Practices, Rituals, and Symbols

Role and Status of Women

The role of women in traditional Judaism is complex and contradictory in some respects. The traditional view is that women are generally seen as separate but equal. Women's obligations and responsibilities may be different from men's, but are also important.

The role of women in Judaism is determined by the Hebrew Bible, Oral Law, custom, and non-religious cultural factors. Although the Hebrew Bible and *rabbinic* literature mention various female role models, religious law treats women differently from men in various circumstances.

Traditionally, 'Jewishness' is determined by one's mother. In traditional Judaism, Jewishness is matrilineal and is passed down through the mother, although the father's name is used to describe sons and daughters in the *Torah* (e.g., Dinah, daughter of Jacob).

In Biblical Times

In Judaism, God has not been seen as being exclusively either male or female. Judaism has maintained that God has both masculine and feminine qualities. It is argued that when Jews refer to God using masculine terms, they do so simply for convenience's sake, because Hebrew has no neutral gender pronouns.

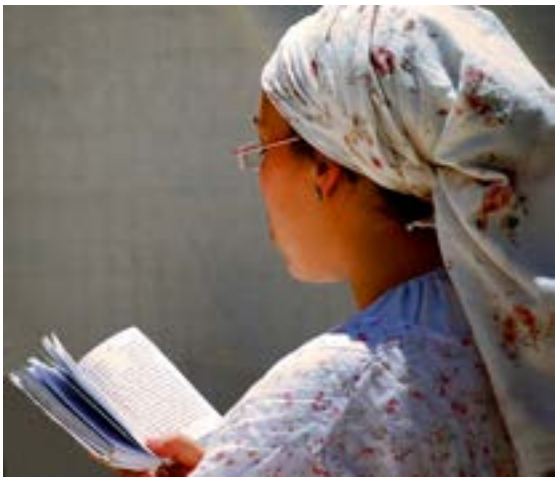

Figure 28: Woman at The Western Wall (Wailing Wall), Jerusalem

According to most Jewish scholars, the first human was created in Genesis 1:27 with aspects of both genders and was later separated into male and female persons. Therefore, both man and woman were created in the image of God.

Women also have important roles in the Jewish scriptures. The matriarchs (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah) were believed to have very strong prophetic

abilities as were the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). As well, women were described as refusing to participate in the worshiping of idolatry with respect to the Golden Calf. Some traditional sources suggest that women are closer to God's ideal than men.

Since biblical times, women have held positions of importance in Judaism, for example, Miriam is considered one of the liberators of the Children of Israel, along with her brothers Moses and Aaron. One of the Judges (Deborah) was a woman. Seven of the 55 prophets of the Hebrew Bible were women. The Ten Commandments require respect for both mother and father.

Talmudic Times

While few women are mentioned by name in *rabbinic* literature, and none are known to have authored a *rabbinic* work, those who are mentioned are portrayed as having a strong influence on their husband. There were many learned women who were recognized for their qualities. The *Talmud* and later *rabbinical* writings speak of the wisdom of Berurya, the wife of *Rabbi* Meir. In several instances, her opinions on *halakhah* (Jewish Law) were accepted over those of her male contemporaries.

The *Talmud* also says some very negative things about women, although it is important to note that the *Talmud* also has negative things to say about men. Various *rabbis* at different times describe women as being lazy, jealous, vain, gluttonous, prone to gossip, and particularly prone to engaging in the occult and witchcraft. In the *Talmud*, men are repeatedly advised against associating with women.

Traditionally, women were discouraged from pursuing higher education or religious pursuits. However, Jewish scholars often note that the rights of women in traditional Judaism were much greater than they were in the rest of Western civilization until recently. For example, within Judaism women had the right to buy, sell, and own property, as well as make their own contracts, rights which women in Western countries did not have until the 1900s.

Women also have the right to choose their partners with regard to their marriage. Marital sex is regarded as the woman's right, and not the man's. Men do not have the right to beat or mistreat their wives, a right that was not recognized by law in many Western countries until the modern era. In cases of rape, in Judaism, a woman is generally presumed not to have consented to the intercourse. Traditional Judaism recognizes that forced sexual relations within the context of marriage are rape and are not permitted.

Traditional Role as a Wife and Mother

Nevertheless, the primary role of a Jewish woman was as wife and mother, and the keeper of the household. However, Judaism has great respect for the

importance of these roles and the spiritual influence that the woman has over her family.

Jewish scholars point out that women are exempted from all positive *mitzvot* (thou shalts as opposed to thou shalt nots) that are time-related (that is, *mitzvot* that must be performed at a specific time of the day or year), because the woman's duties as wife and mother are so important that they cannot be postponed to fulfill a *mitzvah* (religious requirement).

The exemption of Jewish women from certain *mitzvot* has led to a belief that women have a diminished role in Judaism; however, it is important to note that it is an exemption not a prohibition. Generally, although women are not required to perform time-based positive *mitzvot*, they are generally permitted to observe such *mitzvot*. Nevertheless, because this exemption diminishes the role of women in the synagogue, many people perceive that women have a limited role in Jewish religious life.

Women's *Mitzvot*: *Nerot*, *Challah*, and *Niddah*

In Jewish tradition, there are three mitzvot (commandments) that are reserved specifically for women

- *nerot* (lighting candles)
- *challah* (separating a portion of dough, which literally is the name of the bread used for the Shabbat)
- *niddah* (sexual separation during a woman's menstrual period and ritual immersion afterwards)

If a woman is present who can perform the first two *mitzvot*, the privilege of fulfilling the mitzvah is reserved for the woman. The first two of these *mitzvot* can be performed by a man if no woman is present. All of these *mitzvot* are related to the home and the family, areas where the woman is primarily responsible.

Women's Holiday: *Rosh Chodesh*

Rosh Chodesh, the first day of each month, is a minor festival in Judaism. There is a custom that women do not work on *Rosh Chodesh*. A *midrash* teaches that each of the *Rosh Chodeshim* was originally intended to represent one of the twelve tribes of Israel, just as the three major festivals (*Pesach*, *Sukkot*, and *Shavu'ot*) each represent one of the three patriarchs. However, because of the sin of the Golden Calf, the holiday was taken away from the men and given to women, as a reward for the women's refusal to participate in the construction of the Golden Calf.

The Role of Women in the Synagogue

Traditionally, in most synagogues, men and women were separated. This apparently dates back to the practices observed during the period of the two temples, where women could only access a portion of the temple site. Women were given their own section, most likely a second floor balcony, or behind a designated screened or walled area. Some synagogues had a separate building for women.

Separation from the men was directed by the *rabbis* in the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*. The reasoning behind the *halacha* was that a woman and her body would distract men and give them impure thoughts during prayer. As well, Jewish tradition and custom prohibit direct physical contact between men and women who are not related. How this is interpreted will depend on one's level of religious observance. Formal contact, such as a handshake, may be seen by some as a form of greeting. However, others may include a handshake in the prohibition of physical contact.

It is important to understand the nature of *mitzvot* (commandments) in Judaism and the separation of men and women. The *mitzvot* that were given to the Jewish people are regarded as a privilege, and the more *mitzvot* one is obliged to observe, the more one is privileged.

Because women were not required to perform certain *mitzvot*, their observance of those *mitzvot* does not "count" for group purposes. Thus, a woman's voluntary attendance at daily worship services does not count toward the creation of a *minyan* (the 10 people necessary to recite certain prayers), a woman's voluntary recitation of certain prayers would not count on behalf of the group (thus women cannot lead services), and a woman's voluntary reading from the *Torah* would not count towards the community's obligation to read from the *Torah*. The same is true of boys under the age of 13, who are not obligated to perform any *mitzvot*, though they are permitted to perform them.

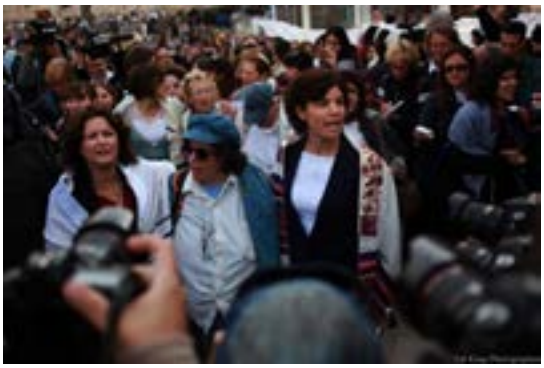

Figure 29: Women challenge gender segregation at the Wailing Wall 11/4/13
Two Parliament members of the Israeli *Knesset*, Michal Rozin and Tamar Zandberg, in solidarity with the "Women of the Wailing Wall" and objecting the arrests of five members

The combination of the exemption from certain *mitzvot* and the separation of men and women resulted in the view that women had an inferior and limited role in the synagogue. Women are not obligated by Jewish law to attend formal religious services, and cannot participate in many aspects of the services, so they have less motivation to attend.

Lastly, women's obligations in the home (which are the reason why women are exempt from time-based *mitzvot* like formal prayer services) often keep them away from synagogue.

However, many *rabbis* and Jews would argue that a restriction on participation in synagogue life does not mean that women are excluded in the Jewish religion, because the Jewish religion is not just something that happens in synagogue. They would argue Judaism is something that permeates every aspect of a person's life, everything that one does, from the time they wake up in the morning to the time they go to bed, from what one eats and how one dresses to how one conducts business. Prayer services are only a small, though important, part of the Jewish religion.

Women in Contemporary Judaism

Figure 30: Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella of the Supreme Court of Canada

The role of women in contemporary Jewish communities and synagogues varies widely, although it has generally moved towards greater equity and full participation. With some very rare exceptions, women historically were not allowed to serve as *rabbis* until the 1970s. Modern human rights ideals and the influence of feminism and other developments favouring gender equity impacted on Judaism (as they have on other religions) in North America and throughout the world. Today, ordained female *rabbis* may be found within all branches of Judaism, with the exception of Orthodox Judaism. In Orthodox Judaism, women generally are excluded from being ordained or functioning as *rabbis*. Each movement, except the Orthodox, Haredi, and Hasidim, have come to accept the right of women to become *rabbis* after long periods of reflection and debate regarding their own religious philosophies and ideals.

Women as *Rabbi's* and Religious Leaders in Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Judaism

The role of women in the *rabbinate* has been hotly debated within the Jewish community. For some Jewish scholars, Asenath Barzani (1590–1670) is considered to be the first female *rabbi* in Jewish history as well as being the oldest recorded female Kurdish leader in history. Hannah Rachel Verbermacher, commonly known as the Maiden of Ludmir, was a 19th-century Hasidic *rebbe*, and the only female *rebbe* in the history of Hasidism. The first female *rabbi* ever to be formerly ordained was Regina Jonas of East Berlin. On December 25, 1935, *Rabbi* Dr. Max Dienemann, head of the Liberal

Rabbis Association of Offenbach, ordained Jonas to serve as a *rabbi* in Jewish communities in Germany.

In the United States, the Reform movement ordained its first female *rabbi* in 1972, the Reconstructionist movement in 1974, and the Conservative movement in 1985. The Orthodox movement has recently accepted women in its *rabbinate*, although a few Orthodox women have been ordained in some seminaries.

Some notable firsts with respect to female *rabbis*, dates, and locations include

- **1980:** In Canada, Joan Friedman becomes the first woman to serve as a *rabbi* in Canada when she is appointed as an assistant *rabbi* at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto. Shortly after Joan's appointment, Elyse Goldstein is appointed as assistant rabbi from 1983–1986.
- **1986:** In Manitoba, Temple Shalom, a Reform Congregation, hires as its *rabbi* Tracy Guren Kliers, the first woman to head a synagogue in Manitoba's Jewish history.
- **1988:** American Stacy Offner becomes the first openly lesbian *rabbi* hired by a mainstream Jewish congregation (Shir Tikvah in Minneapolis).
- **1992:** In Israel, Naamah Kelman, born in the United States, becomes the first female rabbi ordained in Israel.
- **2009:** In the United States, Alysa Stanton, born in Cleveland and ordained by a Reform Jewish seminary in Cincinnati, becomes the world's first black female *rabbi*. Later in 2009, she is appointed *rabbi* at Congregation Bayt Shalom, a small majority-white synagogue in Greenville, North Carolina, making her the first African-American *rabbi* to lead a majority-white congregation.
- **2016:** In Israel, Carmit Feintuch is appointed as *Rabbinat* of the Ramban Synagogue (Orthodox) in Jerusalem.
- **2017:** In Germany, Nitzan Stein Kokin, a German, becomes the first person to graduate from Zacharias Frankel College in Germany, which also makes her the first Conservative rabbi to be ordained in Germany since before World War II.

Women as *Rabbis* and Religious Leaders in Orthodox Judaism

The Orthodox Jewish tradition and apparent communal consensus until recently is that the *rabbinate* is solely the realm of men. While in the last decades there has been a push for Orthodox *yeshivas* to admit women as *rabbinical* students, this has been largely and actively opposed by most Orthodox *rabbis*.

Nevertheless, the advocacy for a greater role for women in Orthodox Judaism has resulted in some changes in the last few decades in developing roles for women as *halakhic* court advisors and congregational advisors. For example, in Britain in 2012, Lauren Levin was appointed as Britain's first Orthodox female

halakhic adviser, at Finchley Synagogue in London. In Israel, a growing number of Orthodox women are being trained as *yoatzot halakhah* (*halakhic* advisers). In 2013, the first class of female *halachic* advisers trained to practice in the United States of America graduated from the North American branch of Nishmat's *yoetzet halacha* program. As well, some women now serve in Orthodox Jewish congregations in roles that were previously reserved only for men.

Furthermore, in spite of opposition to female *rabbis* in Orthodox institutions, there have been some efforts to ordain and appoint Orthodox female *rabbis*. The grammatically correct Hebrew equivalent to the masculine title *rabbi* is *rabbanit* and is sometimes used for women in this role (traditionally *rabbanit* was the title used for the wife of a *rabbi*, usually within the Orthodox, Haredi, and Hasidic Jewish communities). Some, following correct Hebrew feminized grammar, use the title *rabba* while some use another variant, *rabet*.

In 2009, in Israel, the Shalom Hartman Institute, founded by Orthodox *Rabbi* David Hartman, opened a program granting *semicha* (ordination) to Jews of all denominations and sexes, including Orthodox Judaism. However, the program is intended for the graduates to assume roles of *rabbi-educators* and not *pulpit rabbis*, in North American Jewish religious schools.

In the United States, the first Orthodox seminary for women to confer an equivalent to *rabbinic* ordination, the Yeshivat Maharat, uses the title *maharat* for its graduates (an acronym of *manhiga hilkhatit rukhanit Toranit*). In June 2009, Sara Hurwitz was ordained with the title *maharat* rather than *rabbi*. In February 2010, it was announced that her title of *maharat* was being changed to *rabba* in part to clarify Hurwitz's position as a full member of the *rabbinic* staff of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

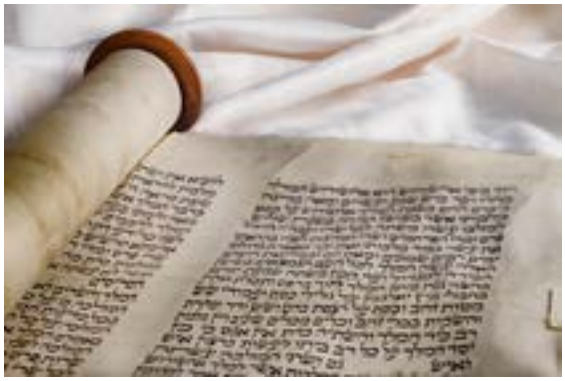

Figure 31: A Jewish Scroll

By 2015, Yaffa Epstein was ordained as *rabba* by the Yeshivat Maharat. Also in 2015, Lila Kagedan was ordained as *rabbi* by that same organization, making her their first graduate to take the title *rabbi*. Sara Hurwitz continues to use the title *rabba* and is considered by some to be the first female Orthodox *rabbi*.

These initiatives met with strong opposition from Orthodox governing bodies. In the fall of 2015, the *Rabbinical* Council of America passed a resolution effectively outlawing the ordination and appointment of female *rabbis* in Orthodox institutions. The resolution declared that Orthodox institutions could not

- ordain women into the Orthodox *rabbinate*, regardless of the title used
- hire, or ratify the hiring of, a woman into a *rabbinic* position at an Orthodox institution
- allow a title implying *rabbinic* ordination to be used by a teacher of *Limudei Kodesh* in an Orthodox institution

Similarly, in the fall of 2015, Agudath Israel of America denounced moves to ordain women, and went even further, declaring that Yeshivat Maharat and similar affiliated entities had rejected basic tenets of Judaism.

Symbols

Symbolism is a very important aspect of Judaism. A description of some of the more common symbols follows.

Mezuzah

The commandment to place a *mezuzah* on the doorposts of Jewish houses is derived from Deuteronomy 6:4-9, a passage commonly known as the *Shema*. In that passage, God commands the Jewish people to keep his words constantly in their minds and in their hearts by (among other things) writing them on the doorposts of their houses. The words of the *Shema* are written on a tiny scroll of parchment, along with the words of a companion passage, Deuteronomy 11:13-21. On the back of the scroll, a name of God is written. The scroll is then rolled up and placed in the case, so that the first letter of God's name is visible (or, more commonly, the letter is written on the outside of the case).

Figure 32: *Mezuzot*

Every time a person passes through a door with a *mezuzah* on it, they touch the *mezuzah* and then kiss the fingers that touched it, expressing love and respect for God and his commandments, and reminding oneself of the commandments contained within them.

Tzitzit and *Tallit*

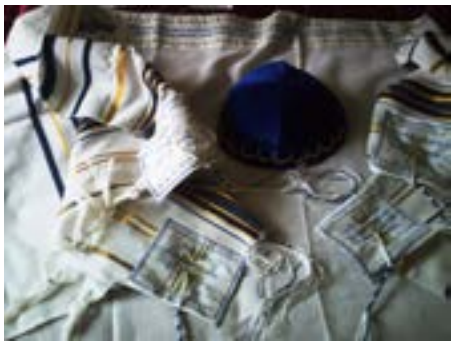

Figure 33: *Tallit* and *Kippa*

The *Torah* commands the Jews to wear *tzitzit* (fringes) at the corners of their garments as a reminder of the commandments. There is no particular religious significance to the *tallit* (shawl) itself, other than the fact that it holds the *tzitzit* (fringes) on its corners. There are also very few religious requirements with regard to the design of the *tallit*. The *tallit* must be long enough to be worn over the shoulders (as a shawl), not just around the neck (as a scarf), to fulfill the requirement that the *tzitzit* be on a garment.

Tefillin

Figure 34: Preparing for a *Bar Mitzvah: Tefillin*

The *Shema* also commands Jewish men to bind the words to their hands and between their eyes. Jews do this by "laying *tefillin*", that is, by binding to their arms and foreheads leather pouches containing scrolls of *Torah* passages.

Like the *mezuzah*, *tefillin* are meant to remind the Jewish people of God's commandments. They bind them to their head and their arm, committing both their intellect and their physical strength to the fulfillment of the commandments. This is done at the morning prayer services and appropriate blessings are recited during the process. The *tefillin* are removed at the conclusion of the morning services.

Menorah

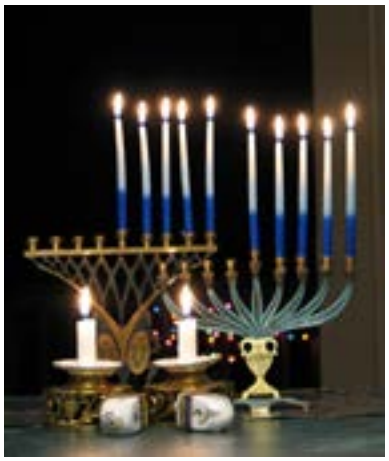

Figure 35: *Menorah, Shabbat* Candles, and Porcelain *Dreidles*

One of the oldest symbols of the Jewish faith is the *menorah*, a seven-branched candelabrum used in the Temple. The *Rabbis* lit the *menorah* in the Sanctuary every evening and cleaned it out every morning, replacing the wicks and putting fresh olive oil into the cups. It has been said that the *menorah* is a symbol of the nation of Israel and their mission to be "a light unto the nations." (Isaiah 42:6). The sages emphasize that light is not a violent force; Israel is to accomplish its mission by setting an example, not by using force. In today's synagogues, there is a lamp called the *ner tamid* (the continual light, the eternal flame), symbolizing the *menorah*.

Chai

The Hebrew word *chai* (living or alive) is commonly seen on jewelry and ornaments. The concept of *chai* is important in Jewish culture. For example, the typical Jewish toast is *l'chayim* (to life) and charitable donations are often given in multiples of 18 (the numeric value of the word *chai*).

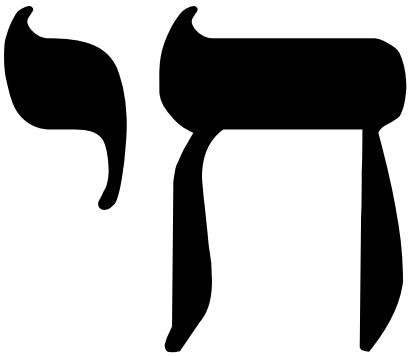

Figure 36: The Hebrew word/symbol *chai* in Judaism means "life."

Star of David

The Star of David is the symbol most commonly associated with Judaism today, but it is actually a relatively new Jewish symbol. It is supposed to represent the shape of King David's shield (or perhaps the emblem on it), but there is no support for that claim in any early *rabbinic* literature. In the 17th century, it became a popular practice to put a Star of David on the outside of synagogues, to identify them as Jewish houses of worship. The Star of David gained popularity as a symbol of Judaism when it was adopted as the emblem of the Zionist movement in 1897. Today, the Star of David is the universally recognized symbol of Jewry. It appears on the flag of the state of Israel.

Figure 37: Star of David

Art and Aesthetics

The concept of Jewish visual arts dates back to the biblical Bezalel, who was commissioned to create a divine dwelling place (tabernacle) in the wilderness guided by Moses who took direction from God. From then on, Jewish visual arts have flourished and reflect the influences and experiences of Jews' journeys around the globe.

Jewish attitudes toward art have been influenced by two contradictory factors. The first is the interpretation of the Second Commandment (forbidding graven images) that prohibits or limits artistic creations, so that they may not be used for idol worship. The second is the value of *hiddur mitzvah* (beautification of the commandments) which encourages the creation of beautiful ritual items and sacred spaces.

These two forces had great impact on folk art as well as the architecture of synagogues, religious objects, and Jewish homes. Judaism as a monotheistic religion focuses on sacred texts rather than sacred images. For example, in a synagogue one will not find paintings or statues of biblical figures.

During the age of Enlightenment in Europe, Jewish artists emerged from Jewish *ghettos* to become prominent global artists. These artists displayed their relationship with Judaism and identity as Jews in various ways in the visual arts that they created. Some artists such as Marc Chagall reflected their Jewish heritage and experiences in their works. Yet for others, like Camille Pissarro, Judaism was of limited or no relevance to their works.

Jewish folk art has pervaded Jewish homes and synagogues for centuries. This has included the *mizrach* and other religious objects. Some examples are

- ***Mizrach***—It is the Hebrew word for east and it refers to an object hung on the east wall of a home designating the direction of Israel/Jerusalem to help orient its inhabitants for their prayer.
- ***Shivitti***—It is an adornment placed in synagogues intended to help focus attention.
- **Jewish Micrography**—In Jewish micrography, sacred words and texts are used to create drawings.
- **Artistic Ritual Art**—This includes *kiddush* cups (for *Sabbat* prayers), *mezuzot* (hung on doorposts), candlesticks, and more.

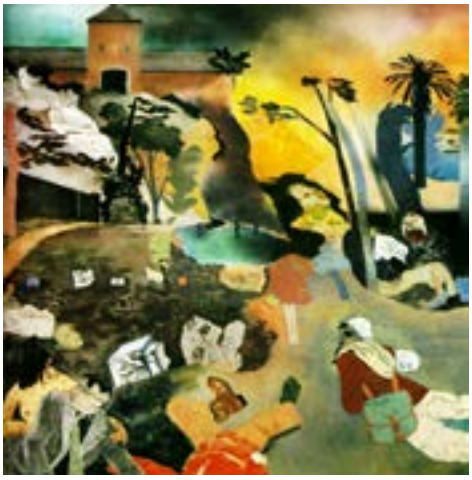

Figure 38: "If Not, Not" by B B Kitaj
Ronald Brooks Kitaj was an American artist of Jewish roots. This painting is probably Kitaj's best-known work. The painting is related to T S Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land' and Auschwitz/the Holocaust.

Judaism Modesty Requirements

Clothing

Contemporary Jews vary greatly in terms of their customs and practices with respect to how they dress. Their style of dress is dependent on the region, the local customs and preferences, and the trends. For the most part, the typical Jewish person in any modern town or city will not stand out in any significant way and will be indistinguishable from non-Jews.

However, this will not be true of Orthodox, Haredi, and Hasidic persons. What some people stereotype as the distinctive Jewish dress or style is very often one that is related to these groups.

Jewish tradition requires men and women to dress modestly. This can be interpreted in different ways, depending on one's level of observance. For those who are very observant, males will wear only long pants when in public, and females will only wear clothing that doesn't reveal the shape of their bodies.

Jewish males keep their head covered; however, there is no prescribed covering. Over time, specific head coverings were developed in different parts of the world. Jewish males may choose to wear a specific kind of covering, such as a *kippah* (also known as a *yarmulke*); however, even a baseball cap is acceptable.

Figure 39: 2015, 10th grade Israeli students ORT Kiriat Bialik High School, north of the city of Haifa with American antiracism educator, Erin Gruwell (Freedom Writers)

Distinctive Jewish costume for men largely disappeared in the early 20th century. The wearing of a head covering at all times (to show respect for God) has become the external sign of the Orthodox Jew. Today, this usually takes the form of wearing a small skull cap known as a *kippah* or *yarmulke*. Ultra-Orthodox groups, concentrated mostly in Jerusalem and Bene Berak in Israel, and in limited areas in other parts of the world, still wear the characteristic *streimel* (a fur hat) on *Sabbaths* and festivals and the long *caftan*, which is yellow and white striped, is sometimes also still used.

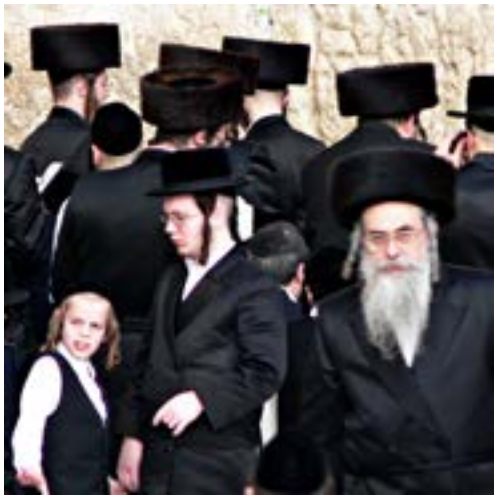

Figure 40: Orthodox Jews at the Western Wall

Jewish law regarding modesty and community customs dictate the dress code for women. This dress code is practiced primarily by Orthodox Jews. Typically, women are expected to wear sleeves extending at least to the elbow, blouses or dresses with necklines that do not expose any cleavage and skirts long enough to cover the knees when seated.

In addition, it is considered a breach of modesty for a married woman to have uncovered hair while in the presence of men other than her husband. Customs differ as to how much hair can be showing beneath the head covering, or if a wig is better or worse than a hat of some sort. This custom, however, is no longer widely observed, except in Orthodox circles. Unmarried women are not required to cover their hair.

Tzniut is a Judaic term for the character traits of modesty and humility as well as a group of Jewish laws that concern human conduct in general, and

especially interaction between genders. *Tzniut* has the greatest influence within Orthodox Judaism. These concepts are not unique to Judaism, as there are similar concepts and requirements within Islam, Christianity, and other faith groups and traditions.

The term is frequently used with regard to the rules of dress for women, but it applies to all members of the community. Jewish tradition requires men and women to dress modestly. This can be interpreted in different ways, depending on one's level of observance and one's faith community. For those who are very observant, males will wear only long pants when in public, and females will only wear clothing that doesn't reveal the shape of their bodies.

Orthodox Judaism interpretations of *tzniut* require that both men and women substantially cover their bodies. Customarily, this includes covering the elbows and knees.

As well, Jewish law requires married women to cover their hair. The nature and form of the hair coverings varies across different Jewish groups and cultural communities. Modern Orthodox Jewish women usually use hats, berets, baseball caps, bandanas, or scarves tied in a number of ways to accomplish the goal, depending on how casually they are dressed. Some modern Orthodox women cover their hair with wigs.

According to Jewish tradition, men must cover their heads regardless of whether they are married or not. The most common head covering for males is the *kippah* (Hebrew for skull cap), which is also known as *yarmulke* in Yiddish. Orthodox men will tend to wear a head covering at almost all times. Non-Orthodox men may choose to cover their heads when performing a religious act, or when eating.

The style of dress involved also depends on cultural considerations that are distinct from religious requirements. For example, members of Conservative and Reform synagogues may follow dress codes that generally range from 'business' casual to informal. In contrast, many Haredi and Hassidic communities have specific customs and styles of dress which are distinctive and help to identify members of their communities. These dress codes and styles are seen to be customs of their communities rather than a general religious requirements expected of all observant Jews.

Some additional examples of the diversity of dress codes and styles within the Jewish communities follow:

- In Haredi communities, men will wear long pants and mostly long-sleeved shirts. Haredi women wear blouses covering the elbow and collarbone, and skirts that cover the knees while standing and sitting. The ideal sleeve and skirt length varies by community. Some women try not to follow fashion, while others wear fashionable but modest clothing.
- Contemporary Orthodox women also usually attend to *tzniut* and dress in a manner which would be considered modest compared to the contemporary urban societies. However, their communal definition does not necessarily

require the covering of their elbows, collarbones, or knees, and may allow for wearing pants. Contemporary Orthodox men's dress is often indistinguishable from those of non-Orthodox peers.

- Conservative Judaism generally requires modest dress, although this requirement may often not be observed on a daily basis, but is more likely to be adhered to when members attend synagogue.
- Reform Judaism has no religious dress requirements.

Food

Judaism has specific laws or requirements that guide adherents in their daily life and in rituals associated with holy or sacred days. The laws that deal with these food requirements are called *kashrut*. *Kashrut* derives from a Hebrew root word meaning fit, proper, or correct. It is the same root as the more commonly known word *kosher*, which describes food that meets these standards. *Kashrut* details what foods Jews can and cannot eat and how those foods must be prepared and eaten. The word *kosher* can also be used, and often is used, to describe ritual objects that are made in accordance with Jewish law and are fit for ritual use.

Figure 41: Canadian *Kosher* Symbols

Although the details of *kashrut* are extensive, the laws all derive from the following fairly simple rules:

- Certain animals may not be eaten at all. This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs, and milk of the forbidden animals.
- Of the animals that may be eaten, the birds and mammals must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.
- All blood must be drained from the meat or broiled out of it before it is eaten.
- Certain parts of permitted animals may not be eaten.
- Meat (the flesh of birds and mammals) cannot be eaten with dairy. Fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables, and grains can be eaten with either meat or dairy.
- Utensils that have come into contact with meat may not be used with dairy, and vice versa. Utensils that have come into contact with non-*kosher* food may not be used with *kosher* food.
- Grape products made by non-Jews may not be eaten.

Almost all prepackaged foods have some kind of *kosher* certification that will also indicate whether the product is dairy, meat, or neither.

Foods Which Are Permitted and Foods That Are Not Permitted

- **Animals:** Any land animal with split hoofs that chews its cud is permitted. For example, cows, sheep, goats, and deer are *kosher*, while pigs, rabbits, bears, and horses are not.
- **Fowl:** The *Torah* lists 24 non-*kosher* bird species; essentially, all predatory and scavenger birds are not *kosher*. For example, *kosher* birds are the domestic species of chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, and pigeons.
- **Fish/Seafood:** A water creature is *kosher* only if it has fins and scales. For example, salmon, tuna, pike, flounder, carp, and herring are *kosher*, while catfish, sturgeon, swordfish, lobster, shellfish, crab, and all water mammals are not.

Figure 42: *Kosher* Asian Sauces

- **Reptiles, Amphibians, Worms, and Insects:** With the exception of four types of locusts, these are all not *kosher*.
- **Fruits, vegetables, cereals:** All products that grow in the soil or on plants, bushes, or trees are *kosher*; however, there are laws that apply specifically to the planting and sowing of vegetables, fruits, and grains. The hybridization of different species is not permitted. Therefore, it is not permitted to sow two kinds of seeds on a field or in a vineyard. There are also additional restrictions. For instance, fruits from trees three years of age or less may not be eaten.
- ***Kosher* Wine:** There are strict guidelines concerning *kosher* wine. The laws dictate what yeast may be used, which additives are not permitted, how the devices and utensils used for the harvest or the processing of the grapes are to be prepared and cleaned, and that the reuse of bottles is not permitted. As well, the vineyards must be maintained and processed according to *halacha* (Jewish religious law). For example, as noted earlier, hybridization is not permitted, so no other plants may be crossbred with the grapes.

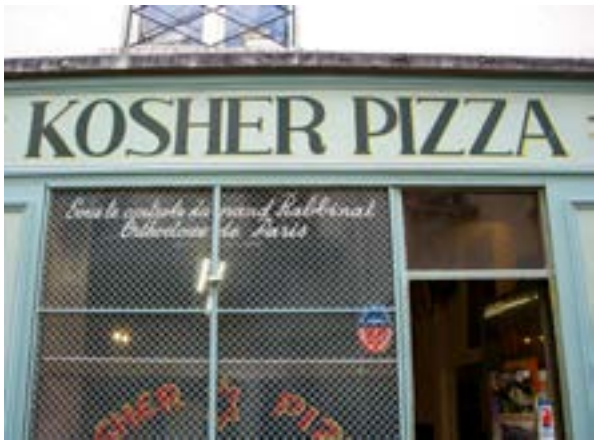

Figure 43: Kosher Pizza; Paris, France

- **Beverages:** There are strict rules concerning alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages such as juices, coffees, and others. Prepackaged beverages that are considered *kosher* will carry a symbol indicating their *kosher* status.
- **Combined Meat and Dairy:** It is not permitted to mix dairy with meat, to cook dairy products and meat together, or to serve them together at the same time. *Kosher* rules are complex, as they also involve a specific approach to food preparation and processing.

The chart that follows provides an overview of some common foods and the details concerning how they may or may not meet *kosher* laws.

Food	Concern	Alternative	Availability
Crackers	May be made with animal shortening (lard)	*Kosher* food products require *rabbinic* certification to be considered *kosher*. This is determined by the presence of one of the following symbols on the product label: COR, MK, or U.	Many supermarkets carry *kosher* products
Cookies	May be made with animal shortening (lard)		
Cheese	Many cheeses are made with rennet and pepsin which are animal by-products	There are *kosher* cheeses or cheeses made with vegetarian rennet.	Supermarkets now carry acceptable cheeses, which are also available through special order
Pizza	May be made with cheeses that were made with rennet and pepsin which are animal by-products	Use cheeses made with vegetarian rennet or *kosher* cheeses.	Some supermarkets and *kosher* restaurants
Beef and Poultry	Beef and poultry must be slaughtered in a certain way	Purchase *kosher* meat. Consider vegetarian hot dogs and other vegetarian substitutes.	Alternatives are available at all supermarkets
Pork or Pork By-Products	Pork is forbidden. Some foods may be made with pork by-products. (e.g., hamburgers, wieners)	No pork products are acceptable.	
Combination of Milk and Meat Products	Milk and meat products are not eaten together.	Ensure adequate alternatives to milk beverages. Don't automatically add cheese to hamburgers and meat to pizza.	

Food	Concern	Alternative	Availability
Gelatin-Based Desserts and Candies	Many candies and desserts are made with gelatin which is an animal by-product. (e.g,. Jell-O, wine gums, Starbursts, gummy bears, and gumdrops)	Choose other candies and desserts.	Supermarkets

Fasting (*Ta'anit* or *Taanis*)

Fasting is a common aspect of Jewish religious traditions and rituals. There are about 25 holidays and religious events that are associated with fasting. As well, there are rules that guide the practice of fasting in Judaism. These include

- No fasting on *Shabbat*, or on any holiday or festival with the exception of *Yom Kippur*
- No fasting during the month of *Nisan*
- No fasting for those too ill to fast
- No fasting for pregnant women
- In modern interpretations, no fasting, if you hold a position of *rabbi*, teacher, security, or other essential personnel, so that you are able to perform your duties adequately

The most well-known and observed fast is the fast of *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. This is the only fast day specifically noted in the *Torah*. The fast for *Yom Kippur* extends from sunset to darkness the following night (25 hrs). The other day where Jews must do a full fast is the *Ninth of Av*, *Tisha B'Av*. Both of these fast days have additional requirements such as not washing one's body; not wearing leather shoes; not using colognes, oils or perfumes; and not having sexual relations. *Yom Kippur* also has all the restrictions of *Shabbat* and *Tisha B'Av* has restrictions somewhat similar to a mourner sitting *shiva*.

All other fasts are minor fasts, observed from dawn to nightfall, without additional restrictions.

A few of the minor fast days are

- 10th Day of *Tevet*
- 17th of *Tammuz*
- 3rd of *Tishrei* (The Fast of Gedaliah)
- 13th of *Adar*
- 14th of *Nisan* (Fast of the Firstborn)
- the day preceding *Purim* (Fast of Esther)

Fasting is also part of the preparation of a couple for their wedding. Although this is not a requirement included in the *Talmud*, it is a cultural and historical tradition. The couple fasts from daybreak until after the *chuppah*, eating their first meal during their *yichud* seclusion at the end of the wedding ceremony.

Taanit Tzadikim (fast of the righteous ones) occurs on days set aside to commemorate the death anniversaries of great Jewish figures. They are usually only observed by the *Chevra Kadisha* (organization of Jewish men and women who prepare the bodies of deceased people for burial), but others may fast on them too. The primary ones are

- Fast of Pilegesh Bagiva—on 23rd *Shevat*
- Fast of Moses—on 7th *Adar*
- Fast of Nadab and Abihu—on 1st *Nisan*
- Fast of Miriam—on 10th *Nisan*
- Fast of Joshua—on 26th *Nisan*
- Fast of Samuel—on 28th *Iyar*