

# Revision Guide for Judaism Course Year 7

## **Basic Jewish Beliefs**

### **(a) Beliefs about G-d**

Jews believe that there is only one G-d. Judaism is a monotheistic religion (mono = one, theistic = about G-d). When Jews pray to G-d they call 'him' Adonai, which means Lord. Jews use this name of G-d with great respect and would never use it carelessly. Jews also believe that G-d is eternal. That he is always present, that he knows everything and that he cares about the world that he has made. This idea of care means that Jews believe that G-d can be experienced through all of the world.

The Jews have a legal religion, there are a set of rules that a Jew must follow called the mitzvot, the most famous of these are the 10 commandments. These rules tell the devout Jew both what they can do and what they cannot. The faith of the Jew is summed up by the prayer that they will say each day called the Shema

*"Hear, O Israel ! The Lord is our G-d, the Lord is one !  
And you shall love the Lord our G-d with all your heart  
and with all your soul and with all your might."*

### **(b) Beliefs about the relationship between G-d and the Jews**

The Jews believe that everybody can have a relationship with G-d but that the Jews have a special relationship because of the covenant that G-d made with Abraham. This story can be read in the Torah, or the Jewish scripture, in the book of Genesis. (Genesis 17 & Exodus 12.43 - 13.2) The covenant is an agreement with G-d and like most agreements there are two sides to the bargain:

- that the nation of Israel must remember G-d at all times, serve Him and keep all of the laws
- G-d will remain faithful to the nation of Israel, will continue to be that nation's G-d and will treat the members of that nation as special.

### **(c) Beliefs about the action of G-d in History**

Because of this covenant relationship the Jews believe that G-d has directed the fate of the Jewish nation and that all the things that have happened to the people are the will of G-d acting in history. Perhaps the most famous example of G-d acting is the story of the escape of the Jewish nation from slavery in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus chapter 14). This is the story that will be recounted each year during the Passover.

The history of the Jews is related in the Torah Reading this gives the story of the Jewish nation from the Creation (Genesis 1) through the story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50), the escape from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 14), The giving of the Ten commandments (Exodus 19:1-20), The laws of the people (Leviticus 19), The story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17), The exile in Babylon (Isaiah). All of this the Jews believe that G-d has directed and continues to direct.

### **(d) The relationship between G-d and non-jews**

Whilst the Jews do believe that they are the 'chosen' people they do not seek conversions to Judaism. This is partly because of the relationship between G-d and all of humanity who keep the 7 Noachide Laws. G-d made a covenant with ALL of humanity as well, in the 7 noachide Laws:

- (1) Do not murder.
- (2) Do not steal.
- (3) Do not worship false gods.
- (4) Do not be sexually immoral.
- (5) Do not eat the limb of an animal before it is killed.
- (6) Do not curse G-d.
- (7) Set up courts and bring offenders to justice.

ALL people have to observe these according to Judaism, and a non-Jew who keeps these seven has as much of a place in the 'World to Come' as a Jew who keeps 613 (which is why Judaism doesn't encourage/insist on conversion [although it does allow it and those who convert according to halacha are 100% Jewish (and include some of the greatest Rabbis of this generation and previous generations)] - simply because it's easier for a non-Jew to get to heaven by observing 7 mitzvots than by doing 613.

### **Important words**

- **Covenant** - A binding agreement made between G-d and the people and Israel
- **Shema** - The Jewish prayer which states the belief that there is only one G-d
- **Torah** - The Jewish book of the law of G-d. Christians call the Torah the Old Testament.

## **Worship in the Synagogue**



The synagogue is much more to the Jewish community than a place of worship. It is the visible focus of the community in an area. Most synagogues will be a combination of prayer hall, community centre, religious school, library and meeting place.

Synagogues probably began about 2,500 years ago when the Jew was exiled to Babylon. Because they could no longer go to the temple in Jerusalem they began to gather together in each others houses for prayer. These soon proved to be too small and so they built houses of worship. When they returned to the land of Israel they continued to build synagogues as a local place to study the scriptures and to act as law courts. In 70CE the temple was destroyed by the Romans and since the Jews believed that only God can rebuild the temple it remained destroyed. The Jews who lived in Israel were scattered all over the world and in each Jewish community the synagogue has become the focus for the community. The most important function of the synagogue is worship, and all synagogues are laid out in the pattern of the sanctuary in the temple of Jerusalem.

### **The Ark**

The most important thing in the synagogue is the Ark. The ark is like a cupboard. The ark is set into the wall of the synagogue that faces the holy city of Jerusalem. The scrolls of the law (Torah) are kept in the ark. The Torah is written on these scrolls, like a book with one long page.

### **The scrolls**

A scroll is a long roll of parchment. It has a wooden roller at each end. Scrolls are written by hand using special ink. The writing on the scrolls is in Hebrew. Scrolls are very important and very expensive. They are looked after very carefully and never touched with the hand. A special pointed, called a yad, is used. When it is put away the scroll is covered with a mantle usually made of silk or velvet and decorated or embroidered to show its importance. Sometimes the scrolls will also have crowns and bells.

### **The Ner Tamid (lamp)**

At the entrance to the ark a light is always kept burning, this everlasting light is called the Ner Tamid.

### **The Bimah**

The Torah scroll is read from a desk called the Bimah

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Magen David</b>      | One of the most common symbols of Judaism is the star of David, in Hebrew Magen David                   |
| <b>The commandments</b> | Over the ark will be the 10 commandments, which with the Shema are seen as central to the Jewish faith. |
| <b>The Menorah</b>      | The seven branched candlestick symbolising the creation of the world.                                   |

### Services in the synagogue

Orthodox synagogues will have services three times a day (morning, afternoon and evening). For all synagogues the important service of the week is the Sabbath, or Shabbat. There will be three services, one on Friday evening after sunset, one on Saturday morning and one on Saturday afternoon. As well as these services the feast days will involve special synagogue services. However all these services can be performed in the home. Jewish worship is not dependent on the synagogue, unlike Christian worship which is much more dependent on the church. Apart from the services the synagogue will be used like a community centre. Wedding reception and Bar / Bat Mitzvah celebrations will be held in the synagogue. In addition most synagogues will have a Hebrew school (shule), a youth club, a crèche, a library and study room, an office for the Rabbi, and will be a gathering place for the Jewish community.

## Prayer/Dress for Prayer

### Prayer

Jews believe that God is present all the time and through all their actions and life, so prayer is bound up with the way that they live.

*"Know Him in all your ways"  
(Proverbs 3:6)*

There are times of worship with associated formal prayers. These take place three times each day, once a week (The Shabbat) and at various times during the year (Festivals and fasts). In addition there are prayers to be said at mealtimes, on holy days, to the Torah and on special months of the year. Nearly all of these prayers are formal and written. One of the most important of these prayers is called the Amidah.

*"O Lord, our God, hear our cry!  
Have compassion on us and pity us;  
Accept our prayer with loving favour ...  
For you mercifully heed Your people's supplication.  
Praised are You, O Lord, who is attentive to prayer"  
(Part of the Amidah)*

The formal prayers take place three times a day, men will usually go to the synagogue, for they have an obligation to pray with a minyan, a group of 10 men; this being the smallest group considered to represent the community. If the day is a festival or Shabbat then the whole family will go to the synagogue. These three daily prayers are said;

**Shacharit** - the morning prayer, after Abraham who set aside the morning to pray so that he could set time aside to God before turning to his own affairs.

**Minchah** - the afternoon prayer, after Isaac who halted his affairs so that he could give time to God.

**Arvit** - the evening prayer, after Jacob who prayed in the evening to thank God for having helped him through the day.

As well as these daily prayers, prayers will be said before and after food, and at various other times during the day. Each type of food has a special blessing. For example before eating bread the prayer will be said,

*"Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the ground"*

All the occasions of life have special blessings that will be said on their occurrences to remind the devout Jew that God is present in all the occasions in life, not just at the 'holy' ones. There is even a blessing for going to the toilet !

## Ritual Objects and Dress

Like most of the religious traditions the Jews have a collection of ritual objects that they wear associated with worship. When a devout Jewish adult goes to the synagogue they will wear the following ritual objects, each of which has a tradition associated with it

**Tallit:** Before beginning to worship or pray the devout Jew will often put on a prayer shawl. The fringes on the shawl remind him of the many commandments (613) of the Torah. He will first cover his head completely with the Tallit and say:

*"Even as I cover myself with the Tallit in this world so my soul deserve to be clothed with a beautiful spiritual robe in the world to come"*

**Kippur or Yarmulke:** On their heads the Jew devout Jew always wears the Yarmulke, a small skull cap, which reminds them that they always duty bound to follow the laws of God at all times and in all places.

**Phylacteries or Tefillin:** Phylacteries are small leather boxes that have long straps attached that are worn on the left forearm and on the forehead. Inside the boxes are passages from the scriptures, including the Shema. The phylactery on the left arm is a reminder to keep God's laws with all your heart, because it is near to the heart; and the one on the forehead remind the Jew to concentrate on the teachings of the Torah with all your full mind. Phylacteries are worn when praying at home or in the synagogue.

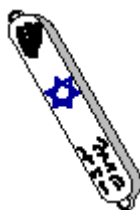


The wearing of these objects and their use in prayer come from the scripture.

Deuteronomy chapter 6 : 4 - 9 and Deuteronomy chapter 11 are the relevant verses.

## Ritual Objects

There are many ritual objects used in the Jewish home, the Mezuzah, the Menorah, the Magen David, the Havdulah candle, the Kiddush cup, the spice box, the Seder plate. Most of these are used in conjunction with festivals. The three that are different but which would be found in every Jewish home are.



**The Menorah**

The Menorah is the seven branched candlestick which was placed in the temple in Jerusalem, each home has a Menorah to remind them of the temple and of their hope that one day it will be built again. The Menorah of the temple is NOT the same as the 8 branched candlestick used at Hanukkah.

**The Mezuzah**

The Mezuzah is a small box fixed to the doorpost on your house, according to the command in scripture. If you look at a Jewish house there will be a small box fixed to the right hand side of the doorpost. Inside the Mezuzah is a small piece of parchment with the words of Deuteronomy 13-21 written upon it. Some Jews will touch the Mezuzah as they enter and leave the house, this remi

**The Magen David**

## The Sabbath

The main holy day for Jews is called the Shabbat. The Shabbat, or Sabbath, starts at dusk on Friday evening and ends at dusk on Saturday evening. Why do Jews celebrate the Sabbath? Think about the creation story from the book of Genesis. In this story it says that God created the world in six days and on the seventh he rested. There are a long list of things that it is forbidden for Jews to do during the Sabbath. Jewish people who keep the Sabbath faithfully will not go to work or to school, will not do any housework or homework, will not use public transport, will not prepare or cook any food (all food for the Sabbath will be prepared before sunset on Friday), and will not go shopping. The Sabbath will be seen as a time to worship, study and enjoy recreation with their family.

### Friday evening

*The fourth of the ten commandments says "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. On it you shall do no work" So the Sabbath is a special day for Jews.*

It is a whole day that is special and different from other days. A day for a special meal, a family get together, best clothes, a complete break from normal routine. The word Sabbath means rest, but in many Jewish homes a great deal of hard work is done before the day begins. The house must be clean and tidy, the Sabbath meal ready, the table laid with flowers and the best plates and glasses, and the wine must be uncorked. Even the candlesticks have been especially polished. Everyone in the family will have a job to do to help prepare the house for the Sabbath.

The Sabbath candles will be lit in the home and then the family will attend the short evening service at the synagogue. After this they will return home and the father will bless the family with suitable words. He may say to the boys,

*"May God make you like Ephriam and Manasseh", or to the girls "May God make you like Ruth and like Rebekah". He will also praise his wife possibly using the words of Psalm 31.*



The Kiddush is then said. A large glass of wine is blessed with the words "Blessed are you Lord our God, King of the Universe, who gives us the fruit of the vine". This wine is a symbol of the joy and the glass will be very full to show that God's love for the world is great. This part of the Shabbat service ends with a blessing for the holiness of the Shabbat.

The Shabbat meal begins with the breaking of bread. There are always two loaves of bread on the Sabbath table, these are called hallot and are usually plaited. Songs are sung during the meal and the meal will end with a prayer of thanksgiving. The hallot bread is to remind Jews that God gave them Manna in the wilderness when they were without food.



### Saturday morning

An important part of the Sabbath day is the service held in the synagogue on Saturday morning. As people arrive they wish each other a "Shabbat Shalom" (A peaceful Sabbath). During the service that follows the Torah is ceremoniously taken from the ark, processed around the synagogue and then a portion of the scripture will be read. A sermon will usually be preached on the text and songs will be sung.

### Saturday evening

At the end of the Sabbath, just before dusk on Saturday evening there is another ceremony. This ceremony is called Havdulah. A special candle with several wicks is lit and a spice box is opened to wish everybody a sweet week until the next Sabbath. The parting greeting at the end of the Sabbath is "shavua tov" (have a good week); the candle will be dipped in wine to extinguish it.

### Important words

- **Sabbath or Shabbat** - The seventh day of the week. The holy day of the Jews.
- **Ark** - The cabinet in the synagogue where the scrolls are kept.
- **Hallot** - Loaves of bread especially baked for the Shabbat meal.
- **Kiddush** - The special prayer said at the beginning of the Shabbat.

- **Havdulah** - The service at the end of the Sabbath.
- **Shabbat Shalom** - The Sabbath greeting meaning "have a peaceful Sabbath".
- **Torah** - The scroll of the law

## The Exodus and the Passover

There is no more popular festival than the festival of Pesach or Passover. Originally a spring festival, Pesach has for centuries been celebrated to remember the Exodus, the story of the deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians (c.f. Moses). Although this event took place more than 4,000 years ago, for Jews it remains the most important example of God's power. The festival of Pesach is a reliving of the events of the exodus story. This story is told in the Hagadah.

### The Seder meal

Although there are services in the synagogue the most important part of the festival takes place in the home. Before Pesach begins the house will be thoroughly cleaned to make sure that there is no leavened bread in the house. When the Jews left Egypt they had to pack so quickly that they took no yeast. This reminds the Jews that during the time of the Exodus they had only unleavened bread (matzoh). So during the festival of Pesach the Jew will only eat unleavened bread.

On the eve of the Passover the Jew will go to the synagogue and then return home for the Passover meal. This special meal is called the Seder. This meal starts with the blessing of wine, four glasses of wine are drunk to remind Jews of God's four promises to Moses. The Seder plate has seven items all of which have a symbolic meaning. They remind the Jews of part of the Exodus:

**Matzah bread.** Three loaves of Matzoh, or unleavened bread. This helps the Jews feel solidarity with their ancestors, who were slaves.

**Salt water.** Some of the Seder food is dipped into salt water. Salt water calls to mind the tears of the slaves, and also the water of the Red Sea which once crossed meant the Jews were really free.

**Charoset.** This is a mixture of almonds, apples mixed with cinnamon and wine. This represents the mud that the Jews had to make into bricks when they were slaves.

**Bitter herbs.** These represent the bitterness of the slavery, but the green reminds them that after the tears of slavery came the freedom of the escape.

**Carpas.** From a Hebrew word meaning hard labour to remind them of slavery. It is also dipped into the salt water to remind them that the Hyssop was dipped in the blood of the sacrifice that the Lord might Passover their houses when the firstborn were being killed



You can see that many of the items on the Seder plate are reminders of both slavery and freedom, the Seder meal is about the passage from slavery to freedom. The next two items are not connected with slavery in Egypt and recall practices which have long since ceased. Jews have not performed animal sacrifices since the temple was destroyed.

- A roasted shank bone to represent the lamb which was slaughtered in the temple until it was destroyed in 70 CE.
- A roasted egg which recalls the sacrifice in the temple for the Passover.

A fifth cup of wine is poured and stands undrunk on the table. This is for the prophet Elijah who will come just before the Messiah. The door will be left slightly ajar for the same reason.

### Important words

- **Passover or Pesach** - The festival to celebrate the escape from slavery in Egypt
- **Exodus** - The journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the promised land
- **Moses** - The leader of the Jews during the Exodus
- **Hagadah** - The special book telling the story of the Exodus, God's delivery of the Jews from slavery.
- **Synagogue** - The Jewish house of worship
- **Matzoh** - Unleavened bread eaten during the Passover
- **Seder** - The word means 'order' in Hebrew and refers to the special order of the service during the Passover.

## The Holocaust

### Background



During the Second World War, the Nazi party, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler tried to kill all the Jews in Europe.. The Nazis and their collaborators murdered six million Jewish people, including 1,500,000 children. This terrible period in history is now referred to as the Holocaust.

Jewish people had lived in Europe for over 2000 years. Originally Jews lived in Palestine but the Romans drove them out of this land in ancient times. Consequently the Jews settled in different places around the world. They often lived peacefully alongside their non-Jewish neighbours.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Germany was experiencing great economic and social hardship. The Germans had been defeated in the First World War, and had been forced to pay huge reparations to the Allies. As a result, Germany suffered terrible inflation and mass unemployment. Hitler blamed the Jews for the hardship that weighed down upon his country. His anti-Semitic policies eventually led to an intricate plan to exterminate the Jewish people. It is unknown whether this was his original intention, as it seems he initially planned simply to force the Jews out of Germany.

## The Yellow Star



Jews throughout Nazi-occupied Europe were forced to wear a badge in the form of a Yellow Star as a means of identification. This was not a new idea; since medieval times many other societies had forced their Jewish citizens to wear badges to identify themselves.

The badges were often printed on coarse yellow cloth and were a garish yellow colour. The star, which represented the star of David, was outlined in thick, black lines and the word 'Jew' was printed in mock-Hebraic type. In the Warsaw ghetto, Jews wore a white armband with a blue Star of David on their left arm. In some ghettos, even babies in prams had to wear the armbands or stars. Jewish shops were also marked with a Yellow Star.

The star was intended to humiliate Jews and to mark them out for segregation and discrimination. The policy also made it easier to identify Jews for deportation to camps.

## Anne Frank



Anne Frank's diary has become famous throughout the world. The diary provides a vivid and poignant glimpse into the world of a young Jewish girl living in Nazi occupied Holland. Anne wrote diary while hiding from the Nazis in an Amsterdam warehouse. She was just 13 when she and her family went into hiding. For two years the Franks lived in a secret annex at the back Mr Frank's business premises on Prinsengracht Street. Their living space was hidden by a movable bookshelf.

Anne was born in Frankfurt in 1929, and her parents fled from Nazi Germany for Amsterdam in 1933. Germany invaded Holland in 1940 and, a year later, all public schools were closed to Jews. The following year Jewish deportations from Holland began, under the guise of forced labour in the East. It was at this point that Anne's family decided to go into hiding. The Frank family remained in their hiding place from 9 July 1942 to 4 August 1944, together with four other Jews, kept alive with the help of their non-Jewish Dutch office workers. They were

eventually betrayed, and the family was deported to Westerbork camp and then to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In November 1944 Anne arrived with her sister Margot in Bergen-Belsen, where she fell ill and died of typhus in March 1945.

Anne had hoped to become an author, and during her time in hiding she wrote several short stories as well as her diary. Immediately following the arrest of Anne's family, Miep, one of the Dutch office workers, found Anne's diary, which she kept, hoping to return it to Anne after the war. Anne's father Otto Frank survived the Holocaust and after he received confirmation that both Margot and Anne were dead, Miep handed him Anne's diary realising this was Anne's lasting legacy. Having read its pages, Otto Frank agonised over whether he should publish her private thoughts. He knew Anne had always wanted to be a writer and he consulted various people about his dilemma. He finally decided to find a publisher for the diary.



Anne Frank has become a famous name because of her poignant diary, which has been translated into many languages. Anne Frank's diary describes the frightening period experienced by Anne, her family and friends in the annexe. It also expresses her hopes and aspirations for the future, which were never to be realised.

## **Key People from the Torah**

### **Abraham**

Abraham is often called the Father of Judaism. He is certainly one of the most important people for the Jewish people.

**Life History** : Abram or Abraham as he was later called, was brought up in the small town of Ur of the Chaldees. There, along with everyone else, he worshiped the many gods who were believed to have control over the different parts of nature. There Abraham encountered the One God who seemed to have control over not only the whole of nature but history as well. This same God was willing to enter into a special relationship (covenant) with Abraham and his descendants.

No-one is quite sure how, or when, Abraham stopped believing in many gods and came to believe in the one God. The time and place however are not important. What matters is that Abraham's experience marked the beginning of the Jewish nation, and Jews today speak, with great fondness, of 'Our Father Abraham' (Avraham Avinu)

Although his experience cannot be dated exactly it seems to have happened sometime between 2000BCE and 1800BCE. Because of this Abraham moved from the town of Ur and traveled 1000 miles to the town of Hebron. It was in Hebron that

God revealed to Abraham that his descendants would be protected and would in time become a great nation. (Read Genesis 12:1-9)

Abraham is often called one of the Jewish Patriarchs (Father Figure). The other two Jewish patriarchal figures are Isaac (Abraham's son) and Jacob (Isaac's son). An important event in Jewish history is the way that God tests Abraham, by asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac (Read Genesis 22:1-19).

The Jewish rite (ritual practice) of circumcision started at the time of Abraham. God said that this would be the sign of belonging to the tribe of Israel. (Read Genesis 17:9-10)

### **Important words**

- Abraham - The Patriarch who left Ur and settled in Canaan in obedience to God's command.
- BCE - Way of counting time, Before Christian Era.
- Isaac - Son of Abraham and one of the Patriarchs.
- Jacob - Son of Abraham and the third of the Patriarchs.
- Patriarch - The title given to the three early "father figures" of the Israelites.

### **Key events in the life of Abraham**

- God calls Abraham to Canaan - Genesis 12:1-9
- Abraham rescues his nephew, Lot - Genesis 14
- God promises Abraham and his wife (Sarah) a son - Genesis 18:1-15
- Isaac is born - Genesis 21:1-8
- God tests Abraham with the sacrifice of Isaac - Genesis 22
- Abraham dies - Genesis 25:7-11

## **Moses**

Moses was born in Egypt during the time that the Israelites were slaves. He is a key figure in the history of the Jews. The Torah tells us that Moses' mother placed him in the reeds on the banks of the Nile when the Pharaoh ordered that all the Jewish children should be killed. Later on Moses was found by an Egyptian princess who brought him up as her own son. Moses was forced to leave the court when he killed a soldier who was mistreating a Jewish slave.

While Moses while in the desert God spoke to him out of a burning bush. God told him that he was to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses went to the Pharaoh and demanded that he released the Jews. Pharaoh refused so God tormented the Egyptians with ten plagues. The last of these was that the oldest male child of each family should die. It is this plague that gives the festival of Passover its name. God told the Jews that they should smear blood on the doors of their houses. This plague then "passed over" the houses of the Jews. Pharaoh then begged the Jews to leave.

After they had left however Pharaoh changed his mind and sent the army to fetch them back. The Jews reached the shores of the Red sea and were trapped. At this point the Jewish scriptures tell us that God parted the sea so that the Jews could cross. When the Egyptians tried to follow God closed the waters on them and they were drowned.

Later in the wilderness God took Moses up to the top of Mount Sinai and there gave him the rules that were to become the basis of the laws of the Jews. These rules are known as the ten commandments.

### **Key events in the story of the Exodus.**

- Moses is born and grows up in the house of the Pharaoh - Exodus 2
- Moses flees after killing a slave - Exodus 3
- God talks to Moses in the burning bush - Exodus 4
- The plagues on the people of Egypt - Exodus 7 : 14 to Exodus 11 : 11
- The story of the first Passover - Exodus 12 : 43 to Exodus 13 : 16
- Crossing the Red sea - Exodus 14
- The Ten commandments - Exodus 20

### **Important words**

- **Torah** - The Jewish book of the law, the first five books of the bible
- **Exodus** - The story of the Jewish escape from Egypt and the 40 years in the desert
- **Pesach** - The Jewish feast of Passover