

**GUIDE TO
JEWISH
KNOWLEDGE
FOR THE
CENTER
PROFESSIONAL**

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Acknowledgements

At this time, we wish to fulfill the mitzvah of Hakarat HaTov. There are several people who have made specific and well defined contributions to this Guide through background papers. However, we want to particularly highlight the contribution made by JWB and its dedicated staff. Without their vision, dedication, and commitment, this Guide would never have come to be. We especially want to single out Leonard Rubin, who has been our full partner in this project over the past several years. His judgment and guiding hand are felt in virtually every page of this document. His custodianship has brought this Guide to being. May he and his family be blessed for good life.

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Finally, we thank all of you in the Center field, who day in and day out work in honesty and dedication to serve the Jewish people and to perpetuate the Jewish tradition.

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A Word About the Authors

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philosophy and theology of Jewish Center work, as well as assessment tools for measuring Jewish knowledge and the development of an extensive Jewish Education Staff Training Program for the JCC of Chicago.

Rabbi Poupko's contribution to this Guide is intimately and inextricably linked to the visions and creativity of Jerry Witkovsky, General Director of the Jewish Community Centers of Chicago, and the working environment that he created to serve the Jewish people. Without him, this guide would not have been possible, and so in gratitude, he wishes to remember in memoriam, Jerry's father, Ben Witkovsky, who died on April 6, 1987, 5 Nissan 5747.

Background

Introduction

During the past decade the Jewish Community Center movement has clearly affirmed that Jewish education is one of its most important priorities. The intensification of the Center movement's concern for Jewishness expresses itself in a variety of ways including the establishment of lay and professional task forces and sub-committees on Jewish education, new programs and services, and Staff and Board Studies Seminars in Israel. The most significant expression of this concern for the Center's Jewish mission has been the growing commitment to the Judaic growth and education of Center staff. A Jewishly committed Center staff has a profound impact on the Jewish atmosphere of the Center. Consequently, the Jewish knowledge, attitudes, and skills of the Center professional have become a major preoccupation of the contemporary Center movement.

What does Jewish education in the Center world mean? For the Center movement, Jewish education means more than Jewish schooling; rather Jewish education refers to the life-long process by which the Jewish community transmits and perpetuates the traditions, norms, and values of the past, and the ongoing process through which an individual Jew's daily life is continually shaped and transformed. Jewish education for the Center movement has come to refer to the enrichment of the Jewishness of the Jewish community as a whole and of the individual lives of Jews.

Jewish education is not the same as Jewish schooling. Jewish education happens not just in the classroom, but in every setting where Jews gather for Jewish purposes and experiences. The list of Jewish life experiences, or Jewish educational opportunities is virtually limitless. All Jewish life experiences constitute Jewish education. To name but a few: lecture series; classes; early childhood programs; Purim and Hanukkah Festivals; Israel programs, whether political, cultural, or entertaining in nature; Jewish camping; travel to Israel, Eastern Europe, or the Soviet Union; film festivals; song festival, and holiday celebrations. As this list makes clear, the place

in the American Jewish community where most of these events take place is the JCC. JCCs are one of American Jewry's critical centers of Jewish life experiences. Our commitment to providing a significant and wide range of Jewish life experiences is the result of a Jewish community which, in a pluralistic democratic society, has chosen the JCC as a central institution. This moment has placed before the JCC field an important and vital responsibility: Jewish education for a variety of Jewish life experiences.

Center personnel have increasingly been asking what Jewish knowledge is needed in order to contribute significantly to maximizing the Center's Jewish purpose. This guide is meant to address the question: What do I need to know? What Jewish skills, what Jewish knowledge do I need to possess in order to fulfill the Center's Jewish educational purposes? The purpose of this guide is to define the basic body of Jewish knowledge necessary for a Jewish Center professional, to present a systematic yet concise outline of the main aspects of Jewish knowledge which are relevant for Center workers and reflect the realities of today's American Jewish community.

Who Is the Guide For?

This guide is intended mainly for a Center's Executive Director, or Executive Vice-President, Associate Director, and Jewish Educational Specialist, as well as the lay and staff committees concerned with In-Service Jewish Educational Staff Training programs for Center staff. It is also designed for those resource people a Center uses in developing Jewish Studies Staff Training. Such resource people may be members of the JCC staff, or may be local rabbis and staff of Jewish educational agencies. The guide's purpose is to enable these Center professionals, together with local educators and rabbis, to develop systematic Jewish Studies Staff Training programs. At the same time, the guide might be used by Center workers to provide themselves with an overview of the scope of Jewish knowledge and to suggest areas of personal strength or weakness for key staff responsible for implementing the Jewish mission of the Agency.

What Is the Guide About?

This guide is not an encyclopedia of Judaism, but rather a map and an overview. Moreover, it is not intended to teach a specific Jewish ideology or denominational view; rather, it sketches a picture of the broad scope of the culture and tradition which is the legacy of the Jewish people as a whole, and which is now reflected in the variety of contemporary forms of Jewish expression. Many of the topics in this guide (e.g., religious practice, religious beliefs, Bible) can be taught from several different ideological perspectives (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Zionist, secular and cultural). Our purpose is to suggest in the broadest of terms those great ideas and areas of knowledge and practice which are part of the common heritage of the Jewish people and which a Center worker should know. This guide is a reflection of the Center movement's deep and abiding commitment to pluralism and to the belief that nothing Jewish is alien to the Center movement.

How Is This Guide Arranged?

The guide is arranged according to five major categories of Jewish knowledge:

1. Jewish Texts and Sources
2. Jewish Thought and Ideas
3. History of the Jewish People
4. Contemporary Jewry
5. Jewish Living
 - a. Shabbat and Holidays
 - b. Life Cycle

Each section or category includes:

1. A summary of key ideas
2. Course outlines
3. A general essay or overview of the subject area
4. A brief bibliography.

Too often, Jewishness is presented as a set of prohibited or mandated behaviors, e.g., "light candles" or "don't eat on Yom Kippur." Jewishness does express itself in behaviors, but not in uninformed behaviors. This guide seeks to teach that there are deep ideas behind our every Jewish gesture; that these ideas are coherent and consistent although they are expressed in what may seem to be a variety of unrelated practices and events.

This is the general structure of each section; however, each section has its own "personality," depending on the subject being discussed. Thus, for example, the Jewish living section is more detailed and practical than other sections, because of the immediacy of this area to Center life.

Is This Guide Exclusively About Jewish Intellectual Knowledge?

The truly educated Jew should combine Jewish knowledge with positive Jewish feelings and behaviors. While this curriculum focuses on areas of Jewish knowledge, it is also based on the conviction that Jewish attitudes, feelings, or behaviors are significant. Jewish knowledge has always been important in Jewish tradition as a vehicle for determining human life and action. Thus, we present this guide as part of the larger concern for the development of the Center worker as a comprehensive Jewish personality -- in thoughts, feelings, and actions.

What Do We Want the Center Worker To Be Like Jewishly?

What is the vision of Jewish personality that we see for Center professionals? What are the Jewish qualities we would like to develop in our Center workers? What knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors do we think are critical for a Jewish Center worker today? These questions underlie the very existence of this guide, and before we proceed to describing what knowledge we think should be taught to Center workers, we must briefly talk about what kind of Jewish personality we think the Center professional should be.

I. A Learning Person

"Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam" 5 `t))D nrnn 'fl 5n

The Virtue of Study is as Great as all Other Virtues.

Learning is one of the cornerstones of human existence according to Judaism. Learning has no beginning or end, and it is not limited to any age or period in one's life. Torah has been compared to water, wine, and fruit in its ability to nourish and give life. We constantly confront new challenges, joys, and problems, and learning helps us to understand and deal with the ever-changing reality of our lives. A person who constantly learns is a person who constantly grows. The lack of knowledge should be an incentive for learning and not the cause of negative feelings. A Center professional should learn for the length of his/her days.

II. A Literate Person

"Vten Helkeynu" vp5n In)

Give us our part in the great enterprise of Torah.

Judaism is a vast treasure of events, sources, ideas, beliefs, practices and esthetic creations, and it constitutes one of humanity's great intellectual and cultural legacies. There are many ways to begin to study this heritage, and it is accessible to all. At the same time, it is vast, and the study of Judaism requires time and patience. There are no short cuts or quick routes to becoming Jewishly literate. Jewish literacy means a basic familiarity with key phrases, ideas, concepts, texts, and moments in the Jewish experience. Just as modern Center professionals should be literate in general language and culture, so should they be literate in the great Jewish tradition of which they are part. Being Jewish includes the commitment to the joy and value of reading books and articles and journals and ideas of worth.

III A Person with a Distinctive Life Style

"Lo Hamidrash Haikar Ela Hamaaseh" nw=n N5N 7p'vn wl-tnn t45l

Deeds Not Study are the Essence.

Judaism is not just study or talk; it is as much or more about actions. Jewish tradition emphasizes the primacy of what we do and the way we live as central dimensions of Jewish commitment. Jewishness has traditionally been very much defined by the day-to-day living of a distinctive and authentic Jewish lifestyle. Today's Center workers should be concerned with creating a Jewish lifestyle for themselves with specifically Jewish behaviors in both their professional and private lives. In the modern era there are a variety of authentic Jewish life styles, encompassing religious, cultural, communal and Zionist dimensions. A

Center worker should be a Jewish role model and a reflection of an authentic Jewish life style.

IV. A Valuing Person

"Higid Lecha Adam..." DIN 15 i'a1

He has told you, people, what is good,

And what the Lord requires of you:

Only to do justice

And to love goodness

And to walk humbly with your God

Judaism encompasses the commitment to great human values: justice, concern for others; the dignity of the individual; family; loving kindness; equality; caring. The concern for human values in our public as well as private lives has always been a high Jewish priority, and contemporary Jewish professionals should perpetuate this classical Jewish concern. Good people do not always act perfectly; rather, they are committed to the ongoing effort to seek the good life amidst the many moments of doubt, weakness, and failure. A valuing person is committed to trying to realize great principles, even if he/she is not always able to achieve success.

V. A Searching Person

"Hafoch Bo V'hafoch Bo Dechula Bo" n2 n5Dr n2 1 11 n2. 1n/1

Turn the Torah Over and Over, Because Everything Is In It.

While Jewish tradition encompasses some clearly defined values and principles, it also encourages questioning, reflection, and individual search. Indeed, the search for and questioning of beliefs, practices, and attitudes which is so characteristic of modern

life is not inconsistent with Judaism. To search is not to deny; it is rather a part of and a prelude to belief. A Center worker should be a person who asks questions, hears many perspectives, seeks answers, and encourages others to do the same.

VI. A Caring Person

"V'ahavta L'reacha Kamocha" 7tt~o 7vi5 na~tst

You Should Love Others as Yourself.

Caring for other people is one of the great virtues of Jewish civilization (as it is of many other civilizations). Work in the caring professions begins with the ability to reach out to people, to be concerned for their lives, and to enjoy their human qualities. The concern for the other great Jewish virtues that we have mentioned should never overshadow caring for others as a foremost Jewish dimension of Center life. Indeed, our Jewish heritage, as much as our professional credo, requires us as Center professionals to be human beings who are concerned for the hearts and souls of people.

The qualities we have described may seem so ideal and so removed from our daily lives that we sometimes despair of ever realizing them. However, Jewish tradition teaches us that they "are not in Heaven"; i.e., they are not intended to be unattainable or the special legacy of a select few. We all can aspire to and realize these virtues in our daily lives if we but try. Sometimes we will succeed and sometimes we will fall short; the very act of attempting to realize a genuine Jewish lifestyle is in itself a great virtue. Indeed, the constant and exciting struggle to come closer to these ideals is the true hallmark of the Center professional.

How To Get Started

This guide is meant to help you design a consistent and effective program of Jewish education and enrichment for your staff. The first step in developing such a program is motivating the staff to want to study, which entails a recognition of the need for study: the staff must believe that its own Jewish self-growth is important. There are psychological blocks to overcome in any learning process, and you may encounter such blocks from staff in the area of Jewish learning. We will identify some typical blocks that we have observed, and pass along what we have learned from the experiences of others.

To learn, a person first has to say: "I don't know." This acknowledgement of ignorance is not easy for most adults. You can help staff by explaining that "I don't know" is the starting point of one of life's most exciting opportunities -- the opportunity to learn and grow. "I don't know" is really an acknowledgement of strength and openness to new learning.

Jewish learning is intimately bound up with Jewish doing and Jewish behavior. Often, when learning about Jewishness and Judaism, staff will ask: "Do I have to do this? Am I being proselytized? Is the agency trying to dictate behavior?" The answer to all these questions is an emphatic "No!" What, then, are the reasons for staff to acquire Jewish knowledge? On the most elementary level, it is to do a better job. Working with any specific group requires knowledge of that group's unique culture and way of life. For example, in order for a community organizer to serve the Hispanic community it is necessary for him or her to know about the role and place of the Church. The same is true for Jewish community staff working with the Center's clientele.

Staff members frequently ask whether their level of Jewish knowledge will become part of their evaluation or personnel file, whether their level of compensation or professional advancement hinge on their level of Jewish knowledge. Our experience has shown us that staff need to be reassured in this area. Lack of knowledge should never be used to penalize

staff as long as there is a willingness and commitment to learn and grow. What should be evaluated is attitude toward learning -- the openness to Jewish learning, not knowledge.

One of the great obstacles to learning you may encounter from staff involves the relationship between Jewish learning and program implementation. Frequently, staff may feel pressured to immediately translate knowledge into service. When this happens, the learning atmosphere suffers. The pressure to implement results in a too-hasty staff "editing" of what is learned, with some knowledge labelled as useful, and other knowledge discarded as irrelevant. Staff needs to be shown that learning takes place for the sake of learning, and that program development based on that learning will be a normal and natural result. The purpose of Jewish educational programs for staff is Jewish knowledge. When the pressure for program production is removed, staff will be free to learn, and to implement.

In the process of acquiring Jewish knowledge, questions are often raised about personal Jewish legitimacy and Jewish authenticity. A staff person may be intimidated when discovering something new that is different from his or her current practice or belief. Jewish self-doubt may ensue. Staff training has to be presented so that it is not perceived as judgmental. Its philosophy ought to be based on the following postulates:

1. This is the received Jewish past.
2. These are its several contemporary interpretations and applications.
3. Every Jew has the obligation and the right to choose and edit.
4. The Agency does not judge or place a value on the outcome of this process of choosing and editing.

Your first task is to help staff reflect upon their Jewishness, their sense of Jewish identity and knowledge, and to thus aspire to self-improvement and growth. This process will certainly take time, and may well be difficult, but it is worth the effort since it is the critical prelude to next stages. In the end, staff attitude is the key to success.

There are several steps we suggest to implement the Jewish learning process. Begin by engaging staff in discussions about the agency's Jewish purposes and their relationship to Jewish identity. These discussions could include the following issues:

1. What does the agency's Statement of Purpose say?
2. How has this Statement been understood and implemented in the past?
3. How could the agency's Statement of Purpose be otherwise interpreted in the future? Are there other ways in which to act upon it.
4. What is the relationship between the Statement of Purpose and the reality of current forms of American identity?
5. What are the various expressions of Jewish identity among Jews in your community? How can the Center support and enhance those expressions of Jewish identity?
6. What about those Jews whose identity appears to be unarticulated?
7. Does the Center have an interest in fostering Jewish identity? Why?
8. What forms of Jewish identity is the Center not yet suited to foster? Of these, which ought the Center leave to other organizations, and with which ought it to work?
9. What forms of Jewish identity are available in North America?

Critical to this process of discussion are staff attitudes, feelings, and thoughts. Conversations should include opportunities for staff to identify their concerns and ambivalences about implementing the Jewish purposes of the agency. The more these issues are aired, the more likely it is that the staff will be open to the educational process.

Having allowed staff to air their personal and professional concerns, and, it is hoped, achieved a sense of common purpose, you are ready to move on to assessment. Before designing a program, you need an accurate evaluation of the staff's knowledge and Jewish learning needs. Several instruments for measuring Jewish knowledge are available from JWB.

At this stage of program design, staff participation is critical. You may want to institute a Staff Development Committee charged with responsibility for developing the Jewish educational training program. This will give staff members a real sense of "ownership," of responsibility for their learning. You will need to identify the staff person -- Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, or Jewish Program Director -- who will chair the Staff Development Committee. In addition, you might consider using an outside

consultant to work with the Committee's chairperson, possibly a local rabbi or a staff member at the local bureau of Jewish education. The chairperson of the Staff Development Committee should study this guide together with the Committee, comparing the information the guide sets forth with the Jewish needs assessment that has been conducted. The staff should also have the opportunity to state what they want and need to study.

At this point, you will be faced with the challenge of developing a Jewish Studies Staff Training program that is consistent with your available resources. The local college of Jewish studies, Bureau of Jewish Education, the Board of Rabbis, or university Department of Jewish Studies can help in your deliberations.

Once the committee and staff have decided the kinds and number of courses, selected teachers, and explored other opportunities for study, a mutually agreed upon learning contract needs to be developed. This process can be carried out in a series of staff meetings, but the best method is to use an all-day retreat. Such a retreat should be preceded by having the staff read the introduction to this guide, especially the section on the ideal JCC professional. Other parts of this guide can also serve as the text for retreats, institutes, or meetings.

It is important to involve the Board in this process. They must believe in and support Jewish staff education and growth, and they should be kept informed on a regular basis of your progress. You may also want to develop a parallel process of sensitizing the Board to these Jewish educational concerns and tasks.

At JWB, the Director of Staff Training and Retention and the Consultant on Jewish Educational Programming are ready to assist you in the implementation of this process. The Commission on Maximizing Jewish Educational Effectiveness of Jewish Community Centers stated that the desire and capacity of the JCC professional staff to develop innovative Jewish educational programs and services determine the Center's ability to fulfill its Jewish education mission. Centers have rich Jewish educational programs when:

- a) The Center director places a high priority on Jewish education and transmits this commitment in his/her practice.
- b) Center professional staffs bring the knowledge of their own discipline, a commitment to the purposes of the agency and the Jewish background and desire to implement Jewish programs and services.

There is a need for a greater number of Jewishly committed and knowledgeable professional staff in Jewish Community Centers. At the same time, Centers must continue to increase the level of Jewish knowledge and skills of existing staff.

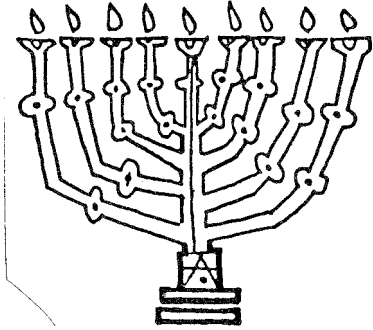
A Hasidic story tells of Rabbi Zusya saying the following before he died:

"In the world to come they will not ask me, 'why were you not Moses?'

They will ask me: 'Why were you not Zusya?'"

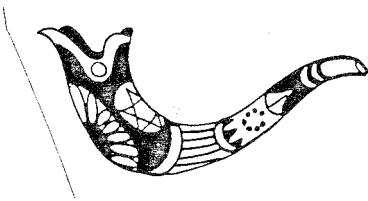
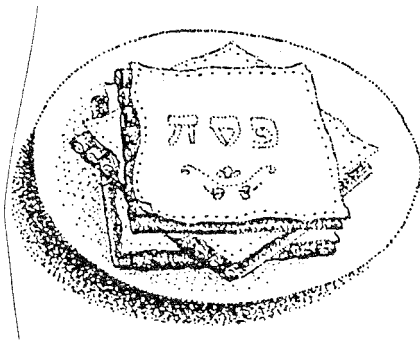
Our task is to attempt to become the very best Jewish Center professionals that we can in this day and age. Our tradition tells us that the vision of a better educated Center professional is not in heaven, nor are we free to desist from attempting to realize that great vision in our daily lives. This guide is an invitation to Centers, executive boards, and staff to begin to study and learn about that great treasure called Judaism.

The day is short and the work is great and the workers are tired... but the Master of the House waits.



J [WISH IDEAS

- A Summary of Key Ideas
- Course Outline
- General Essay and Review of the Subject Area



Some Key Ideas

1. Jewish ideas describe the basic purposes of Jewish life and Jewish self-understanding.
2. Jewish ideas emerge out of the texts of Judaism.
3. Jewish ideas arise out of the need to explain Judaism and Jewishness to ourselves and to others.
4. Jewish ideas are an attempt to present organizing principles that lend coherence and consistency to Jewish practice and ritual.
5. Jewish ideas are an attempt to explain Jewish history.
6. Jewish ideas are the product of the effort to systematically present and understand Jewish belief.
7. There are several key Jewish ideas expressed in the following concepts:
 - a. Kedushah - Holiness
 - b. Mitzvot - Deed or Commandment
 - c. Brit - Covenant
 - d. Tzelem Elokim - The Image of God In Which All Are Created
 - e. Tikkun Olam - The Obligation to Perfect the World
8. The central preoccupation of Jewish ideas is to explain the greatest of all mysteries, God.

Thirteen Lessons on Jewish Ideas

- I. The Role and Purpose of Ideas in Human Experience
- II. The Texts of Jewish Ideas
 - a. Torah
 - b. Rabbinics
 - c. Philosophy
 - d. Mysticism
- III. The Circumstances of Jewish Ideas in History
 - a. The Bible
 - b. The Rabbis
- IV. The Circumstances of Jewish Ideas in History (Cont'd)
 - a. Philosophy
 - b. Mysticism
- V. God: Who Is He and What Does He Want?
- VI. Creation in the Image of God
- VII. Covenant, Contract Making, and Relationship With God
- VIII. The Land of Israel, Its Role, Purpose, and Place
- IX. Kedushah: The Life of Sanctity and Holiness
- X. Mitzvot: Commandment or Deed - The Function, Structure, and Purposes of Jewish Ritual and Deed.
- XI. Tikkun Olam: Perfecting the World
- XII. The Purpose of the Jewish People
- XIII. Issues in Modern Jewish Thought
 - a. Good and evil in light of the Holocaust
 - b. The emergence of Jewish power in the Land of Israel

Some Jewish Ideas: An Overview

We live in a society whose major cultural influence is the TV screen, a society in which deep ideas either scare people or are presented in so superficial a manner that they are not taken seriously. Ours is not a society of ideas. The Jewish world on the other hand, not only takes ideas seriously but has developed ways to make them accessible. Unfortunately, Judaism is too often reduced to ritual observance and behavior, without much emphasis on underlying ideas and concepts. Too often Jewish ideas are either presented as overly complicated or are reduced to the lowest common denominator. The too-complicated idea is unavailable; the overly simple idea seems too obvious, like "apple pie and motherhood." Jewish ideas are, however, accessible and understandable to everyone, even though they are not simple, even though they are, at times, complicated. This section's purpose is to help you enter the new, but hospitable, world of Jewish ideas. In fact, while reading it, you will every now and then say to yourself, "Aha, I know that." This section will, at times, merely re-arrange information that you already have, or identify patterns whose components are known to you.

Where do Jewish ideas begin? They begin with the Torah, and that in itself is a source of the problem. The Torah is not a book that sets forth ideas in a systematic fashion. The Torah is certainly filled with concepts, but they are usually expressed in one of two ways:

1) **The Action Narrative.** This is the record of the meeting of God and person, and God and Israel. For example, the narrative of the Exodus from Egypt is about the equal sanctity of all life; therefore an expression of the idea that no person can be slave to another. The narrative of the creation of the world teaches that the universe has order, and life has purpose. These ideas have to be mined or extracted from the ore of the text. The narrative functions like a parable. We have to draw out from the action narrative the lesson or the idea. 2) **Mitzvot/Commandments.** The Torah is filled with commandments and specific laws. The reasons behind the laws are not

always given and even when the reason is apparent, the commandment expresses an idea which is its deeper source. For example, the Torah says that Jews should not charge interest when making loans. The reason is obvious: It's not nice! If somebody needs money, a loan should be given as an act of support and kindness. Yet, behind this lies a deeper idea, an idea that gives us a clue to understanding other commandments. In this case, the Torah says you shouldn't lend money with interest because God took you out of Egypt. Now, what does Egypt have to do with loans and interest? One of the central ideas of the liberation from slavery is that no one should ever be oppressed. There are a variety of forms of oppression besides slavery. The control that one person exerts over another through interest and usury smacks of oppression. This same idea is expressed in the Torah's prohibition against the use of false weights and measures in the sale of goods, and the conduct of business. They are forbidden, not just as a form of stealing and cheating, but because "God took us out of Egypt." To cheat in business is to violate the basic idea of being liberated from slavery.

It is, however, not enough just to identify the Torah as the beginning point of Jewish ideas. Jewish ideas are formulated through a complex process which includes the following:

1. Text and Fantasy. The text of the Torah, like many other great ancient works, is brief in its description and careful with each word. It hides more than it discloses. The human mind with its capacity for fantasy is tantalized by the mystery, by the secrets not revealed, by the ideas merely hinted at. When the Torah says that at Sinai, "Moses went up to God," we are left wondering. How does one go up to God? Where is God? Where is Moses? Where are they when they are together? Jewish ideas emerge in the attempt to answer these questions, to fill in the blank spaces. Or, for example, when the Torah says that work or labor is prohibited on the Sabbath, it doesn't define work or labor. Jewish ideas emerge in the attempt to understand the underlying purposes of the laws. Thus, one component in the process of Jewish idea formation is human curiosity, the insatiable desire to understand the patterns, and to demonstrate that the Torah is a seamless cloth with coherent and consistent patterns. Jewish ideas, then, are very much the product of the common human attempt to understand reality. Whether it is examining

economic data or governmental pronouncements, the human mind regularly searches for patterns to connect bits of data. Jewish ideas are the end product of the attempt to make sense out of Jewish data.

2. Text and Reality. Another component of the process of Jewish idea formation is the encounter between text and reality. Jewish ideas are born out of the attempt to reconcile the fact that reality, as experienced by Jews and the Jewish people is rarely, if ever, consistent with what the Torah says it should be. The most prominent and simple example comes from the verse, "And it shall be if you will listen to the voice of the Lord, your God, to keep His commandments then all these blessings will come upon you and overtake you." (Deut. 28: 1-2) Virtually every Jewish community in history has had to deal with the reality that piety and proper Jewish behavior do not guarantee good fortune, happiness, or success, not to mention physical safety and security. Throughout the ages, Jews who have been faithful to the text have asked questions, speculated and thought about such dilemmas. These questions and their answers are the substance of Jewish ideas. The burden of reality and Jewish faithfulness to text and tradition are the circumstances that produce Jewish ideas, or to put it differently, Jewish ideas serve as the bridge between what ought to be, and what is; between the ideal and the reality. Why is there evil? Why do the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper? The confrontation between reality and text causes people to think and Jewish ideas to emerge.

3. Text and the World. Jews are human beings who, in the main, have historically lived in two worlds. This causes certain things to happen. First, Jews have to figure out how to live in two worlds. Second, Jews try to explain their world to the general culture in which they find themselves, and, sometimes, they become apologetic. Third, when Jews find the general culture attractive, as often happens, they attempt to incorporate ideas of the host culture into Judaism, so as to make it consistent with contemporary ideas. This interaction with the world results in a continuing process of reconsideration, rejection, adaptation, and reinterpretation. For example, Jewish thought in America today is deeply influenced by feminist thinking. Jews living in those societies deeply influenced by Greek philosophy attempted to understand Torah using the

language and concepts of Greek philosophy. In the Center movement it often happens that people are deeply influenced by the principles of group work and Jewish experience.

Thus, in Jewish life, even the most common of our practices, beliefs, and rituals express important ideas about human life. The richness of Jewish life does indeed express a set of profound ideas. All of our holidays, life cycle celebrations, prayers, and communal gestures express Jewish ideas that have been centuries in the making. Jewish ideas represent a systematic attempt to understand human experience, and the reality common to all who inhabit the planet; to answer the question: why are people the way they are, what makes us tick?

Each of the following paragraphs defines a basic Jewish idea. Our purpose is not to tell you what to believe. Rather, we want to explain some basic Jewish ideas in a way that does not always reflect the variety of current Jewish interpretation and belief. What is attempted is a definition that is in our judgment broad and inclusive, and reflective of classical belief. We seek to present material that in the main is acceptable to all the denominations as a record of what Jews have believed. These definitions are not a description of the complex state of current belief. They do, however, provide the tools for understanding the current state of Jewish understandings of basic Jewish ideas. These definitions merely point the way without completing the journey. Thus, we present what most Jews have traditionally believed about the following:

1. God: Jewish understandings of God are the most fundamental and complex of all Jewish ideas. All other Jewish ideas flow from conceptions of God. Jews traditionally believe that God is uniquely and absolutely one; that God is in no way physical; that God is beyond time and space; that God cannot be seen; that no image or likeness of God is possible in human depiction or characterization; that He created the universe; and that God selected Abraham and Sarah and their children as His chosen people, redeemed them from Egypt, revealed Himself at Sinai, gave them the Torah, and then brought them to the Land of Israel.

2. Creation. Judaism believes that the one God created the universe. Thus, creation has purpose because it is the intentional work of God. It is not an accident. With this belief comes the Jewish conviction that Torah contains God's purposes for his creation. The belief in the one creator, God, signifies that there is harmony and order in creation, and that the task of humans is to seek that harmony and unity. Those who are in conflict are seen as unnatural. Another consequence of this is that God and nature are not synonymous. Storms are not caused by Neptune, disease is not caused by spirits. God, who is separate from His creation, creates nature to function with its own created and inherent rules. Understanding and learning these rules is the pursuit of science. As God's creation, nature is sacred and not ours to do with as we please. There is another important idea related to creation. In Hebrew, its term is Tzelem Elokim, translated as the "Image of God." In the narrative of creation, the Torah says that human beings, all people, are created in Tzelem Elokim, the Image of God. This is the basis of all Jewish ethics and inter-personal relations. Every human being is endowed with absolute sanctity; all life is sacred; all people are to be treated with dignity and decency because all life is fashioned in the Image of God, who is the source of all sanctity. That one God creates all in the same manner rather than many Gods creating differentially is the source of human equality. Consequently, despite the fact that creation is a mystery and that we cannot imagine how it is that God creates, there emerges, from the belief in creation, a set of ideas that give meaning to and explain a variety of Jewish practices and traditions. Nature is not to be polluted because God created the world. Human beings are not to be murdered because every human being is created in the Image of God.

3. Revelation. How does one meet God? How does one know God's mind, intent, and purpose? Jews believe that at Sinai, God revealed Himself to People Israel. This means that not only did God give the Torah; it also means that He introduces Himself to Israel as one person introduces himself to another. This is admittedly a great mystery, but the Torah describes God's revelation in much the same way that it describes any encounter between human beings. After

all, the Torah is written in human language for that is the only language that we know. It is important to understand that when God reveals Himself to Israel, Israel does not see an image, but merely hears a voice, and that what crosses the abyss that separates God, the Infinite, from human beings, the finite, are words -- the words of prayer, and the words of God's commandments.

4. Covenant. The main activity that takes place during the revelation at Sinai is the making of the Covenant. Covenant is a fancy word for a contract between God and Israel, a set of understandings which describe the terms of a relationship. Essentially, the Covenant is quite simple: God says to Israel that if you keep the Torah you will be rewarded with a good life and, conversely, if you don't keep the Torah, you will be punished. However, the Covenant contains a broader and deeper formula. Essentially, the Covenant is the marriage-making or the establishment of the relationship between God and Israel. God says to Israel, "I will be your God if you will be My own treasured people." As in any contract, or any set of understandings that govern relationships like marriage, the terms are spelled out and embody a set of expectations. All relationship is made up of expectations, written and implicit. The Covenant is the set of expectations that God has of Israel, and Israel has of God. The unique feature of the Jewish Covenant is that not only does God have expectations of Israel, but Israel traditionally has the right to have expectations of God. Both parties to the Covenant have obligations to each other and there are consequences for non-performance of those obligations. The Covenant presents to the Jewish people the belief that even in a relationship that involves God, there is a degree of mutuality and equality, and both parties have the right to have expectations of the other. This idea of the mutuality of Covenant has given birth to a Jewish tradition of calling God to task for non-fulfillment or non-performance, in the face of Jewish suffering.

5. Land. A full and natural existence for a people can be lived only upon a land of its own. The Land of Israel is the promise made to Abraham, to be given to his and Sarah's children. It is God's gift in response to Abraham and Sarah's commitment to start the Jewish people and to bring their children into God's Covenant. The purpose, then, of liberation from

Egypt is, in fact, travel to and settlement in the Land of Israel. Living upon the land in prosperity and success is a reward to the Jewish people for fulfilling the terms of the Covenant. Living upon the land and engaging in normal day-to-day life, commerce, agriculture, society building, and family building is the means by which Israel will develop its own specific culture and its unique way of living as a "light to the nations." Exile from the land is traditionally seen as punishment for sin, as an unnatural or undesirable state. The land is understood as a place where Israel is at home, and to which Israel will, in the end, return.

6. Kedushah/Sanctity. In the Hebrew language, the word kedushah means separateness, uniqueness, distinctiveness. To be kadosh or sacred means to be special, separate, or apart, different from that which is ordinary, plain and simple. Many things in the Torah are described as sacred: There are sacred days such as the Sabbath and the holidays. There is a sacred language, Hebrew. There is a sacred people, Israel. There is a sacred land, the Land of Israel. And the Torah presents a sacred way of life as embodied in the Commandments. Sanctity or kedushah has been understood as that which results from coming closer to God by living a special way of life. The further one is from God, the further one is from sanctity. The spiritual category of sanctity is achieved by leading a special way of life. For the modern person, kedushah is admittedly a difficult concept to grasp. Kedushah implies that something has a value and importance that transcends its specific circumstances. Kedushah means that to perceive a human being as merely a biological entity is to miss the point. Because they are created in the image of God, human beings have a value that is more than the sum total of their parts. Shabbat is not just another day; it is separate and distinct and therefore holy. More simply stated, kedushah means that something -- a place, a person, an act, a thing, a word -- has an absolute value beyond its mere self. Kedushat HaChayim, the sanctity of daily life activities, is a unique feature of Judaism. It is not just that a priest, or the Sabbath, or a Torah Scroll is holy. Rather all of life's activities -- farming, business, art, writing, plumbing -- have the potential for sanctity. The arena of kedushah is daily life, which regularly presents opportunities for transforming the ordinary into the holy. Kedushah is not limited to our relationship with God.

The returning of lost objects, or the building of a house which is safe from obstacles that could hurt other human beings are seen as holy acts in that they testify that human life is sacred and must, therefore, be secured. The experience of kedushah is the experience of something beyond one's self, the experience that one and others have an ultimate and transcendent value.

7. Mitzvah/Commandment or Deed. Mitzvah in Hebrew is often translated as commandment. The Torah is filled with God's Commandments. All the Commandments fall into one of two categories: those that govern person-to-God relationships, and those that govern person-to-person relationships. Mitzvah is understood as the way of achieving holiness by having a set of specific behaviors with which to concretize and act out specific beliefs. It is not enough to believe that the Sabbath is holy; one has to act as if it is holy. It is not enough to simply love thy neighbor as thyself; one must act out the holiness through acts of lovingkindness. Judaism has shied away from abstract principles and, hence has developed a complicated system of detailed mitzvot by which to actualize thoughts, feelings and ideas. It is not enough to remember that Passover is the season of liberation; one must act it out in such deeds as eating bitter herbs and eating matzoh. The 613 mitzvot are actualized expressions of basic Jewish ideas.

8. Tikkun Olam/Perfecting the World. Judaism has a belief that people are God's partners in creation, and that one of the supreme tasks of being God's partner in creation is to make this world a better place: hence the abiding and passionate Jewish commitment to social justice. This world is in need of redemption. Redemption means making sure that there is less poverty, less suffering, less illness, and less hunger. There are all sorts of mitzvot that obligate Jews to fix this world in order to make it a better place. This work is seen as sacred work, and is seen as fulfilling the belief that human beings are created in the image of God. For Judaism, the focus of redemption is this world, and ultimately redemption will happen in this world. Until that ultimate redemption happens, Judaism believes it is the responsibility of every Jew to fix this world, even if just a little.

9. Kehillah/Community It is a simple and basic truth that for the Jewish people life is with people. Kehillah means the Jewish community organized in a systematic and disciplined fashion to achieve its basic goals of maintaining and living a unique and sacred way of life. The Jewish community has throughout its history, organized itself in a variety of different ways to achieve these goals. What is common to all Jewish communities is the belief that the community should be organized. Furthermore, what is basic to the notion of kehillah is that not only is every Jew a member of the kehillah, but that, in fact, one cannot really lead a Jewish life without the kehillah or the community. It is not just that certain functions such as prayer cannot be achieved without a quorum of ten; rather that life itself can only be lived together and with other Jews. Judaism seeks not just individual perfection, it seeks collective perfection, it seeks a special way of life, not just for individuals, but for a whole people. To this end, people must organize themselves.

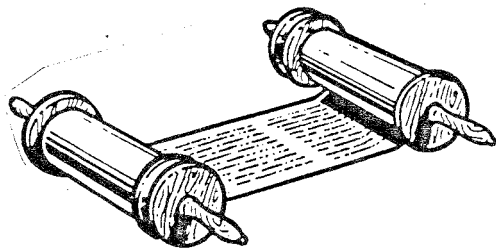
10. Torah. Torah means the Five Books of Moses. Torah means the written and the oral tradition. Torah means the whole history of Jewish study and learning. And Torah means something else: Torah means that it is not just enough to observe a unique way of life, but that all Jews must, in some fashion, continue to educate themselves. The study of Torah has traditionally been seen as the way in which Jews come to understand the will and the intent of God. The study of Torah is also viewed as a way of communicating with God, for His intent or intellect is expressed in the Torah. This belief in the supreme value of Torah study has given birth to the basic Jewish value of education as a means by which people must constantly grow.

11. Peoplehood. Judaism believes that one can know God, live the good life, and fulfill Torah only as a member of the Jewish people. All the previously discussed ideas are realized only in peoplehood. Peoplehood means that the Jewish way of life is lived in the context of a whole people functioning as a people. The Covenant is with the people, God reveals Himself to the people. And only the people, not an isolated individual, can achieve the goals of Jewishness. The promise of chosenness is made to Abraham and Sarah, and to their biological offspring. Peoplehood is just another term for family. God has a family and that family is

Israel, and just as in an ordinary family, every member needs the others. So too, in the family Israel, everyone needs everyone else. Out of this idea emerges the Jewish notion that each Jew is responsible, and indeed, accountable, for every other Jew.

Bibliographical Note On Jewish Ideas

Books in the area of Jewish theology, philosophy, and ideas are almost as numerous as the stars in the sky. They range from the general to the highly specialized and esoteric. The most accessible and useful are Basic Judaism by Milton Steinberg, Judaism by Michael Fishbane, and Understanding Jewish Theology by Jacob Neusner. Specialized anthologies are available on specific areas of Jewish thought, and the book stores and book catalogs should be explored.



JEWISH TEXTS AND SOURCES

- A Summary of Key Ideas
- Course Outline
- General Essay and Review
of the Subject Area
- Brief Bibliography

Some Key Ideas

- 1 Jewish existence throughout the ages has been rooted in the belief in the importance of Torah for our lives.
2. The Jewish religious and literary heritage is based on the Tanakh (Torah -- the Five Books of Moses, Neviim -- the Prophets, and Kethubim -- the Writings) and the Talmud. These books have been the subject of perpetual interpretation and commentary by great rabbis and teachers throughout the ages, and their commentaries have also become part of the great Jewish literary heritage.
3. While Jewish literature has been rooted in these great original religious texts, it has also been influenced by ideas and literary forms from other cultures. Thus, the Jewish literary heritage is very diverse, both in terms of its ideas and the styles it encompasses.
4. Jewish literature has been written in Hebrew as well as in other Jewish languages (Yiddish and Ladino) and in the languages of the surrounding non-Jewish communities.
5. Contemporary Jewish literature continues to deal with some of the themes that have preoccupied Jews throughout the ages (e.g., Torah and life; holiness and profanity) as well as raising new and uniquely modern subjects (the break with religion; Jewish guilt; alienation.)

A Sixteen-Lesson Great Jewish Texts and Sources Course

- I. Torah }
- II. Prophets } Bible
- III. Writings }
- IV. Misnah } Talmud
- V. Gemara }
- VI. The Rabbinic Commentaries
- VII. Midrash
- VIII. The Prayerbook
- IX. Jewish Philosophic Literature
- X. Jewish Ethical Literature
- XI. The Literature of Hasidism
- XII. Jewish Music
- XIII. Jewish Art
- XIV. Modern Hebrew Literature
- XV. Modern Yiddish Literature
- XVI. Modern American-Jewish Literature

These sixteen topics might serve as the subject of a staffs annual study program or of a regular academic course or of a two-year institute and retreat program. Specific sessions would be devoted to studying the background and contents of specific texts.

Jewish Texts and Sources

We are "the people of the book," and the story of the Jewish people is the record of our connection to sacred texts. Indeed, we might more accurately be called "the people of the books," since Jews have written and cherished books across centuries and continents. To be a Jew is to study texts and the written word, and to love the tension between ancient texts and contemporary experience.

The Jewish commitment to books is rooted in the Book of Books -- the Torah. Jews have studied Torah throughout the ages in order to understand God's vision and plan for the world. The word "Torah" has several meanings. First, it refers to the first five books of the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible). Second, it describes the scroll we read in synagogues on the Sabbath, Mondays, Thursdays, and holidays. Third, the word "Torah" is used in a broad sense to describe the study of the great Jewish texts. Until our day, the study of texts ("talmud torah") has always been one of the most important ways in which Jews have expressed their Jewishness.

The central Jewish text is the Tanakh, which is made up of thirty-nine books divided into three sections: Torah (the Five Books of Moses or Pentateuch); Neviim (the Prophets); Kethubim (the Writings). Tanakh has been the basis of most subsequent Jewish writing, commentary, and religious literature.

However, the Bible is not the only holy text in Jewish tradition. The Talmud is a massive compendium of Jewish law, thought, ethics, and commentary which developed between the sixth century B.C.E. and the sixth century C.E. It too has been of remarkable importance throughout Jewish history. Indeed, the word "Torah" is applied to both the Bible and the Talmud: Torah she bkhtav means the written Torah or Law and it refers to the thirty-nine books of the Bible. Torah shebalpeh means the Oral Torah or Oral Law and it refers to the

six volumes or orders of the Talmud. The Bible and the Talmud are the two cornerstones of the Jewish literary heritage.

Jews have, for many centuries, discussed the origins and interpretations of these two great creations. Some Jews believe that both these works were given by God to Moses at Mt. Sinai, after the Exodus from Egypt -- Torah m'Sinai, meaning the Torah was given at Mount Sinai; others believe that the Torah and the Talmud are great human creations which developed over the ages. All agree that both are profound religious documents, which together are the Magna Carta and Constitution of Judaism and the Jewish people. It is therefore no wonder that the study of these two great creations has been the mainstay of Jewish education throughout the ages.

Indeed, much of the Jewish literary heritage after the Talmudic era is a series of commentaries and explanations of these texts by great scholars. These include Rashi (France, 1040 - 1105), Maimonides (Egypt 1135 - 1204), Moses Mendelssohn (Germany, 1729 - 1786) and Martin Buber (Germany, 1878 - 1965). Each new commentary adds new wisdom and attempts to relate the teachings of Torah and Talmud to contemporary times. These commentaries are often remarkably provocative and immediate, but they all begin with a commitment to the great original texts.

Indeed, the greatness of the Oral and Written Law is that they continue to speak to human beings and human societies throughout the ages, in different ways and with powerful immediacy. Their style may be of a different era (an era of "thou's" and tribes and cubits), but their truths remain relevant for our lives as Jews today and for our work in contemporary Jewish Community Centers.

Jews throughout the ages have manifested a deep commitment to the study of these great texts. This has not always been easy. The holy texts are written in a strange language, using metaphors and similes from a different age. It is particularly difficult to begin to study these texts in adulthood. We all feel this frustration, whether professor, rabbi, Center

professional, and lay leader. But Jewish tradition has continually emphasized that it is never too late, never too difficult, to begin.

The Bible, the Talmud, and their commentaries are the major foundations of the Jewish literary heritage; however, the Jewish literary heritage did not end with their completion. In addition to these works, there has been a constant outpouring of Jewish literary creation throughout the Middle Ages up to the modern era. These works have included collections of Jewish law, mystical and philosophic literature, religious poetry, and ethical literature. Jewish literature throughout the ages has been influenced by the general cultures in which it was produced, and it might sometimes be philosophical or moral, or even sensual and profane! Jews wrote holy books, but they were very much part of and influenced by the not-so-holy worlds in which they lived.

The direction of the Jewish literary heritage has changed radically from the eighteenth century to our own day as Jews entered the modern era. New themes and literary styles have emerged and the Torah and Talmud were no longer the sole subject. Hebrew essayists wrote about politics, socialism, and a homeland. Yiddish satirists mocked religion, rabbis, and piety. Poets wrote in Hebrew about love, suffering, and American Jewish novelists wrote about their loss of roots, their loneliness, identity crises, and Jewish parents.

Some have argued that the new Jewish literary creations deal with the same great classical themes of Judaism -- religion, morality, chosenness -- only in modern garb. Others have argued that modern Jewish writing constitutes a major break with the great sources of Jewish literary creativity and that we are now pre-occupied with an entirely new set of themes: emancipation, secularism, guilt.

Both sides are correct. Our ancestors cannot dispense with us so easily! Many of the so-called modern questions our new Jewish writers deal with are, in fact, topics which have preoccupied Jews for centuries. Yet, we are indeed a new breed. Whereas our ancestors constantly saw the presence of God in history, we are more likely to have difficulty finding Him in history or in our lives. Whereas our ancestors lived in tightly-knit and self-enclosed

Jewish communities which were permeated with the Jewish spirit, we live in sprawling suburbs and in modern secular societies. The contemporary Jewish literary heritage reflects both ties with and breaks from the great religious literature of the past.

Thus, we can list a long and magnificent tradition of many great Jewish literary creations, from the lofty prophecy of Jeremiah (640 – 609 B.C.E.) and Hosea (785-745 B.C.E.) to the passionate religious poetry of Yehuda Halevi (c 1075 - 1141) to the great ethical literature of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter (1810 - 1883), to the gentle love poetry of Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai (1924 -). The creativity has not died, and continues in our very day in Hebrew, English, and a multitude of other languages. There are so many books and so much creativity that it is impossible to summarize this great legacy neatly. Still, some themes seem to have persisted and to have obsessed our great writers.

Jewish literature throughout the ages has been constantly concerned with the meaning of Torah for Jewish life. It has continually attempted to understand Torah and explain its relevance for the contemporary lives of Jews.

Jewish literature throughout the ages has been constantly concerned with the tension between a sacred tradition and the realities of ever-changing life and society. How can one cling to an ancient tradition and still be part of a changing world?

Jewish literature has been obsessed with Jewish uniqueness, while at the same time flirting with general culture. Jews preserved their own unique literary forms, while freely borrowing and adapting the surrounding culture's poetry, philosophy, essays, and ethics. The story of the Jewish literary heritage is, in many ways, the story of the Jewish attempt to retain its uniqueness while at the same time interacting with the larger non-Jewish world.

Finally, Jewish literature is, in many ways, about the challenge and the crisis of being holy in a profane cosmos. It reflects the chutzpah of attempting to perpetuate piety in a world which is just the opposite. Some of our literature is the record of success in this endeavor, and some is the story of failure.

It is a long path from the majestic opening sentences of Genesis to the novels of Philip Roth or Saul Bellow or the short stories of A.B. Yehoshua or Aharon Appelfeld. This long path reflects the glory, the pain, and the diversity of a people wrestling with its own uniqueness.

A Bibliographic Stroll Through the Jewish Literary Heritage

The Bible

The Jewish literary tradition begins with the Bible, that amazing compilation of history, philosophy, ethics, poetry, and law which recounts the origins and the credo of the Jewish people. The Bible encompasses a medley of subjects, including: The Covenant between God and Israel; the meaning and plan of God for the world; the ethical and religious mitzvot; the meaning of good and evil, life and death, holiness and profanity; the moral imperative. The best source for coming to understand the Bible is the Bible itself. The most reliable translation of the Hebrew text is the Jewish Publication Society's Tanakh (1985). An excellent commentary on the Torah is Gunther Plaut's The Torah: A Modern Commentary. (Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1982.) Nahum Sarna's Understanding Genesis (Schocken, 1970) and Exploring Exodus (Schocken, 1986) are helpful guides.

The Bible (Tanakh)

The Law (Torah) -- Pentateuch

	<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Verses</u>	<u>Letters</u>
Genesis	50	1534	78,064
Exodus	40	1209	63,529
Leviticus	27	859	44,790
Numbers	36	1288	63,530
Deuteronomy	34	955	54,892
	187	5845	304,805

The Prophets (Nevi'im)

Foziner Prophets

Joshua	24
Judges	21
I Samuel	31

Mishnah	Babylonian		Jerusalem		Subject Matter
	Talmud *	Talmud	Talmud	Talmud	
No. of Chapters	No of Folios	Folios Munich Ed.	No. of Folios		
<u>Order Nashim</u>					
Yevamot	16	122	24	16	Levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5-10) and halitzah
Ketubbot	13	112	20	12	Marriage contracts
Nedarim	11	91	10	7	Vows (Num. 6)
Nazir	9	66	8	8	The Nazirite (Num. 6)
Sotah	9	49	11	9	The suspected adulteress (Num. 5:11 ff.)
Gittin	9	90	16	7	Divorce
Kiddushim	4	82	14	9	Marriage; legal acquisition of bondsmen, chattel and real estate
<u>Order Nezikim</u>					
Bava Kamma	10	119	22	7	Torts: cases of compensation for theft, robbery or violence
Bava Metzia	10	119	20	6	Civil law: found property; bailments; hiring; leasing; joint owner
Bava Batra	10	176	21	6	Property law, including rights & restrictions
Sanhedrin	11	113	24	14	Judges; courts; arbitration; procedure; capital cases, dogma
Makkot	3	24	5	3	Flagellation (Deut. 25:2): treatment of perjurers; cities of refuge
Shevu'ot	8	49	9	7	Oaths
Eduyyot	8		4		Traditional testimonies
Avodah Zarah	5	76	13		Idolatry
Avot	5	--	2		Ethical maxims and aphorisms
Horayot	3	14	4	4	Erroneous ruling of the court (Lev. 4:22 ff.)
<u>Order Kodashim</u>					
Zevachim	14	120	21		Animal offerings and their procedure; conditions of acceptability
Menahot	13	110	21		Meal and drink offerings
Hullin	12	142	25		Slaughtering of animals & birds
Bekhorot	9	61	13		Firstlings (Deut. 15:19 ff) and tithing (Lev. 27: 32-33)
Arakhin	9	34	9		Vows of valuation (Lev. 27:10)
Temurah	7	39	8		The substituted offering (Lev. 27:10)
Keritot	6	28	9		Excisions (Lev. 18:29)
Me'ilah	6	22	4		Sacrileges (Lev. 5:15-16)
Tamid	7	9	4		The daily sacrifice (Num. 28:3-4) and Temple service
Middot	5		3		Dimensions of the Temple
Kinnim	3		2		The Bird offering (Lev. 5:7 ff)

	Mishnah No. of Chapters	Babylonian		Jerusalem	Subject Matter
		Talmud		Talmud	
<u>Order Tohorot</u>		No. of Folios	Folios Munich Ed	No. of Folios	
Kelim	30		11		Uncleanness of vessels (Lev. 11:33-35)
Oholot (Ahilot)	18		7		Uncleanness through presence under same roof (Num. 19:14-15)
Nega'im	14		7		Leprosy (Lev. 13, 14) and purification
Parah	12		5		The Red Heifer (Num. 19)
Tohorot	10	--	5		Contact with sources and grades of impurity
Mikva'ot	10		5		Ritual immersion
Niddah	10	73	14	4	The menstruant (Lev. 15: 19-31)
Makhshirin	6		3		Liquid that predisposes food to become ritually unclean (Lev. 11: 37-38)
Zavim	5		2		Fluxes (Lev. 15)
Tevul Yom	4		2		Ritual uncleanness between immersion and sunset (Lev. 22:6-7)
Yadayim	4	--	3		The ritual uncleanness of the hands
Uktzin	3		2		Stalks parts of plants susceptible to uncleanness

* The number given is the last page number. The pagination, however, always begins with page 2; one page should therefore be deducted.

Three good introductions to the world of the Talmud are: Robert Goldenberg "The Talmud" in Barry Holtz, Back to the Sources (Summit Books, 1984); Adin Steinsaltz, The Essential Talmud (Bantam, 1976), and Judah Goldin, The Living Talmud (New American Library, 1957.)

Midrash

Midrash is a collection of interpretations of Biblical texts and reflections on the key ideas of Judaism. There is no single book called "Midrash"; rather the term refers to a kind of literature or literary activity. The great flowering of Midrash was between the years 400 - 1200 C.E. Holtz's essay on Midrash in Back to the Sources and Jacob Petuchowski's Our Masters Taught (Crossroads, 1982) provide an overview of this literary form.

Medieval Jewish Commentary and Literature

Medieval Jewry produced a rich and diverse literature which included religious poetry; love and wine songs; philosophy; ethical writings; legal codes; mystical treatises; and responsa -- rabbinic questions and answers. This literature spans many centuries and many countries and includes the writings of such great names as: Saadia Gaon (Egypt, 882-942); Rashi (France, 1040-1105); Yehuda Halevi (Spain, 1075-1141); and Maimonides (Morocco and Egypt, 1135-1204.) A general survey of this literature may be found in "The Judaeo-Islamic Age" by Abraham Halkin in Leo W. Schwarz's Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People (Modern Library, 1956).

The Prayerbook

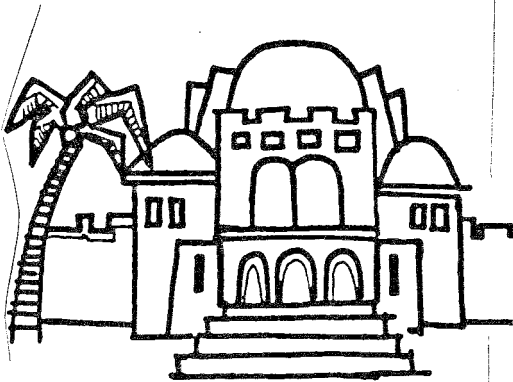
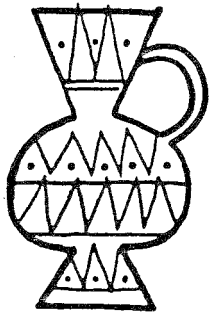
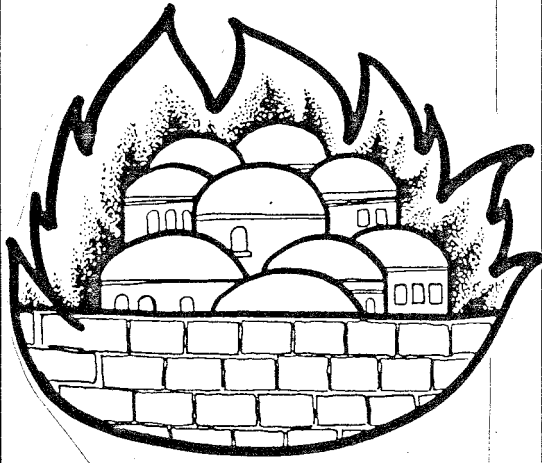
One of the great creations of the Jewish people is its literature of prayer. Prayer and the prayerbook (siddur) have, throughout the ages, been a central form of Jewish literary and spiritual creativity. While the major features of the Jewish prayer book crystallized in the first two centuries C.E., the prayerbook has continued to grow and develop throughout the ages. Even in our own day we are witness to the ongoing development of new haggadot, siddurim, and machzorim. The prayerbook is both a great work of spirit and piety as well as a remarkable record of the life and mood of the Jewish people in many ages and many places. There are many different versions of the prayerbook reflecting many different Jewish cultures (Ashkenazic, Sephardic; traditional, contemporary; English, Spanish, Italian, French). Three good introductions to the prayerbook are: Evelyn Garfiel, Service of the Heart (Burning Bush Press); Abraham Milgrom, Jewish Worship (Jewish Publication Society); Hayim Halevy Donin, To Pray as a Jew (Basic Books).

Hasidic Literature

One of the most influential movements in Jewish life has been Hasidism, which developed in Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century. Hasidism was a reaction against what were seen as overly intellectual currents in Judaism. It called for a return to more expressive and emotional forms of Jewish expression and its writings were often short tales and sayings rather than lengthy philosophic treatises. Martin Buber's Tales of the Hasidim (Schocken) is a popular collection of Hasidic writings, and a good general discussion of the literature may be found in Arthur Green's essay on "The Teachings of the Hasidic Masters" in Holtz's Back to the Sources.

Modern Jewish Literature

Jewish literature since the Enlightenment and Emancipation has assumed many diverse forms, and has been written in several languages, including Yiddish, Ladino, English, and Hebrew. Some of this literature, both philosophic and literary, has continued traditional religious themes and motifs (e.g. the novels and short stories of Samuel Joseph Agnon or the essays and books of Abraham Joshua Heschel or Martin Buber.) The establishment of the State of Israel and the flourishing of Jewish writing in North America have given impetus to modern literature which has often been pre-occupied with new Jewish motifs and concerns. Saul Tchernikovsky, Haim Nachmanm Bialik, Sholom Aleichem, Philip Roth, and Bernard Malamud are among the major writers. Some anthologies of modern Jewish literature are Robert Alter's Modern Hebrew Literature (Behrman House); Warren Bargard and Stanley F. Chyet's Israeli Poetry (Indiana University Press); Saul Bellow's Great Jewish Short Stories (Dell); Howard Schwartz and Anthony Rudolf's Voices Within the Ark: The Modern Jewish Poets (Avon).



HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

- A Summary of Key Ideas
- Course Outline
- General Essay and Review of the Subject Area
- Brief Bibliography

Some Key Ideas

1. Jewish history has been marked by the continual desire of Jews to perpetuate a unique Jewish life style while also participating in the general cultures in which they have lived.
2. Jewish life throughout the ages has, therefore, been influenced by both its own unique tradition as well as by the many cultures in which Jews have lived:
3. Jews have faced many great challenges and threats to Jewish existence, and have also demonstrated the will and ability to rebuild and re-create after challenge and catastrophe.
4. The challenges confronted by the Jewish people throughout history have included the ancient world and its culture; exile from the ancient homeland of Israel; Christianity and Islam; anti-Semitism; the open society and the modern age; the Holocaust. The responses of the Jews to these challenges have included Israelite religion and Biblical monotheism; Diaspora Jewish life; medieval Jewish commentary and culture; contemporary Jewry, and the State of Israel.
5. Jewish life has been marked by great diversity and there have been many differing viewpoints within Judaism throughout the ages. This diversity has often resulted in richness of expression and opinion; sometimes, it has resulted in great internal bickering, struggle, and crisis.
6. While the age in which we live is unique in many ways, it nonetheless reflects the age-old search of Jews for a way to preserve some Jewish uniqueness while at the same time being affected by and being part of general society.

Twelve Lessons on Jewish History

THE ANCIENT PERIOD

I. Earliest Israel

- a. The World of the Patriarchs
- b. Models of Patriarchal Behavior

Nahum Sarna. Understanding Genesis (Schocken Books, 1970).

II Ancient Israel from Conquest to Destruction

- a. Conquest of Canaan (c. 1250 - 1200 B.C.E.)
- b. The Period of the Judges (c. 1200 - 1100 B.C.E.)
- c. Establishment of the Monarchy (c. 1020 - 1000 B.C.E.)
- d. Imperial Overlordship
- e. Exile

John Bright. A History of Israel (Westminster, 1981).

III The Ideas and Ideals of Biblical Israel

- a. The Torah
- b. The Cult
- c. The Prophets

Yehezkel Kaufmann, "The Biblical Age" in: Great Ideas and Ages of the Jewish People. Leo W. Schwarz, editor. (Modern Library, 1956).

FROM HELLENISM TO LATE ANTIQUITY

IV. Jewish Life in a Hellenistic World

- a. The Return to the Land of Israel
- b. Alexander's Conquests
- c. New Patterns of Jewish life

Elias Bickerman. From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees (Schocken, 1962).

V. The Coming of Rome

- a. Roman Conquest
- b. Jewish Rebelliousness
- c. Eventual Accommodation

Shaye J.D. Cohen. From the Maccabbes to the Mishnah (Westminster Press, 1987).

VI. The Development of Rabbinic Judaism

- a. Religious Experimentation
- b. The Growing Authority of Rabbinic Judaism
- c. The Christian Offshoot
- d. The Mishnah

Shaye J.D. Cohen. From the Maccabees to the Mishnah (Westminster Press, 1987).

VII. The Babylonian Center

- a. The Shift of Power to Babylonia
- b. The Organized Jewish Community
- c. The Babylonian Talmud

Jacob Neusner. There We Sat Down (Ktav Publishing House).

MIDDLE AGES AND EARLY MODERN TIMES

VIII. In the Orbit of Islam

- a. The Muslim Conquests
- b. A New Status
- c. Socio-economic Successes
- d. The Range of Creativity
- e. Representative Figures

Bernard Lewis. The Jews of Islam (Princeton University Press, 1984)

IX. The Jews in Western Christendom: The Early Phase

- a. Sephardic Jewry
- b. Ashkenazic Jewry
- c. Jewish Creativity: Philosophy, Theology, Poetry, Kabbalah

Robert Seltzer. Jewish People, Jewish Thought (Macmillan, 1980), Part Three: "Middle Ages and Early Modern Times," pp. 323-453.

X. The Jew in the Later Eras of Western Christendon

- a. Late Medieval German Jewry
- b. The Emergence of Polish Jewry
- c. New Forms of Creativity

Robert Seltzer. Jewish People, Jewish Thought (Macmillan, 1980), pp. 454-541.

THE MODERN PERIOD

XI. New Stirrings in the West

- a. New Ideals
- b. Emancipation of the Jews
- c. The Resultant Crisis

Jacob Katz. Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emanicipation (Harvard University Press).

XII. The Onslaught of Modernity: Jewish History from 1880 to the Present.

History of the Jewish People

The history of the Jewish people is a long and fascinating thread that begins in the ancient Near East thousands of years ago and weaves its way through almost every corner of the globe down to our own day. Much has occurred along the course of this long and winding road, and there are many avenues along which one could wander. Two themes, however, are particularly striking: 1) the concern of Jews to preserve Judaism yet also to participate in general culture, and 2) the ability of Jews to re-create and rebuild after dislocation and catastrophe.

Whether in ancient Babylonia or contemporary America, Jews have been influenced by the larger society in which they have lived, and they have absorbed values and practices from those worlds. At the same time, both then and now, Jews have exhibited a steadfast desire to preserve their links with Jewish historical tradition and values. Nowhere is this dynamic more evident than in our very own communities and Centers. Our JCCs reflect popular contemporary norms of recreation, leisure-time activities, and architecture. We have health clubs, we conduct extensive recreational programs for all age groups, and we have constructed impressive modern buildings. At the same time, we introduce Jewish education into our programs, we celebrate Jewish holidays, and we have become increasingly concerned with issues of Jewish identity and Jewish purpose. Our modern experience is a reflection of a great theme in Jewish history: the dynamic and creative tension between a unique Jewish lifestyle on one hand and interaction with general culture on the other.

The story of Jewish history is also about the remarkable ability of Jews to cope with adversity. Our history is not, as some would have us believe, only about suffering; it reflects both great and difficult moments. The difficult times could have sapped the will of the Jews and led to their disappearance. Yet it is fair to say that Jewish history is very much characterized by the resolve and ability to overcome adversity and oppression and to rebuild, precisely at those most difficult of moments.

The first arena of Jewish life -- and the one that held center stage for many centuries -- was the ancient Near East, particularly the historic birthplace of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. It was in this area (regarded by the ancients as the center of the world) that the Israelites produced beliefs and ideas which were to influence all of subsequent civilization: monotheism, social justice, and the prophetic vision of an ethical and Godly world. At the same time, the life of the ancient Israelites was influenced by the environment and culture in which they lived. The general culture of the ancient Near East incorporated the political structure of monarchy, the practice of ritual animal and human sacrifice, and literary forms quite different from those of the Israelites. The challenge that the ancient Israelites faced then (as it is our challenge today) was to shape ideas and practices from their surrounding culture in a way consistent with the innovative religion of Judaism. The Israelites adapted the practice of animal sacrifice, but made it part of the Temple service of the One God. The prophet Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel, but this was a kingship which was, for the first time, subservient to God's sovereignty. The literary styles of the ancient Near East became transformed into the magnificent religious, ethical, legal, and poetic writings of the Torah. This attempt at synthesis of Jewish and general life was difficult, and our people has succeeded sometimes more and sometimes less; but we have always been confronted with this challenge.

The greatest challenge faced by ancient Judaism and the Jewish people was the need to adjust to the loss of their homeland, self-rule, holy city of Jerusalem, and Temple (in 586 B.C.E. when the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians and the Jews were first sent into Exile.) Indeed, the critical question at that point was whether Jewish religion, which had been born and rooted in a specific homeland, could survive without that land. The emergence of Diaspora Jewry in Babylonia (in the sixth century B.C.E.) is an example of the ability of Jews to confront crisis and re-create themselves.

From the second century C.E. until our day the demographic center of gravity of the Jewish-world shifted from Palestine to Jewish communities outside of Israel. Although Jews have lived in Palestine throughout the ages, the major centers of Jewish life shifted throughout the

centuries to Jewish communities in Babylonia, Spain, North Africa, France, Germany, Russia, Poland, and North America. Despite this movement, the idea of returning to and rebuilding the Land of Israel has been a part of Jewish prayer, consciousness, dreams, and daily ritual throughout the ages.

Another challenge which the Jews faced was the confrontation with Greek culture in the fourth century B.C.E. The conquering Greeks brought an exciting and stimulating culture to Palestine and other Jewish communities. Once again, the Jews were confronted with the need to adjust. This adjustment was neither smooth nor simple, and Jews disagreed about how much Greek culture could be accepted as well as the extent to which Jewish tradition could be relaxed. Indeed, the story of Hanukkah is as much about the confrontation amongst Jews as to what it meant to be Jewish as it is about their external battles.

The next major challenge faced by Judaism was the birth and growth of Christianity. This religion began modestly, and was a small and oppressed faith community for several centuries; however, by the 4th century, when it became the religion of Rome, Christianity emerged as the dominant force in Western civilization. As we know from our own lives in America, Jewish life exists in the context of a larger Christian world (the "December dilemma" is but one of many examples). Sometimes Christianity has been the source of great oppression and destruction for Jews; it has always been a source of interaction and reaction.

Christianity was not the only religion to challenge Judaism. During the seventh century C.E., Jews were confronted by another powerful religion -- Islam. The conquering Muslim armies spread their influence and power from Spain to India, encompassing all of the world's major Jewish communities. Modern Jewish life in North America is very distant from the cultural influence of Islam, but we cannot underestimate the profound impact Islam has had on Jewish life.

Islam confronted the Jews with remarkable new values and norms. Jews were able to find a niche in this society, and Jewish culture became greatly influenced by the Islamic culture. Such great personalities as Ibn Ezra (1089-1164), Yehuda Halevi (c. 1075-1141), and Moses

Maimonides (1135-1204) created music, philosophy, poetry, and Biblical commentary which reflected a synthesis of Jewish and non-Jewish elements.

The period from the end of the Middle Ages until the emergence of the modern era was marked by developments and changes in general society which had a profound impact on Jews. Christianity emerged as a powerful world force, and the Church was a source of great influence (and strife) for Jews and non-Jews alike. Social and religious conflict caused much havoc among societies. Gradually, Western society emerged from what has often been described as the Dark Ages into the era of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, which saw the development of powerful new human and social values, cultural and scientific creations, and social alignments. This era was followed by the age of nationalism, which was characterized by the expression of strong national loyalties and the foilation of powerful nation states.

Jewish life was profoundly affected by this change and turmoil, and its impact upon Jews was both challenging and threatening. Amidst all this upheaval, Jews continue to create new religious works, social and ideological movements, and cultural legacies: the mystical vision of the Kabbalah (12th-13th centuries); the passionate world of Hasidism (18th-19th centuries); the great Talmudic academies of Eastern Europe; the Shulhan Arukh of Joseph Karo (1488-1575); the ethical (Musal) literature of Israel Salanter (1810-1883).

The struggles of Jews have not only been with general society; Jews also wrestled with themselves. Indeed, one of the striking characteristics of Jewish life throughout the ages has been the ongoing discussion between Jews as to the meaning of Jewish life. We tend to think that the conflicts between different Jewish groups today in America and Israel are something new, but in fact Jewish history is full of exciting and sometimes painful internal Jewish debate. The philosophic and educational approaches of the great Talmudic teacher Hillel at the beginning of the Common Era often conflicted with those of his colleague Shammai. The Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes were three prominent Jewish "camps" in the first century B.C.E., and the first century C.E. who strongly disagreed about their approaches to Judaism.

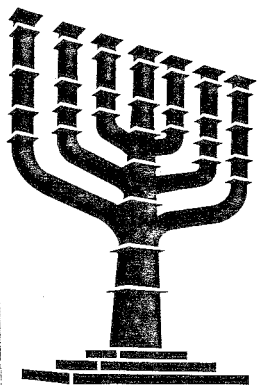
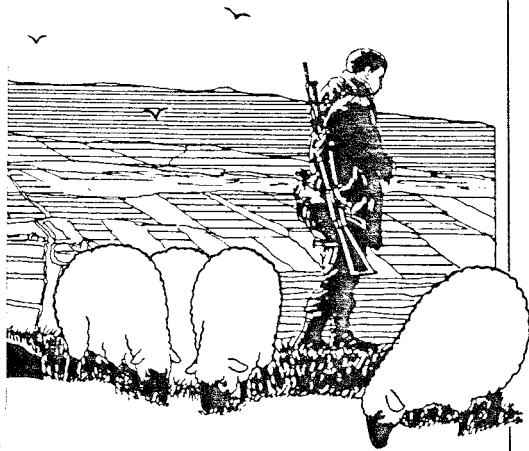
The medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides was a great Jewish hero to some, while to others he was overly compromising. In nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, the Hasidim constantly locked horns with their arch-opponents the Mitnagdim (literally, "the opponents") about the nature of Judaism. The Zionists, the socialists, the traditional religionists, and the religious reformers of the twentieth century offered radically different solutions to the challenge of the modern world. Throughout the centuries, Jews have discussed and disagreed about what is indispensable in the tradition and what can be changed. This is not because, as is sometimes jokingly suggested, Jews are by nature argumentative. Rather, the nature of Jewish tradition is such that it invites commentary and discussion. It is an interpretative rather than hermetically sealed tradition. Second, as we have seen, Jews were very often preoccupied with the creation of a synthesis between their Judaism and their general life. This forced them to think constantly about those elements that were indispensable to being Jewish. The internal Jewish debate has been the source of great creativity in Jewish life in the past and in the present; it also has been the cause of some of the greatest crises in Jewish life.

The past two hundred years have been one of the most critical periods in Jewish history. The entry into the modern age of science, secularism, and nationalism posed an unprecedented challenge to Judaism, no less powerful than the confrontation with Exile, the Greeks, or Christianity. European civilization reorganized itself into new-style states that broke the traditional link between church and state; this resulted in unprecedented opportunities as well as inconceivable pressures for Jews. In exchange for the new political freedom that they began to acquire as individuals, Jews were to lose much of the protection of an all-encompassing Jewish community that had sheltered and nourished their Jewishness. Now Jews as individuals began to encounter directly the non-Jewish world around them. As we know from our own lives, this confrontation can be both phenomenally exciting but also extremely threatening for Jewish identity. Some Jews sought total assimilation into the larger society; others urged the creation of a uniquely Jewish society in the historic Jewish homeland of Eretz Yisrael; still

others argued for a total retreat to traditional Jewish religious life; and the majority searched for new forms of Judaism which would offer a synthesis of the traditional and the modern.

These changes were paralleled by the most cataclysmic social and demographic changes in Jewish history. Millions of Jews were on the move in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the demographic centers of Jewish life shifted from Europe and North Africa to Israel and the United States. The unparalleled devastation of the Holocaust completed the process of upheaval in Jewish life and threatened its very core. Once again, when confronted with massive dislocation and tragedy, world Jewry rallied to rebuild itself. Jews have built schools, synagogues, Jewish Community Centers, Federations, defense and welfare organizations, departments of Jewish studies, camps. . . and a Jewish state.

The modern era has been an age of promise, destruction, and rebirth. As we shall see in the next chapter on Contemporary Jewry, our lives today and those of the Community Centers which we have built are still very much in the throes of the Jewish confrontation with modernity. Jews of earlier epochs exhibited remarkable fortitude and ingenuity in confronting the challenges of both general culture and more overtly threatening societies. This legacy is a promising sign to us as we confront the agenda of contemporary Jewish life. The challenge of the modern Jewish Community Center to be Jewish and modern is a continuation of the eternal saga of Jewish history.



CONTEMPORARY JEWRY

- A Summary of Key Ideas
- Course Outline
- General Essay and Review of the Subject Area
- Brief Bibliography

Some Key Ideas

1. Contemporary Jewry is the product of the confrontation of Jews and Judaism with a host of ideas, beliefs, and practices of the modern world which both attract Jews and threaten Jewish existence.
2. Jewish responses to this confrontation with modernity have been diverse, including:
 - a. The re-affirmation of traditional Judaism
 - b. The creation of new religious forms and movements
 - c. The emphasis on Jewish peoplehood
 - d. The search for a non-religious Jewish culture
 - e. Zionism
 - f. Emigration
 - g. Assimilation.
3. The nature of contemporary Jewish life has been particularly affected by four events:
 - a. The massive demographic shifts of the Jewish people in the twentieth century.
 - b. The Holocaust
 - c. The State of Israel
 - d. The emergence of North American Jewry as a major Jewish community.
4. The confrontation of Jews and Judaism with the modern world has resulted in a series of new challenges which include:
 - a. The meaning of Jewish identity
 - b. Assimilation
 - c. Inter-marriage
 - d. Jewish family life
 - e. Israel-Diaspora relations
 - f. Jewish education.

Fifteen Lessons on Contemporary Jewry

- I. Tradition and Modernity
 - a. The Traditional World and Its Collapse
 - b. The Meaning of Modernity
 - c. Jews Confront Modernity
- II. Jews React to Modernity: Religious Responses
- III. Jews React to Modernity: Cultural Responses
- IV. Jews React to Modernity: National Responses
- V. The Holocaust: Background and Events
- VI. The Meaning of the Holocaust and its Aftermath
- VII. The Zionist Movement and the Establishment of Israel
- VIII. The Social and Political Nature of Contemporary Israel
- IX. The People and Personalities of Contemporary Israel
- X. The New Demography of the Jewish People - Israel/Diaspora Relations
- XI. The Social and Organizational Nature of American Jewry
- XII. The People and Personalities of American Jewry.
- XIII. Jewish Communities Throughout the World: Latin America and Europe
- XIV. Jewish Community Throughout the World: South Africa, Australia, Eastern Europe, Arab Lands
- XV. Issues of Contemporary Jewry.

Contemporary Jewry

We are the Jews of modernity and our lives are the product of the monumental confrontation of Judaism and the Jewish people with the modern world. The traditional world was one of clearly defined truth and of communal authority. The modern world is a place of questioning values and searching for individual freedom. The great confrontation with modernity began in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and we still live in its shadows. For Jews this confrontation has meant the testing of some of the most basic values of our religion and culture. The entry of Jews and Judaism into the modern age has resulted in remarkable creativity as well as great crises in all spheres of Jewish life: politics, religion, culture, and values.

There are four prominent characteristics of the age of modernity, each of which has had profound implications for Jews. First, much of the modern age is distinguished by the belief in the political equality of all citizens, regardless of religious, cultural, or other differences. For Jews this meant that, in principle, they could become equal citizens in many contemporary societies.

A second characteristic of the modern age is an unprecedented commitment to a no-holds-barred expression of ideas and beliefs and to their easy accessibility by the wider public. This has resulted in the vast range of books, ideas, music, art, and value systems which confront you daily in supermarkets, on television, in bookstores, and through advertising. For Jews this has meant access to ideas and beliefs which can enrich and expand their lives, but which can also threaten and destroy the most basic tenets of traditional Jewish belief.

A third aspect of modernity has been the confrontation with the ideals of change, experimentation, and evolution, with what is sometimes described as the age or ideal of science. This ideal includes the beliefs that knowledge comes from human observation and reason rather than from God, and that knowledge is ever-changing and dynamic rather than fixed. These arguments have directly challenged some of the basic beliefs of traditional Judaism and have

caused many Jews to question the authority and divinity of the Bible and Jewish tradition and to seek change and modernization of classical Jewish beliefs and practices.

The fourth characteristic of modernity is the spirit of nationalism and the rise of national movements as prominent forces and values in human life. Some of the new national movements welcomed Jews into their folds; others, as we so tragically know, developed mechanisms for oppressing and destroying the Jewish people. Nationalism was also to find its unique Jewish expression in the dream of a Jewish homeland which was developed and realized in the Jewish national movement of Zionism.

Jews have responded to the values and ideas of modernity (equality, science, culture, and nationalism) in many different ways, and the many groups and ideologies which characterize contemporary Jewish life are a striking result of these diverse responses. One major area of Jewish response to modernity has been religious. The development of Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform understandings of Judaism emerge as an attempt to bolster Judaism against the secularizing ideas of modernity. Thus, traditional Judaism is refashioned by these denominations and their ideologies in order to be more suitable to modern ideas and behaviors.

A second response -- the Orthodox -- has attempted to preserve the great religious legacy of classical Judaism even as we live in the modern age. Some of the more extreme versions of Orthodoxy, e.g. the Jews of Williamsburg in Brooklyn or Mea Shearim in Jerusalem, attempt to turn their backs completely on the modern world. Other versions of Orthodoxy attempt to retain a faithful adherence to classical Jewish belief and practice while finding ways of co-existing with contemporary society.

A third response to modernity has been to shift the emphasis from Judaism as a religion to an emphasis on the Jews as a people and a culture with a common history, heritage, and responsibility. Sometimes this response has expressed itself in a remarkable emphasis on helping and saving Jews, and it has resulted in some of the great contemporary Jewish achievements in philanthropy, resettlement, and self-defense. The emphasis on Jewish

peoplehood has also been expressed by the commitment to Jewish music, art, literature, and especially languages, e.g. Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino (a Spanish-Hebrew dialect.) While those who were concerned with Jewish peoplehood did not always reject the religious elements of Judaism, they did argue that it was not the only or even the most essential factor. This response was most strikingly expressed by the creation of a modern non-religious Jewish culture rooted in the renaissance of the Hebrew language and literature.

Another way in which Jews responded to the challenge and dangers of modernity was literally to pack their bags and seek a better world. For the Jews, the modern age has been an era of massive physical movement and emigration, from Eastern and Western Europe and from North Africa and Arab countries to new homes in the West and in Israel.

Still another response to modernity was the emergent Zionist Movement at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, with its vision of creating a Jewish national home in the historic Land of Israel, a vision realized on the 14th of May 1948, with the birth of the modern State of Israel.

The decision of many Jews to minimize or to discard their Jewishness and to become absorbed in the larger non-Jewish society has been another response to modernity. The option of assimilation has been chosen by many Jews in the twentieth century and it continues to attract many of our people.

These diverse Jewish responses (and their numerous sub-categories) have resulted in a rich diversity of Jewish lifestyles, as well as in intense conflict amongst Jews. It explains why there are so many political parties in the State of Israel, so many different kinds of synagogues and Jewish communal organizations in Jewish communities throughout the world. Indeed, twentieth-century Jewish life is the most diverse supermarket of ideologies and practices that our people has known. In moments of crisis, Jews have shown a remarkable ability to rally together; at other moments the supermarket has resembled a battlefield.

The contemporary life of the Jewish people has been further complicated by the massive demographic and sociological changes in the past century. The major shift has been the transfer

of the prominent centers of Jewish population and resources to Israel and North America. These changes have resulted in a radically new map of the sources of culture, power, and creativity in the Jewish world.

Although many important events have shaped the Jewish experience, all of contemporary Jewish life is overshadowed by the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, which are among the most consequential events in Jewish history. The systematic destruction of six million Jews by the Nazis is probably the greatest disaster in Jewish and non-Jewish history. It wiped out precious lives and major spiritual, cultural, and physical resources of the Jewish people, necessitating a monumental Jewish effort of reconstruction and rehabilitation. It raised disturbing questions about humanity and the nature of people.

The struggle for the State of Israel, and its birth in 1948 constitutes one of the great sagas and achievements of the Jewish people. The establishment of Israel reflects both the realization of an ageless dream, as well as a dramatic affirmation -- in the darkest of days -- of the will of the Jewish people to live. The existence of Israel since 1948 has been marked by the continual struggle for survival against outside forces, and the dynamic evolution of a diverse and often troubled Jewish society within. In many ways, the contemporary State of Israel is a striking mirror of all of the issues, achievements, and problems which characterize contemporary Jewry.

What, in fact, are the critical issues which face the Jewish world which has emerged from the ideological, physical, and cultural metamorphoses of the past two centuries?

A first major concern of contemporary Jewish life, often described as the issue of Jewish identity, is the very meaning and nature of being Jewish. Traditionally agreed-upon definitions of Judaism have been shaken, and there is ambiguity today concerning basic defining characteristics and qualities of " Jewishness.

A second major concern of contemporary Jewry is the crisis of Jewish family life. The traditional model of an intensely Jewish family operating within an intimate, self-contained Jewish community was broken down by the modern age, and the contemporary Jewish family

is characterized by a host of threatening factors -- low birthrate, divorce, and inadequate Jewish knowledge.

The third challenge of contemporary Jewry is intermarriage. It is only natural that life in open, contemporary societies increases the likelihood of marriages between Jews and non-Jews. There is much debate in the contemporary Jewish world over the percentage and significance of Jewish intermarriage; however, virtually all would agree that whatever the percentage, intermarriage is a challenge for ongoing Jewish survival.

Fourth, anti-Semitism continues to be a force and an issue in Jewish life. In some communities anti-Semitism is more intense than in others. Jews in North America probably would not regard it as the major Jewish dilemma of their day and age, but it continues to rear its head and Jews continue to be extremely sensitive to it.

Fifth, the social and ideological currents of the twentieth century have led to a questioning of the traditional role of women in Jewish life. Many have argued that the true spirit of Judaism and the greater values of an enlightened egalitarian ethic demand significant adjustments and improvements in the role women play in contemporary Jewish religious and general Jewish life.

Sixth, the Jewish people is struggling with the critical question of the Jewish education of its young. A fairly substantial network of day schools, supplementary schools, community centers, youth organizations, and camps has been established; however, both professional and lay circles are concerned about the quality of this education and the extent of its impact on the Jewishness of our young.

Finally, whereas the traditional Jewish world was committed to a belief in the possibility and responsibility to strive for a perfectable world in God's image ("A messianic age" or "a kingdom of priests and a holy peoplehood"), much of today's Jewish society seems to have severed its ties with such a vision. The concepts of the prophetic vision and the Messianic ideal have either been distorted or have become increasingly sparse in Jewish ideology and practice, and they have been replaced instead by the visions of "Jewish survival" and "Jewish identity."

The great question which the Jewish people faces today is whether or not it will continue to define itself in terms of the prophetic, messianic and divine vision which, up to modern times, was its unique legacy.

The story of contemporary Jewry, then, is that of an ancient people which has become part of the modern age, and of the promises and problems which have emerged. We are still on the opening pages of this story, and where it will go is very much dependent on the choices and decisions of individual Jews and the Jewish people as a whole in these critical years. The world of the Jewish Community Center is an important actor in that drama.

Readings for Fifteen Lessons on Contemporary Jewry

The Jewish Confrontation With Modernity

1. Salo Baron, "The Modern Age" in Leo Schwarz (editor), *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People* (Modern Library, 1956), pp. 315-485.
2. Ira Eisenstein, "Challenges of Modern Times" in A.E. Millgram (editor). *Concepts that Distinguish Judaism* (B'nai B'rith Books, 1985), pp. 265-280.

II. Jewish Responses to Modernity (1)

A. The Reform of Judaism

1. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Yehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 1980) "Emerging Patterns of Religious Adjustment: Reform, Conservative and Neo-Orthodox," pp. 140-156.
2. David Rudavsky, *Modern Jewish Religious Movements: A History of Emancipation and Adjustment* (Behrman House, 1979), pp. 156-185.

B. Positive-Historical Judaism

1. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 188-195.
2. David Rudavsky, *Modern Jewish Religious Movements: Emancipation and Adjustment*, pp. 186-217.

III Jewish Responses to Modernity (2)

A. Neo-Orthodoxy

1. Chaim Potok. *The Chosen* (Fawcett)
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Some Key Ideas

1. Human beings experience life in and through the regular movement of the life cycle from birth, to puberty, to adulthood, to marriage, to aging, to death; and so go the generations.
2. Judaism uses rituals to address the human needs of each stage in the life cycle.
3. Life cycle rituals are designed to help a person in transition from one identity stage to another.
4. Life cycle rituals address the Jewish person as individual, as family member, and as a member of the Jewish community.
5. Life cycle rituals cannot happen without family and community.
6. Life cycle rituals link a Jewish person to the flow of Jewish history.

Twelve Lessons About the Jewish Life Cycle

- I. The Life Cycle
 - a. The common human experience of the total life cycle
 - b. The structured flow of each stage.
- II. Change and Anxiety in the Life Cycle: Psychological Perspectives
- III. Birth
 - a. The human experience
 - b. Covenant-entry, and rituals
- IV. Puberty
 - a. The human experience
 - b. Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations and rituals
- V. Sexuality: The Human Experience
- VI. Sexuality: The Jewish View
- VII. Marriage: Purposes and Rituals
- VIII. Divorce
 - a. The human experience
 - b. Jewish values and rituals
- IX. Aging
 - a. The human experience
 - b. The position of the elderly in the Jewish community
- X. Death and Mourning: The Human Experience
- XI. Death and Mourning: The Jewish Experience
- XII. The Jewish Life Cycle: Opportunities for Intervention with Center Membership.

Jewish Living: The Life Cycle

Life cycle change means movement from one identity, purpose, and style of living to another. Transition is anxiety provoking. The structure and rules that support and inform each stage of life may no longer work for the next stage. The person in transition is in limbo. His or her family is likewise adrift. The only constants are the community -- the Jewish people, and Jewish tradition, both of which are, as we shall soon see, intimately involved in the process of life cycle change. From childlessness to pregnancy to new life, from childhood to puberty, from unwed to married, from marriage to divorce, from life to death, a human being regularly and predictably moves from the comfortable and the familiar to the uncomfortable and the foreign.

In matters of life cycle change, Jewish tradition, as in all life areas, addresses the common human experience and the challenges that are part of it. The tradition responds to the human condition of change and the need for comfort and structure, while at the same time focusing the direction of change toward Jewish meaning and purpose. Each life stage has both human consequences and Jewish opportunities. A Jewish woman who becomes a mother, shares the experience of new motherhood with all other human beings who become mothers. As a Jewish mother, this experience presents challenge and opportunity, and the tradition gives it Jewish direction and purpose. The Jewish mother is both mother and Jew. Each of those identities and statuses requires new understanding and meaning.

Life cycle change is understood on three different levels of Jewish human experience. The person in transition is an individual, and changes as an individual. The person in transition is a family member -- child, husband, wife, mother, father, sibling. Change affects not just the family member, the child being named or circumcised, for example, but the family as a whole. A family with a child of Bar or Bat Mitzvah age is a family experiencing life cycle change. And finally, these changes take place in the larger context of the Jewish people as represented in the specific Jewish community in which the

family and the individual reside. A child is born to individual Jews who now shift from childlessness to parenthood; a child is born to a heretofore Jewishly incomplete family; and now this family carries within it the elements of Jewish continuity; a child is born into a community which now acquires a new member adding to the fund of the Jewish community's most precious resource.

Judaism addresses the human being in his or her moments of transition, not just as an individual, but also as a member of the family of Israel, the Jewish People. Every Jew is a person, family member, and Jew, the son or daughter of Israel, someone with a sacred Jewish past, a present Jewish life, and a stake in the Jewish future. A single person who marries is not only helped in the move from singlehood to married, but is at the same time assigned a new position and a new set of tasks and responsibilities in the larger Jewish community.

How does the tradition achieve this? Ritual is the tool of transition, the provider of support and comfort for the individual, the teacher of new responsibility and task, and the means by which the new person is integrated in his or her new status within the community, and thus supported and welcomed. Ritual gives concrete expression to thought and emotions, and provides a structure for the expression of anxiety, for its relief, and for its resolution in life tasks. No life cycle traveler is alone. All life cycle moments require either a quorum of ten, or two witnesses at the very least, who represent the community. Using marriage as an example, the classic Jewish wedding ceremony treats the bride and groom as individuals, male and female, as family members, and as members of the whole House of Israel. As individuals, they alone can effect the wedding contract and the marriage that is brought about. As family members, they are accompanied to the chupah by parents, and in the marriage contract, they are referred to as "so and so, the son or daughter of so and so." And finally, as community members of the whole House of Israel, the blessings affirm their commitment to building a true House in Israel.

It is by now obvious that all life cycle events are about and with family. Jewish life is family life. Jews, when asked what they most value about their Jewishness, often respond by referring to "the Jewish sense of family." There is an important and deep idea here. Why is family so critical to the Jewish way of life? The simplest answer is that without people there can be no Jewish people. This is the biological response. On a deeper level Judaism holds to the truism that life is with family. The first book of the Torah is about family life, the family life of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel and Leah. This is so because the purpose and focus of Jewishness and Jewish teaching is this world. This life's most basic unit is the family where natural love is the classroom for teaching people how to function in the larger world. Many of the Torah's laws about interpersonal relations begin with the phrase, "If your sibling... loses something, needs a loan, is in dire straits" etc. The Torah wants us to function in the larger society as we function in family.

This is not simple today when a variety of alternative life styles are available and are validated by American society. Judaism and the Jewish people are in the midst of developing strategies that will, on the one hand, be as inclusive of all Jews as possible, and, on the other hand, still uphold Judaism's commitment to family life. This good struggle will continue.

The family has a space: the Jewish house and home. These are but a few of the ways in which a house becomes a Jewish home: 1) Jewish art; 2) a mezuzah on the doorpost; 3) Jewish ritual objects such as Shabbat candlesticks, Havdalah spicebox, challah server and tray; 4) kashrut, grappling with the various forms of making eating a Jewish experience; 5) studying Torah with family; 6) owning and reading Jewish books.

There is another activity whose sacred space is the home, sexuality, about which has been written, and could be written, volumes. In the spirit of brevity, it will suffice to point in several directions. Classically, Judaism sees sexuality as a great delight given by God in order to benefit man and woman. It is a mitzvah for husband and wife to delight in

each other and to meet each other's sexual needs. We live after the sexual revolution and hence we must grapple with a question: Why does Judaism, with its positive and affirmative view of sex, place sexuality only within the love covenant of marriage?

At the conclusion of this introduction, it is very important to point out a pattern that will be of use to you. It is the pattern of seven. Whenever there is major life change it happens through a transition period of seven days. This pattern begins with creation. Life cycle change is the creation for the individual of a new world, a new life. Seven is the cycle of creation. The world was created in seven days. A baby boy enters the covenant and is named when eight days old, seven days after birth. Marriage is followed by seven days of celebration. Death is followed by shiva, seven days of mourning and comforting.

We now want to become specific and provide you with detailed information on each stage in the life cycle. Birth, Bar and Bat Mitzvah, Marriage, Divorce, Death. Each topic is presented in four sections. (1) Human Experience: The purpose of this section is to set forth the human experience common to all for a particular stage in the life cycle. This is the general context into which Jewish ideas and practices must fit. (2) Jewish ideas and values: This section presents the core ideas, values, and Jewish purposes of a particular stage in the life cycle. (3) Text: Jewish ideas and practices grow out of classic texts. In this section the classic sources for the life cycle are set forth. (4) Practice: The purpose of this section is not to tell you what to do, rather it is to present some of the classic rituals and to invite your curiosity in the pursuit of the options.

Giving Birth | Entry Into Covenant

I. Human Experience

1. Birth is creation.
2. Birth brings responsibility for life.
3. Birth is paradoxical in that it brings about both happiness and anxiety.
4. Birth presents the challenge of integrating a new life into family, community, and society.

5. Birth affirms the goodness and purpose of life.
6. Birth is a new beginning for child and parents.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Birth imitates God by creating life.
2. Birth insures the continuity of the Jewish people.
3. Birth fulfills the First Commandment: "Be fruitful and multiply."
4. Birth builds a family in which love is learned and expressed.
5. Rituals at birth join the new child to the covenant between God and Israel.
6. Rituals at birth make the child part of the covenantal family of Israel.

III. Texts

1. Genesis 1:28. God blessed them (Adam and Eve) and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth..."
2. Genesis 17: 9-14. God further said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring to come throughout the ages shall keep My covenant. Such shall be the covenant between Me and you and your offspring to follow which you shall keep: every male among you shall be circumcised... and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you."
3. Leviticus 12: 1-2. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the Israelite people thus: "When a woman at childbirth bears a male... on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."
4. Exodus 19: 5-8. "Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel." Moses came and summoned the elders of the people and put before them all the words, that the Lord had commanded him. All the people answered as one, saying, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the people's words to the Lord.

IV. Practice

1. Traditionally, it is incumbent upon parents to fulfill the mitzvah to circumcise their son on the eighth day -- brit milah.
2. It is a traditional practice for a female child to be named in the synagogue the week following her birth when the father is called to the Torah. In Liberal Judaism parents share the responsibility for bringing their sons and daughters into the brit, and both mothers and fathers are involved in the covenant entry ritual.

Puberty / Bar and Bat Mitzvah

Human Experience

1. At puberty a person experiences a new body.
2. At puberty a person encounters his/her sexuality.
3. At puberty awareness of the opposite sex is heightened.
4. At puberty there are new expectations for individual responsibility.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. A boy at the age of thirteen is a bar mitzvah. A girl at the age of twelve is a bat mitzvah.
2. Bar/bat mitzvah means "son / daughter of the commandments" and implies that the person now assumes full responsibility as part of the Jewish people.
3. In the past, marriage would often take place soon after bar and bat mitzvah; today adolescents are in a period of Jewish apprenticeship.

III. Texts

Bar or bat mitzvah are not explicitly mentioned in the Torah. The Talmud takes it as fact that a child of 12 or 13 legally becomes Jewish adult. "At age thirteen one becomes subject to the commandments." (Talmud Avot 5:21)

IV. Practice

1. The central ritual of bar / bat mitzvah is being called to the Torah (Aliyah) for the first time.
2. In the American Jewish community, bar/bat mitzvah is one of the life cycle stages which brings Jews into the world of the synagogue.
3. The ceremony of Confirmation was originally established by the Reform Movement to extend the period of Jewish education beyond bar/bat mitzvah, which too often marked the end of Jewish education.

Marriage

I. Human Experience

1. Traditionally, it is in marriage that sexuality is expressed.
2. Marriage fulfills the need for intimacy and companionship.
3. Marriage is a place where love is learned and expressed.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Traditionally, the sacred covenant of marriage is the place for sexuality.
2. Traditionally, love in the family teaches us how to behave in the community.
3. One of the purposes and joys of marriage is procreation.

III. Text

1. Genesis 2:18. The Lord said, "It is not good for Adam to be alone; I will make him a partner."
2. Genesis 2:22-24. ...and the Lord fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man. Then the man said, this one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called Woman, for from man was she taken. Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so they become one flesh...
3. Genesis Rabbah 8:9. It is impossible for a man to be without a woman, a woman without a man and impossible for both to be without God.

IV. Practice

1. There are four parts to the Jewish wedding ceremony:
 - a. Kiddushin -- Sanctification. The bride and groom share a cup of wine, as on Friday night, and exchange or give rings.
 - b. Ketubah -- Contract. The obligations of bride and groom are spelled out to each other in the written contract called the ketubah.
 - c. Sheva Brachot -- Seven Blessings. Seven blessings celebrating love, intimacy, life, joy and happiness are recited.
 - d. Zecher L'Hurban -- In Memory. A glass is broken to recall the destruction of the Temple and the Exile.

2. In marriage, there are mutual obligations for material support, childrearing, and the meeting of basic human and sexual needs. Failure to provide any of the above are grounds for divorce in Jewish tradition.

Divorce

I. Human Experience

1. People's circumstances in life change. People change. Relationships change.
2. The ability to change is fundamental to human betterment.
3. A failed marriage should be ended. Divorce can be a positive step.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Since marriage within Judaism is a contract, there are legal procedures for divorce or severance of the contract.
2. Since marriage is a legal act, a legal act has to be performed for a Jewish divorce.
3. Marriage is the ultimate form of agreement between two human beings. When an agreement between two people no longer exists, it is best to formally sever the agreement.

III. Text

Traditionally, the husband initiates and institutes divorce proceedings as expressed in the text:

Deuteronomy 24. When a man marries a woman and she fails to please, he finds an aversion to her and he writes a bill of divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house.

The legal details of divorce remain faithful to this text. However, the Talmud does not permit a divorce to be issued in an arbitrary manner. It equalizes the role of husband and wife in the implementation of divorce. Thus, both can sue for divorce and neither party can be coerced.

IV. Practice

1. A Bet Din (Rabbinic Court) issues a Get, a bill of divorce.
2. Traditional Judaism requires a Get before a divorce person may remarry; Liberal Judaism does not require a Get, a civil divorce suffices.

Death and Mourning

Human Experience

1. Death is common to all and in all.
2. Death is ultimately incomprehensible.
3. Death is an experience shared by the dying and the living.
4. Death engenders a sense of profound finality and powerlessness.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. The dead human being must be treated with honor, respect, and love.
(Kibud ha-met).
2. Jewish tradition establishes simplicity as a central value in the treatment of all dead human beings.
3. There is continuity to life in spite of the finality of death.
4. The emotional and spiritual needs of the mourner must be met.
5. The trauma and pain of death are acknowledged and expressed in ritual.

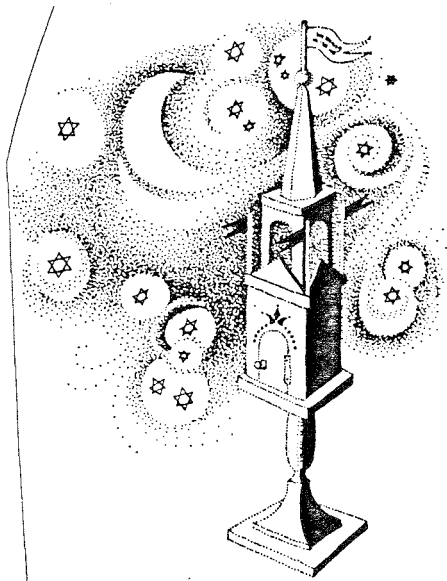
III. Text

1. Genesis 3:19. For earth you are and to earth you shall return.
2. Ecclesiastes 12:7. ...but the spirit returns to God who gave it.
3. Mishna Sanhedrin 11:1. All Israel has a share in the world to come.

IV. Practice

1. The lifeless human being is never left alone (Shmira).

2. The lifeless human being is washed and clothed in a white linen shroud and placed in a wood casket. (Tahara).
3. The lifeless human being is given honor and respect through words and prayers at the funeral service. It is a mitzvah to carry the dead to burial back in the earth (L'vaya).
4. Traditionally, a piece of the mourner's clothing is torn to symbolize the ripping away of life (Kria).
5. A seven day period of mourning is observed (Shiva).
6. The Kaddish (mourner's prayer) -- an affirmation of the purpose and continuity of Jewish life -- is recited for eleven months following the death of a parent.



JEWISH LIVING:

THE LIFE CYCLE, HOLIDAYS ADD COMMUNAL CONVOLUTIONS

- A Summary of Key Ideas
- Course Outline
- General Essay and Review
of the Subject Area
- Brief Bibliography

Some Key Ideas

1. Life is lived in time and space. Judaism, through its various cycles, sanctifies time, with Shabbat and the holidays.
2. Shabbat commemorates the creation of the world.
3. Jewish holidays celebrate the history of Israel's encounter with God.
4. Jewish holidays celebrate the great events of Jewish history.
5. Through the yearly cycle of holidays, Jews can experience, relive, and re-create the history of Israel. Thus, the Passover statement: "Every Jew in every generation is obligated to see him or herself as if he or she went out of Egypt."
6. The holidays bring about identification with Jewish history.
7. The celebration of the holidays takes place primarily at home through family rituals.
8. Judaism uses ritual to express thoughts and feelings in concrete form.

Fifteen Lessons on Shabbat **and** Holidays

- I. Time and the Calendar
 - a. The Jewish view and use of time
 - b. The structure of the Jewish calendar as compared to other calendars
- II. The Jewish Calendar
 - a. The daily cycle
 - b. The weekly cycle
 - c. The monthly cycle
 - d. The yearly cycle
- III. Shabbat: The Sources
 - a. Biblical Texts
 - b. Rabbinic Laws
 - c. Midrashic Literature
- IV. Shabbat and Its Rituals
 - a. In the home
 - b. In the synagogue
- V. The Pilgrimage Festivals and the Sacred History of Israel
 - a. Passover
 - b. Shavuoth
 - c. Sukkot
- VI. Passover: The Study of the Haggadah
 - a. The rituals of the Seder
 - b. The key ideas
- VII. Passover (Continued)

- VIII. Shavuoth
 - a. Festival of first fruits
 - b. Torah giving and receiving time
- IX. Sukkot: Ideas and Rituals
- X. The High Holiday Theme
 - a. Sin and repentance
 - b. Judgment
 - c. Human and Jewish growth
- XI. Rosh Hashanah: Ideas and Rituals
- XII. Yom Kippur: Ideas and Rituals
- XIII. Purim, Hanukkah and Tu B'shvat
- XIV. Tisha B'Av
 - a. The Book of Lamentations
 - b. The tragedies of Jewish history
- XV. Holocaust Memorial Day and Israel's Independence Day

Shabbat and Holidays: Introduction

Don't be tempted to skip this section. Despite its title, it is truly the most difficult of all the sections we present to you. This is the section with which you have the most familiarity, therefore you are likely to say, "I know it already," "I live it," "I program it," or "I have often been with others who do it." This section, more than others, seeks to move Jewish practice, understanding, and interpretation to a deeper and more sophisticated level. You, as a Jewish adult, really should not do something, whether it's lighting candles or eating matzoh, just because you are told to do it. You, as a Jewish professional, should not program something just because other Jews like it, or it happens to be considered typical Jewish behavior. Jewish celebrations deserve your informed and considered acceptance and editing.

Jewish rituals and celebrations express deep ideas. These ideas fall into two categories, religious and human. Shabbat and the holidays express through their variety of practices and celebrations the religious idea and beliefs of Judaism such as God the Creator in the case of Shabbat, or God as the Redeemer in the case of Passover. Human ideas -- the thoughts, feelings and concerns common to all sorts of people -- are likewise manifest in these celebrations. Shabbat embodies a person's need for physical rest and private space as he or she retreats periodically from the marketplace and its pressures. Purim, for example, teaches us that aside from mourning a Jewish loss, there is another way to confront our enemies, that we also need to retain a sense of humor in order to overcome tragedy.

Shabbat and the holidays form the Jewish calendar whose flow and movement is determined by their celebrations. Calendars represent the way we organize time, express the way we use and experience it. Each one of us bases our lives on sets of overlapping calendars: The secular calendar, the fiscal year, the school year, the work year, the program calendar, the seasonal calendar, the birthday and anniversary year, and the Jewish calendar. Each of these begins and ends on its own, different dates. Each of these calendars moves from the beginning of a new year to the end of an old year, passing through a set of special dates and ordinary

dates. There is preparation and anticipation in advance of the special dates; day-to-day life is lived in the ordinary dates. The ordinary and special dates together create the rhythms of human experience. The organization of the calendar reflects human purpose. The work calendar contains planning, build up, preparations for reaching certain goals. The goals when reached are evaluated and then recede only to be replaced by the new goals to be planned. A student's basic task is study; his or her calendar organizes and expresses the student's purpose in time.

Each of the calendars mentioned above understands time in a special way. How does the Jewish calendar understand time? The Jewish calendar seeks to present and help us experience three elements of time at once, past, present, and future. On the Holidays we remember the past. Zakhor ("remember") is a basic Jewish principle. Remember the Exodus, remember the Torah giving, remember the Maccabees, remember the destruction of the Temple. We remember the movement and progress of Jewish history by re-enacting each of its main components in the cycle of one year.

To be a Jew is to remember, to identify with Jewish history and to perceive it as having imperatives now for our daily lives. History has lessons. We remember Torah giving in order to receive the Torah into our own lives. We remember the Exodus from Egypt so that we too can redeem ourselves and others. The moment we live, in the present, is not an isolated island; it is part of a movement from past to present to future. Rosh Hashanah celebrates the creation of the world in the past, asks us to judge ourselves in the present, so that a better self can move to the future. The yearly Jewish calendar is a re-enactment of the whole of Jewish experience: its past, its present, and its movement to the future.

The Jewish calendar year is composed of overlapping cycles:

Daily: The Jewish day begins and ends at sunset, thus putting a person in more intimate contact with nature rather than days which are arbitrarily and unnaturally defined as starting at midnight.

Weekly: This is the cycle of creation, seven days culminating in the Sabbath, week in and week out, celebrating work progress, rest, contemplation, renewal, and work again.

Monthly: The Jewish month is lunar, that is it is based on the typical 28 / 29-day cycle of the moon. The first mitzvah given to Israel in Egypt, hard upon the heels of their liberation, was the task of establishing their own lunar calendar. The months of the solar year are pre-determined. The lunar month is based on regular sightings designed to determine when the slowly waning moon turns toward renewal; and the path leads to half moon, full moon, and half again, daily decreasing to the point of rebirth. This is the calendar given to Israel as they moved from slavery to freedom. A slave has no control over time; a free person owns time. Israel is, at the moment of freedom, given that calendar which more than any other is in human control.

Yearly: The year begins in several places. The counting of the Jewish year by the traditional reckoning or, belief in time from creation begins with Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah begins the year of human activity, of work and school and human achievement. Rosh Hashanah also brings the old year to an end so that achievement and failure can be assessed in the scrutiny of the high holidays, and new resolve and new life celebrated in the delight of Sukkot. The yearly cycle begins again in Nisan, the spring month of Passover. Passover begins the cycle of Israel's history as it develops and is celebrated, redemption from Egypt on Passover, Torah receiving and God meeting at Shavuot, and wandering in the desert in the shanties or Sukkot. These are the three pilgrimage festivals. The major cycle is that of the seasons, spring, summer, fall, winter, of birth and growth, of withering and death only to be renewed in Nisan, spring's month. The rebirth of nature and the birth of the Jewish people are celebrated as one.

The holidays of Israel are not just biblical in origin. However those that are not biblical share something very basic in common with the three pilgrimage festivals: they share rootedness in history. Yom Ha'atzmaut and Hanukkah, for example, both commemorate and celebrate critical events in Jewish history. Judaism is the only religion whose holidays do not celebrate events in the life of a God, or the gods. Judaism's holidays celebrate the life history of Israel.

With these ideas in mind we turn now to a set of outlines for Shabbat and the holidays. These outlines organize basic information in order to make it accessible and to point in the direction of future study. Each outline has three sections: 1) Texts - some of the key Biblical and other Jewish texts that describe the specific event; 2) Jewish Ideas and Values -- the specific concepts of each event are presented in abridged form; 3) Practice -- an abbreviated list of important Jewish rituals and practices.

Shabbat - The Sabbath

I. Texts

1. Genesis 1:1-5

When God began to create the heaven and the earth -- the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water -- God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day.

2. Genesis 2:1

The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array. On the seventh day God finished the work which He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work which He had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation which He had done. Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created.

3. Exodus 20: 8-11

Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God: you shall not do any work -- you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

4. Deuteronomy 5: 12-15

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God: you shall not do any work -- you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in

your settlements, so that your male and female slave may rest as you do. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the LORD your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an out-stretched arm; therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the sabbath day.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Shabbat is a holy day.
2. Shabbat is an eternal sign between Israel and God.
3. Shabbat is a bond of love between ourselves and God. To understand Shabbat, like love, you must experience it.
4. Shabbat is a day of complete rest - not interfering with nature nor exhibiting mastery over it. It is a state of peace between person and nature.
5. The prohibition against labor means refraining from interfering in the physical world. We let the physical world rest for a while, and it lets us rest for a while.
6. Shabbat offers the opportunity to celebrate the labor of the past six days.
7. Belief in God as the Creator of all things is celebrated through the observance of Shabbat -- God's rest on the seventh day is imitated by our rest. Shabbat is the touchstone of Jewish faith.
8. Shabbat is the only ritual mentioned in the Ten Commandments.
9. As much as the Jew has kept Shabbat, so has Shabbat kept the Jew.
10. Three basic concepts of Shabbat:
 - 1) The remembrance that God finished creation in six days and rested on the Shabbat.
 - 2) The remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt.
 - 3) The idea that Shabbat resembles the World to Come, perfection.

III. Practice

1. Preparing home and self for Shabbat. Separate from workday activities and celebrate through rest.
2. Lighting of candles.
3. Blessing of children.

4. Reciting of kiddush -- sanctification of Shabbat over wine.
5. Eating challah.
6. Enjoying Shabbat meals with family and friends.
7. Attending synagogue services.
8. Hearing Bible and Torah readings.
9. Spending time with family.
10. Making Havdalah (service of separation) at end of Shabbat and beginning of new week.

Rosh Hashanah

I. Texts

1. Leviticus 23: 23-25

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts. You shall not work at your occupations; and you shall bring an offering by fire to the Lord.

2. Numbers 29: 1-6

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded.

3. From the High Holiday Prayer Book

Let us describe the sheer weightiness and sanctity of this awesome day .. it is true that You are the all-powerful judge, and You write, and You inscribe, You account, and You measure, and You remember all that is forgotten, and You, God, open up the Book of Memories and it reads and speaks for itself, and the signature of every person is found in it. And with the great sound of the Shofar, judgment begins and the still small voice is heard ... and all humanity passes before You for judgment as a shepherd takes note and counts each of his sheep so do You take note of each person; so do they pass before You, so do You count them and You review the life of each person. You determine their length of days, and You inscribe their fate. On Rosh Hashanah, it is written, and on the Fast of Yom Kippur it is sealed, how many shall leave this world and how many shall come into this world, who shall live and who shall die...

You remember the days of creation, and You remember the deeds of all. Before You are revealed all secrets and all the mysteries from the beginning. There is no forgetfulness before You, there is nothing hidden from You. You remember everything that has been done and no creature can hide from You. Everything is revealed before You, for You have established a day of remembrance to record the deeds of all human beings. This day, Rosh Hashanah, is a reminder of the first days of creation. It is an observance for People

Israel, the practice of the God of Jacob, and then all the nations in the world has declared this day, which are destined for the sword, and which for peace which for hunger, and which for satisfaction, who shall live and who shall die. Who is it that is not called to judgment before You on this day? The record of every human being is opened before You, his or her works and ways, designs, and desires.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. According to tradition, Rosh Hashanah celebrates the birthday of the world.
2. Rosh Hashanah embodies the promise of rebirth and renewal for the world, Israel, and the Individual:
3. Rosh Hashanah offers the opportunity for evaluation of the past and making new plans for the future.
4. The day of creation is a day of judgment. Traditionally Rosh Hashanah is the day when God judges the world.
5. There are three elements to judgment and repentance:

Tefillah -- prayer
Tzedekah -- good deeds
Teshuvah -- returning to our better selves and to God.

III. Practice

1. Sounding the Shofar.
2. Special prayers in the Machzor (High Holiday prayer book).
3. Dipping apples in honey, symbolic of a sweet year.
4. Traditional family meal with apples and honey (sweet year) and round challah, which represents hope for a year whose goodness should be as complete as a circle.

Yom Kippur

I. Texts

1. Leviticus 16: 29-31, 34

And this shall be to you a law for all time: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall practice self-denial, and you shall do no manner of work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the Lord. It shall be a

Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self-denial; it is law for all time. This shall be to you a law for all time to make atonement for the Israelites for all their sins once a year.

2. Leviticus 23: 26-32.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Mark, the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: You shall practice self-denial, and you shall bring an offering by fire to the Lord. You shall do no work throughout that day. For it is a day of Atonement on which expiation is made on your behalf before the Lord your God. Indeed, any person who does not practice self-denial throughout that day shall be cut off from his kin; and whoever does any work throughout that day, I will cause that person to perish from among his people. Do not work whatever; it is a law for all time, throughout the ages in all your settlements. It shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self-denial. On the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall observe this your Sabbath!

3. Mishnah Yoma

... Where sins are between person and God, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, gains forgiveness and newness, but for sins between a person and his or her fellow human being, Yom Kippur does not gain forgiveness and newness until he or she has begged forgiveness and been reconciled with his or her fellow person.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Every person has limitations and weaknesses that bring about sin and wrongdoing.
2. Human beings can correct wrongs and they can change. This is called Teshuvah, return.
3. Teshuvah means return to our better selves; return to the Jewish people; return to God.
4. God and those we have offended can forgive our sins and enable us to begin life anew.
5. Teshuvah takes place through fasting, prayer, self-reflection, and good deeds.

III. Practice

1. Pre-fast meal celebrating new life
2. Fasting from sunset to sunset
3. Post-fast meal
4. All day prayer and Teshuvah -- return.

Sukkot--Feast of Huts

I. Texts

1. Exodus 23:14-17

Three times a year you shall hold a festival for me: You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread -- eating unleavened bread for seven days. As I have commanded you, at the set time in the month of Abib, for in it you went forth from Egypt; and none shall appear before Me empty-handed; and the Feast of the Harvest, of the first fruits of your work of what you sow in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in the results of your work from the field. Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Sovereign, the Lord.

2. Leviticus 23:33-44

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Say to the Israelite people: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month there shall be the Feast of Booths to the Lord, (to last) seven days. The first day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations; seven days you shall bring offerings by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall observe a sacred occasion and bring an offering by fire to the Lord; it is a solemn gathering: you shall not work at your occupations.

Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Lord (to last) seven days; a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. You shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages. You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the Lord your God. So Moses declared to the Israelites the set times of the Lord.

3. Deuteronomy 16:13-17

After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days. You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities. You shall hold festival for the Lord your God seven days, in the place that the Lord will choose; for the Lord your God will bless all your crops and all your undertakings, and you shall have nothing but joy. Three times a year--on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Booths--all your males shall appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each with his own gift, according to the blessing that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Sukkot celebrates the harvest.
2. Sukkot celebrates the renewal achieved through Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
3. Sukkot reminds us of the fragile huts of the Jews' wandering in the desert.
4. Sukkot is a great holiday of joy and happiness with nature.

III. Practice

1. Building a sukkah (hut).
2. Sitting and eating in a sukkah.
3. Special prayers--musaf--instead of sacrifices.
4. Waving the lulav and etrog.
5. Reading Kohelet (Ecclesiastes).

Hanukkah - Festival of Rededication, Festival of Lights

I. Texts

1. Talmud - Shabbath

What is (the reason of) Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev (commence) the days of Hanukkah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit (the lamp) therewith for eight days. The following year these (days) were appointed a Festival with (the recital of) Hallel and thanksgiving.

2. Book of Maccabees

But Judah and his brothers said: "Now that our enemies have been crushed, let us go up to Jerusalem to cleanse the temple and rededicate it." So the whole army was assembled and went up to Mount Zion. There they found the temple laid waste, the altar profaned, the gates burnt down, the courts overgrown like a thicket or wooded hillside, and the priests' room in ruin. They tore their galinents, wailed loudly, put ashes on their heads, and fell on their faces to the ground. They sounded the ceremonial trumpets, and cried aloud to Heaven.

Then Judah detailed troops to engage the garrison of the citadel while he cleansed the temple. He selected priests without blemish, devoted to the law, and they purified the temple, removing to an unclean place the stones which defiled it. They discussed what to do with the altar of burnt-offering which was profaned, and rightly decided to demolish it, for fear it might become a standing reproach to them because it had been defiled by the Gentiles. They therefore pulled down the altar, and stored away the stones in a fitting place on the temple hill, until a prophet should arise who could be consulted about them. They took unhewn stones, as the law commands, and built a new altar on the model of the previous one. They rebuilt the temple and restored its interior, and consecrated the temple courts. They renewed the sacred vessels and the lamp-stand, and brought the altar of incense and the table into the temple. They burnt incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lamp stand to shine within the temple. When they had put the Bread of the Presence on the table and hung the curtains, all their work was completed.

Then, early on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, the month Kislev, in the year (164 B.G.E.) sacrifice was offered as the law commands on the newly made altar of burnt-offering. On the anniversary of the day when the Gentiles had profaned it, on that very day, it was rededicated, with hymns of thanksgiving, to the music of harps and lutes and cymbals. All the people prostrated themselves, worshipping and praising Heaven that their cause had prospered. They celebrated the rededication of the altar for eight days. There was great rejoicing as they brought burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings and thank-offerings. They decorated the front of the temple with golden wreaths and ornamental shields. They renewed the gates and the priests' rooms, and fitted them with doors. There was great merry-making among the people, and the disgrace brought on them by the Gentiles was removed.

Then Judah, his brothers, and the whole congregation of Israel decreed that the rededication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness at the same season each year, for eight days, beginning on the twenty-fifth of Kislev.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Hanukkah signifies the military victory over Antiochus, the Greek, and the recognition of a need for military power.
2. Hanukkah signifies the cultural victory of Judaism over those Jews who had fully assimilated into Greek culture.
3. Hanukkah signifies the rededication of the temple and the possibility of regularly renewing and reviving Jewish life.
4. Hanukkah signifies the Menorah and lights as the primary symbol of God's presence, and the endurance of the Jewish people in history.

III. Practice

1. Lighting Hanukkah candles
2. Playing dreidel
3. Eating latkes
4. Family meal
5. Hanukkah parties.

Tu B'Shvat

I. Texts

1. Leviticus 19: 23-25

When you enter the land and plant any trees for food, you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden for you not to be eaten. In the fourth year, all its fruit shall be set aside for jubilation before the Lord; and only in the fifth year may you use its fruit - that its yield to you may be increased: I am the Lord your God.

2. Deuteronomy 8: 6-8

For the Lord your God brings you into a good land of brooks, water and fountains and springs flourishing in valley and hills; a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Tu B'shvat celebrates the beginning of Spring in the Land of Israel. It provides an opportunity to feel a connection with the ancestral homeland by identifying with the natural and agricultural cycles.
2. Tu B'shvat provides a focus on the importance of trees and ecology in the Jewish tradition.
3. Tu B'shvat acknowledges the mystical traditions of Judaism; a connection to the "Tree of Life."

III. Practice

1. Planting trees in Israel or donating money to plant trees.
2. Eating fruits and grains from the Land of Israel, especially from the seven species of Deuteronomy.

- Celebrating a Tu B'shvat seder, with four cups of wine, and a variety of fruits, accompanied by passages from the Torah about different types of trees.

Purim--Feast of Lots

I. Texts

1. Esther - Chapter 3, Verses 1-11

Some time afterward, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite; he advanced him and seated him higher than any of his fellow officials. All the king's courtiers in the palace gate knelt and bowed low to Haman, for such was the king's order concerning him; but Mordecai would not kneel or bow low. Then the king's courtiers who were in the palace gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's order?" When they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's resolve would prevail; for he had explained to them that he was a Jew. When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel or bow low to him, Haman was filled with rage. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone; having been told who Mordecai's people were, Haman plotted to do away with all Jews, Mordecai's people, throughout the kingdom of Agasuerus.

In the first month, that is, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, pur--which means "the lot"--was cast before Haman concerning every day and every month, (until it fell on) the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar. Haman then said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other people and who do not obey the king's laws; and it is not in Your Majesty's interest to tolerate them. If it please Your Majesty, let an edict be issued for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the stewards for deposit in the royal treasury." Thereupon the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of the Jews. And the king said, "The money and the people are yours to do with as you see fit."

2. Esther - Chapter 7, Verses 1-6, and 10

So the king and Haman came to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, the king again asked Esther at the banquet, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." Queen Esther replied: "If Your Majesty will do me a favor, and if it pleases Your Majesty, let my life be granted me as my wish, and my people as my request. For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, massacred, and exterminated. Had we only been sold as bondmen and bondwomen, I would have kept silent; for 'the adversary' is not worth bothering the king about."

Thereupon King Ahasuerus demanded of Queen Esther, "Who is he and where is he who dared to do this?" "The adversary and enemy," replied Esther, "is this evil Haman!" And Haman cringed in terror before the king and the queen. So they

impaled Haman on the stake which he had put up for Mordecai, and the king's fury abated.

3. Esther - Chapter 9, Verses 20-26

Mordecai recorded these events. And he send dispatches to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus, near and far, charging them to observe the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, every year--the same days on which the Jews enjoyed relief from their foes, and the same month which had been transformed for them from one of grief and mourning to one of festive joy. They were to observe them as days of feasting and merry making, and as an occasion for sending gifts to one another and presents to the poor. The Jews accordingly assumed as an obligation that which they had begun to practice and which Mordecai prescribed for them.

For Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of all the Jews, had plotted to destroy the Jews, and had cast pur--that is, the lot--with intent to crush and exterminate them. But when Esther came before the king, he commanded: "With the promulgation of this decree, let the evil plot, which he devised against the Jews, recoil on his own head!" So they impaled him and his sons on the stake. For that reason these days were named Purim, after pur.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. On Purim we celebrate the victory of the Jews over Haman through the intercession of Esther and Mordecai.
2. Purim is a response to anti-Semitism; what Haman plans for the Jewish people, happened to him.
3. Purim gives Jews a chance to laugh at their enemies and at evil.
4. Purim gives Jews a chance to have fun, to make fun, and to laugh at themselves.

III. Practice

1. Reading of Megillat Esther, the Scroll of Esther.
2. Mocking Haman's name with graggers--noisemakers.
3. Sending gifts of food to friends--shalach manot.
4. Dressing up in costume.
5. Giving tzedakah to the poor.

6. Eating hamantaschen.
7. Eating a festive meal.
8. Making Purim parties.
9. Reciting special prayers.

**Passover -- Pesach (Feast of Unleavened Bread)
Festival of Freedom**

I. Texts

1. Exodus 12: 21-51

Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. For when the Lord goes through to smite the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, and the Lord will pass over the door and not let the Destroyer enter and smite your home.

You shall observe this as an institution for all time, for you and for your descendants. And when you enter the land which the Lord will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. And when your children ask you, "What do you mean by this rite?" You shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord, because He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses.'

The Israelites journeyed from Raamses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. Moreover, a mixed multitude went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

The length of time that the Israelites lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years; at the end of the four hundred and thirtieth year, to the very day, all the ranks of the Lord departed from the land of Egypt. That was for the Lord a night of vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that same night is the Lord's, one of vigil for all the children of Israel throughout the ages.

2. Exodus 13: 1-16

And Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how the Lord freed you from it with a mighty hand: no leavened bread shall be eaten."

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival of the Lord. Throughout the seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten; no leavened bread shall be found with you, and no leaven shall be found in all your territory. And you shall explain to your son on that day, "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt."

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Passover celebrates God's redemption of Israel from slavery.
2. God is concerned with the human condition.
3. Jews are obligated to imitate that same concern for all human beings.
4. No human being can ever own another human being.
5. Passover celebrates God's fulfillment of His promise to Abraham to redeem His people and return them to the promised land.
6. Passover celebrates the birth of the Jewish people.

III. Practice

1. Removal of hametz, leaven of grain products, from the home.
2. Eating matzah.
3. Participating in a seder with family and friends.
4. Retelling the narrative of the exodus from Egypt.

Shavuot-Pentecost

L Texts

1. Exodus Chapters 19, 20

On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone forth from the land of Egypt, on that very day, they entered the wilderness of Sinai. Having journeyed from Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and encamped there in front of the mountain, and Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me. Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Moses came and summoned the elders of the people and put before them all the words that the Lord had commanded him. All the people answered as one, saying, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!"

On the third day, as morning dawned, there were thunder, and lighting, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people who were in the

camp trembled. Moses led the people out of the camp toward God, and they took their places at the foot of the mountain....

Exodus 20 - The Ten Commandments

God spoke all these words, saying: I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: You shall have no other gods beside Me.

You should not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the Lord your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the fathers upon the children upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me, but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep my commandments. You should not swear falsely by the name of the Lord your God; for the Lord will not clear one who swears falsely by His name.

Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God: you shall not do any work.. you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

Honor your father and your mother, that you may long endure on the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house: you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female slave, or his ox or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

2. Deuteronomy 16:9-15

You shall count off seven weeks (from Passover). Start to count the seven weeks when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. Then you shall observe the Feast of Weeks for the Lord your God, offering your freewill contribution according as the Lord your God has blessed you. You shall rejoice before the Lord your God with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite in your communities, and the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your midst, at the place where the Lord your God will choose to establish His name. Bear in mind that you were slaves in Egypt, and take care to obey these laws.

After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days. You shall rejoice in your festival with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow in your communities. You shall hold festival for the Lord your God seven days, in the place that the Lord will choose; for the Lord your God will bless all your crops and all your undertakings, and you shall have nothing but joy.

3. Masechet Bekurim
Seder Zeraim
Description of bikkurim (first fruits)

When the temple stood, there were two special aspects of the sacrifice for Shavuot: the two loaves of bread offered up by the priests for the nation as a whole, and the free will offering brought by every family according to its own means, according to how God had blessed them. These offerings were brought from bikkurim the first fruits, of the seven kinds of food plants for which the Land of Israel is specifically praised in the Torah: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates.

Family by family, in pilgrim parties made up by clans, districts, and provinces, huge numbers of Israelites would travel to the Temple in Jerusalem. Each family carried baskets of the bikkurim: the rich, baskets made of gold and silver; the poor, willow baskets. By night on their journey they slept in the public squares of the towns they passed through.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Shavuot is the end purpose of the redemption from Egypt.
2. Shavuot celebrates the giving and receiving of Torah and the meeting with God at Sinai.
3. Shavuot is the festival of the first fruits and it celebrates the gifts of the land.

III. Practice

1. Special prayers.
2. Reading the Book of Ruth.
3. All-night Torah study.
4. Eating dairy products.

Yom Ha-Shoah

I. Text

From Lucy S. Dawidowicz' s book "*A Holocaust Reader.*"

Estimated Number of Jews Killed in the Final Solution

Country	Estimated pre-final solution population	Estimated Jewish population annihilated Number	Percent
Poland	3,300,000	3,000,000	90
Baltic countries	253,000	228,000	90
Germany/Austria Protectorate	240,000	210,000	90
Slovakia	90,000	80,000	89
Greece	90,000	75,000	83
The Netherlands	70,000	54,000	77
Hungary	140,000	105,000	75
SSR White Russia	650,000	450,000	70
SSR Ukraine	375,000	245,000	65
Yugoslavia	1,500,000	900,000	60
Belgium	43,000	26,000	60
Rumania	65,000	40,000	60
Norway	600,000	300,000	50
France	1,800	900	50
Bulgaria	350,000	90,000	26
Italy	64,000	14,000	22
Luxembourg	40,000	8,000	20
Russia (RSFSR)	5,000	1,000	20
Finland	975,000	107,000	11
Denmark	2,000	8,000	—
TOTAL	8,861,800	5,933,900	67

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. We should remember and never forget the destruction of the six million Jews by the Nazis.
2. We should recognize and combat evil anywhere and everywhere.
3. We should understand, identify, and combat anti-Semitism.
4. We should understand the circumstances that made the Holocaust possible.

5. We should never be silent in the face of evil or anti-Semitism.
6. We should save Jews who are threatened.
7. We should never let the world forget.
8. We should secure Jewish power in a Jewish homeland.

III. Practice

Jewish rituals and practices in commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day are still developing, and will continue to do so for a long time to come. Essentially they consist of memorial services at which traditional memorial prayers are read along with selections from the diaries of the victims and survivors; and other writings on the Holocaust.

Yom Ha'atzmaut

I. Text

1. From the Proclamation of the State of Israel

The land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious, and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world. Exiled from Palestine, the Jewish people remained faithful to it and all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom. Compelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their Fathers and regain their statehood. In recent decades, they returned in their masses. They reclaimed the wilderness, revived their language, built cities and villages, and established a vigorous and ever-growing community with some economic and cultural life. They sought peace, yet were prepared to defend themselves. They brought the blessings of progress to all inhabitants of the country. In the year 1897, the First Zionist Congress, inspired by Theodor Herzl's vision of the Jewish State, proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national revival in their own country.

The Nazi Holocaust which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe proved anew the urgency of the re-establishment of the Jewish State, which would solve the problem of Jewish homelessness by opening the gates to all Jews and lifting the Jewish people to equality in the family of nations. Accordingly, we, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the Zionist movement of the world, met together in solemn assembly that day, the day of determination of the British Mandate for Palestine, and by virtue of the natural and historic right of the Jewish people, and of the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, hereby proclaimed the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called Israel.

Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side in the task of immigration and development, and to stand by us in the great struggle for the realization of the dream of generations--the redemption of Israel. With trust in the Rock of Israel, we set our hand to this Declaration at this Session of the Provisional State Council, in the City of Tel Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the 5th of Iyar, 5708, the 14th day of May, 1948.

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrates the return of the Jewish people to Israel.
2. Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrates the establishment of Jewish self-government and self-determination.
3. Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrates the exercise of Jewish power for the first time in nearly 2,000 years.
4. Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrates the establishment of a fully Jewish society and culture.

III. Practice

1. Israel Independence Day-- parades, parties, and celebrations
2. Memorial prayers and services for those who died in defense of the State of Israel.
3. Special prayer services.

Tisha W'Av-The Fast of the Ninth of Av

I. Text

1. II Kings 25:1-12

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. And in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar moved against Jerusalem with his whole army. He besieged it; and they built towers against it all around. The city continued in a state of siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth day (of the fourth month) the famine had become acute in the city; there was no food left for the common people. Then (the wall of) the city was breached. All the soldiers (left the city) by night through the gate between the double walls, which is near the king's garden--the Chaldeans were all around the city; and (the king) set out for the Arabah. But the Chaldean troops pursued the king, and they overtook him in the steppes of Jericho as his entire force left him and scattered. They captured the king and brought him before the king of Babylon at Riblah; and they

put him on trial. They slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his eyes; then Zedekiah's eyes were put out. He was chained in bronze fetters and he was brought to Babylon.

On the seventh day of the fifth month--that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon--Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards, an officer of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the House of the Lord, the king's palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem; he burned down the house of every notable person. The entire Chaldean force that was with the chief of the guard tore down the walls of Jerusalem on every side. The remnant of the people that was left in the city, the defectors who had gone over to the king of Babylon--and the remnant of the population--were taken into exile by Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards. But some of the poorest in the land were left by the chief of the guards, to be vinedressers and field hands.

2. Lamentations - Chapter 1, Verses 1-7

Alas!
Lonely sits the city
Once great with people!
She that was great among nations
Is become like a widow;
The princess among states
Is become a thrall.
Bitterly she weeps in the night,
Her cheeks wet with tears.
There is none to comfort her
Of all her friends.
All her allies have betrayed her;
They have become her foes.
Judah has gone into exile
Because of misery and harsh oppression;
When she settled among the nations,
She found no rest;
All her pursuers overtook her
In the narrow places.
Zion's roads are in mourning,
Empty of festival pilgrims;
All her gates are deserted.
Her priests sigh,
Her maidens are unhappy--
She is utterly disconsolate!
Her enemies are now the masters,
Her foes are at ease,
Because the Lord has afflicted her
For her many transgressions;
Her infants have gone into captivity
Before the enemy.
Gone from Fair Zion are all
That were her glory;
Her leaders were like stags
That found no pasture;
They could only walk feebly
Before the pursuer.

All the precious things she had
In the days of old
Jerusalem recalled
In her days of woe and sorrow,
When her people fell by enemy hands
With none to help her;
When enemies looked on and gloated
Over her downfall

II. Jewish Ideas and Values

1. Tisha B'Av mourns the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. respectively.
2. Tisha B'Av mourns the exile of the Jewish people and the loss of national sovereignty.
3. Tisha B'Av commemorates and mourns other Jewish tragedies such as the Crusades.
4. Tisha B'Av memorializes the experience of the Holocaust.

III. Practice

1. All day fasting.
2. Reading of the Book of Lamentations.
3. Special prayers for specific Jewish tragedies.

Bibliographical Note
Life Cycle & Shabbat & Holidays

Jewish authors and publishers have responded to the burgeoning interest of the Jewish community for both conceptual and practical information on Jewish living. No bibliography can be kept up to date. Regular visits to the book store are advised. However, a few books bear mentioning and highlight for the purposes of this Guide. The most famous books about contemporary Jewish living are the three *Jewish Catalogs* by Michael and Sharon Strassfeld. This highly accessible work covers a variety of aspects of the Jewish Life Cycle, Shabbat and Holidays, with additional sections about specialized needs of today's Jewish community and contemporary Jewish living.

Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Life Cycle edited by Rabbi Simeon Maslin reflects Reform thinking on Life Cycle celebrations, while *To Be a Jew* by H. H. Donin takes an Orthodox stance. *The Enchantments of Judaism: Rites of Transformation From Birth Through Death* by Jacob Neusner explores the Jewish ritual on the Life Cycle from a conceptual point of view as a definition of both individual and communal Jewish life.

To investigate the rituals and deeper ideas celebrated in the Jewish holidays, the following books are suggested: *Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary* by Michael Strassfeld, which includes both basic information and thought-provoking questions, as well as *The Jewish Way: Observing the Holidays* by Irving Greenberg, an Orthodox rabbi who attempts to move beyond denominational concerns in his analysis. *The Complete Family Guide to Jewish Holidays* by Dalia Renberg is a useful resource for parents of young children. *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household* by Blu Greenberg reflects a liberal Orthodox point of view, while *Gates of the House* and *Shabbat Manual* issued by the Central Conference of American Rabbis presents the Reform point of view. *The Complete Book of Jewish Observance* by Leo Trepp reflects a stance that could be loosely

defined as Conservative. In addition, Oscar Waskow's book, *Seasons Of Our Joy* is eminently useful.

Aftervord

Now that we have spent some time studying together with you, we want to take our leave of you in much the same way that the Rabbis of old said goodbye to each other after having engaged in the intimacy of study and learning; so we quote from the Babylonian Talmud in Berahot, "May all your needs be provided for in your lifetime. Your destiny is the destiny of the Jewish people. Your hope is the hope of the generations. May your heart meditate understanding, your mouth speak wisdom, and your tongue sing songs. May your eyelids point the straight way before you, and may your eyes shine with the light of the Torah, and may your face radiate like the brightness of the heavens above. May your lips always utter knowledge, and may your very being rejoice with uprightness and righteousness, and may your footsteps always run to hear the words of the Ancient of Days."

And now we add a further text, again from the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate 7u anit. When the Rabbis were about to part from each other, one said to the other, "Pray master, bless me". He replied, "Let me tell you a tale; to what may our parting be compared, to a man who is travelling in the desert. He was hungry, weary, and thirsty, and he came upon a tree whose fruit was sweet, whose shade was pleasant, and a stream of water flowed beneath it. He ate of its fruit, drank of its water, and rested beneath its shade. When he was about to continue his journey, he said "Tree, oh tree, with what shall I bless you? Shall I say to you, may your fruit be sweet; your fruit is already sweet. Shall I say to you, may your shade be pleasant; your shade is already pleasant. Should I say to you may a stream of water flow beneath you; a stream of water already flows beneath you. Therefore, I say, may it be God's will that all the shoots and young saplings taken from you should be just like you."

So is it with you who work in the Center field. With what shall we bless you? Should we bless you with dedication; you are already dedicated. Should we bless you with commitment to the Jewish people; you are already committed. Shall we bless you with knowledge of Jewish life; you are already blessed. With what then shall we bless you? May it be God's will that all those who come forth from you should be just like you.

A Note of Welcome to ,ACC's Outside Resource Person

At the outset, we want to welcome you to one of the Jewish community's most exciting and potentially important activities, the Jewish learning activities of JCC's professional staff.

We are grateful to you for your dedication and commitment. Even though you are not personally known to us, we do share with you a common set of goals and Jewish values. You are now indispensable to the Jewish education of so many JCC staff who have a wide array of contacts with, and impacts upon the Jewish community and Jewish individuals. We are grateful to you for assuming responsibility for working with your local Center.

When we wrote this guide, we had you in mind. We wanted to make your tasks as easy as possible. Hence, our first goal was to define what of the vast sea of Jewish knowledge was necessary for the Center Worker to know in order to fulfill his or her responsibilities in the building of a rich Jewish community.

Second, we wanted to outline courses of study based upon our delineation and definition of specific areas of knowledge so that you would have an easier time in helping to design the study program. The material before you is offered by way of recommendation. We are certain that in the course of using this Guide, you will discover a variety of areas where improvement is possible.

We would appreciate hearing those suggestions, both in terms of substance and methodology. Please send them to us through your local Center Director. Please note that the guide is just that - a guide. It is not engraved in stone. We are certain that in your

actual design of the Jewish Studies Staff Training Program, new ideas will emerge. We would like to hear about those as well. In addition, do let us know, through the JWB office, how and in what way we may be of further help to you.

You have our profound thanks and good wishes for becoming our partners in the fulfillment of the mitzvah of Torah teaching and learning.

Barry Chazan and Yehiel E. Poupko