALS (DEATH)

Dying person: tries to spend last moments saying the **Shema & confessing sins (to God)**.

Burial is organised by chief mourner - the **onan**. A burial society (Chevra Kadish) takes care of preparing the body - wrapped in a **tallit**. Burial happens quickly, within one or two days.

Vigil: the body is not left alone, as made in the image of God. Mourners take turns to sit with the body.

Burial: **coffin is plain and simple**, so no distinction between rich and poor. Buried not cremated but buried as Torah says "From the soil you came, to soil you shall return". **Kaddish prayer** said at graveside. (about God's greatness & for peace). Sephardic Jews may walk round coffin 7x, and call on angel of mercy to accompany the person's soul.

Mourning periods:

SHIVA: week following burial. Mourners stay in their homes. May make small rip in clothes to show their loss. Visitors bring food for the close relative (as nothing is to be taken away from the mourning family). Say Kaddish prayer. Sit on low stools. No mourning allowed on Shabbat.

SHLOSHIM: one month following shiva. Do not shave or have haircuts. Do not wear new clothes. Do not go to parties.

ONE YEAR after the death, place a tombstone on the grave.

Yahrzeit: Every year after, ceremony with prayers to remember dead. Candle burns for 24hrs. Leave stones on the tombstone (as Abraham buried Sarah under pile of stones)



Festivals 1: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot

Importance of Festivals

- remember important events from the past eg the Exodus
- opportunity to build relationship with God, & put everyday life aside
- also called "making a date" with God (moeb)
- strengthens identity of being part of a Jewish community



Rosh Hashanah

- one of the Days of Awe
- means "Head of the year"
- day of judgment: prepares people to start thinking about God's judgement of them - on this day, God judges deeds of the last year & writes down His decisions. This book is sealed on Yom Kippur.
- also celebrates day of God's creation of the world - so also called "Day of Remembering" & a happy time.

SYNAGOGUE: special service. Pomegranates are bought. People wish to each other "*May you be written down for a good year*". Prayers address God as King sitting in judgement over earth.

- Next morning, at the synagogue service **shofars** are blown 100x - like the crying of the soul to be reunited to God.
- jews may then go to a running stream throwing crumbs in, to symbolise hope of sins being washed away.

AT HOME: kiddush is made, and sliced apples in honey eaten. The challah bread is baked round.

Rosh Hashanah is followed by **Ten Days of Returning**, leading up to Yom Kippur. It is a period of time when Jews can still make up for sins.

Sukkot = "Booths" or "Shelters"

- remembers the time when Jews were wandering for 40 years in the Sinai desert, living in shelters, and moving only when the pillar of cloud and fire lifted and moved.

AT HOME: Jews build their own shelters and live in them for a week (ie eat, and sometimes sleep). This symbolises their vulnerability and dependence on God. Some synagogues may also have one inside.

- the sukkah must have 3 walls and a roof of vegetation, sparse enough for rain to get through.
- **no work** is allowed on the first two days of the holiday
- each morning, people waive a **lulav** (see below) inside the sukkah in 6 directions and bless God whose power is everywhere.



The Lulav

Can represent 4 parts of the body
spine: palm (long & straight) - goodness of your actions

eye: myrtle (small and oval) - how you see life

mouth: willow (long and oval) - quality of your speech

heart: etrog - your emotions.

These 4 parts all have the potential to sin, but should be brought together to perform mitzvots.

Can also represent 4 types of Jews

etrog: Jews that have knowledge of Torah & do mitzvots (taste & smell)

palm: Jews that know Torah but don't do mitzvots (tasty fruit, no smell)

myrtle: Jews that do mitzvots, don't know Torah (no fruit, smell)

willow: neither know Torah nor do mitzvots (no fruit, no smell)

Bringing these 4 species together is a reminder that all kinds of Jews are important & should be united.

Yom Kippur

- the Ten Days of Returning after Rosh Hashanah ends on Yom Kippur, the 10th day.
- it is the 2nd "**Day of Awe**" & the holiest day in the calendar, many people attend synagogue.
- it is the last chance **to make up for sins done**, and ask forgiveness from those they hurt (God will not forgive unless that person has forgiven)
- it is a **day of self-denial:** no food, no drink, no wearing of leather shoes, no sex, no perfumes.

AT HOME: Some Jews take chickens to the poor or give money to charity. An **early dinner** is eaten, so can get to synagogue before sunset. Then the **table covered** with books to show Yom Kippur is celebrated by fasting and prayer. Jews **fast from food and water** for 25hrs.

- after the shofar is blown at the end of the last synagogue service (see below), Jews make Havdallah at home & break their fast.

AT THE SYNAGOGUE: the **story of Jonah** is read out, as in that story, the city of Nineveh listened to Jonah's preaching and repented, and was not destroyed by God.

- Rabbis and cantors and Torah scrolls are dressed in **white** (symbolise forgiveness).

- Doors of the Ark (Aron Hadokesh) are thrown open, symbolising the **gates of heaven being open** to all.

- there are **5 prayer services**, during which jews confess their sins to God, privately.

- at the last of 5 services, the day ends with the **closing of the gates** ("Neilah") and the **Shofar is blown once**.

- finally, the **Shema** is said to conclude the service.

Festivals 2: Passover (Pesach)

Meaning & Importance

- celebrates the Hebrew slaves **liberation from slavery** in Egypt, led by Moses. Particularly the night of liberation, when they were commanded to sacrifice a lamb or goat and put its blood on their doorposts, then to roast and eat it in a hurry.
- also called "**Festival of Freedom**"
- prayers are said each year for those who are not free.

Preparation

Removal of all yeast & leavened products & grains that swell: because the Hebrews had to leave in a hurry, they had no time to wait for bread to rise. Also yeast is a symbol of the swelling of pride, a serious sin.

- **Hunt for the "chametz" (leaven):** search and destroy. Bread cooked with wheat, barely, oats, yeast. Any leavened products found are burnt. Even crockery used for eating eg bread, may be replaced.

Celebrations

AT HOME:

- Passover, like Shabbat, is welcomed with **lighting of candles**.
- families go to the **synagogue** for a service, then return for a special meal
- three Matzoh crackers are taken and placed on top of each other. The middle one is cracked, and the **largest piece is hidden** for the children to find. The winner gets a prize.
- the passover meal is called the **seder meal**.
- it is eaten on the first two nights of the festival
- it involves 7 items on a **seder plate**, which all have a symbolic meaning.
- the **youngest child** must begin by asking **questions** about the meaning of the night of the passover. The head of the household answers, explaining the origins of the festival and the meaning of the symbols on the seder plate.
- The questions and answers and other instructions about the celebration are followed from a book called the **Haggadah**

Matzoh crackers are eaten instead of bread (have no leaven)

Four small cups of wine are drunk during the meal: they symbolise joy and happiness and freedom.

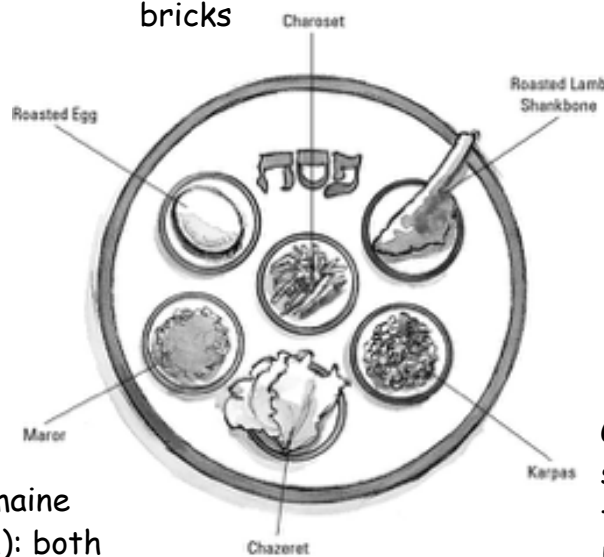
One glass is left for the Prophet Elijah, by an open door, as he is believed to come at the end of Passover to announce the coming of the Messiah.

Roasted egg: represents the new life that Jews had after their escape from Egypt

Maror & Chazeret (romaine lettuce and horseradish): both can be bitter and represent the bitterness of slavery

Charoset: nut and apple paste, to symbolise the mortar used for making bricks

Lamb bone: represents the lamb that was sacrificed



Green herbs: dipped in salt water, to represent the tears shed by the Hebrew slaves





Keeping Kosher

Kosher = something that is fitting or proper, according to Jewish laws in the Torah. Usually about food.

Treifah - forbidden or unclean. Opposite of kosher.

What the Torah says

-Genesis: the first humans were commanded to eat plants, fruit and seeds. Later Noah & his family were allowed to eat meat

-Moses receives commands from God about some foods being clean or unclean. (Lev 11:1-23)

Kosher: hoofed herbivores that chew the cud, fish with fins & scales, chicken/ duck/ goose.

Treifah: crawling insects, pork, rabbits, camels, seafood with no fins/ no scales.

Parev: foods that are "neutral", and can be eaten with any meal. eg vegetables, eggs.

It is **treifah** to **mix meat with milk** in any meal, or in any dish because of the way the Rabbis interpreted the Torah law "*You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk*".

- * No cheeseburgers, or dairy deserts after meat mains.
- * separate storage must be used for meat and for milk products (2 fridges)
- * separate dishes and pots must be used for each.
- * Orthodox Jews wait 6 hrs after eating one, to eat the other.

KOSHER food is...

- prepared in a kosher way
- stored in a kosher way
- is a kosher or parev type of food



Killing animals

is done in a certain way, so as to bring the animal into human life in a fitting way (it will become part of the human!).



- done by a "**shochet**" - a Jew of good moral standing
- the knife must be sharp & free of imperfections e
- The animal's throat is cut – sudden loss of blood and loss of consciousness
- the blood must drain out of it "You shall not eat flesh which still has blood in it, for the life of each creature is in the blood".

Option 4 – Judaism

Ten Commandments	ten duties given by God to Moses which form the basis of Jewish belief
Shekinhah	the place where God's presence rests and can be felt
Shema	a prayer declaring Jewish faith that is said by many Jews twice a day. The Shema is placed in the Mezuzah case and tefillin
Pikuach Nefesh	the obligation to save life whenever possible. For example giving medical treatment on Shabbat
Torah	the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Regarded as the holiest books of the Tenakh
Mizvot	the term has a mix of meanings. It is often used to refer to duties (such as the 613 in the Torah) and good deeds
Messiah	the anointed one who Jews believe will bring in a new era or age for humankind. This will include rebuilding the Temple and bringing in an age of universal peace.
Covenant	a promise or agreement between two parties. Covenants were made between God with Noah, Abraham and Moses