

# Jewish Culture

By: Jolene R Drust  
Karyssaann Costagliola  
HCS 320



# Overview

- ◉ The Jewish culture is a unique culture that attributed to many cultures and how they are today
- ◉ It also the beginning of what led to Christianity
- ◉ This culture went to many hardships in the beginning of time, but overcame and are a flourishing culture today



# Location

- ◉ The Jewish population is spread out across Europe in particular they are located and originated from Israel
- ◉ Israel is known as the land of milk and honey
- ◉ Jewish population is also largely located in the U.S. due to immigration

# History

- ◉ The Jewish population helped create the European culture and what it is today
- ◉ They trace their history back to being children of Abraham
- ◉ According to the bible Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt and into Israel and gave them what is known as the Torah and the Ten Commandments

# History (cont.)

- As far back as 587 BCE after the capture of Jerusalem they became a nomadic culture
- They were sent mainly to Israel after World War II and a lot of the people immigrated to the U.S. to escape being exiled and for better opportunity

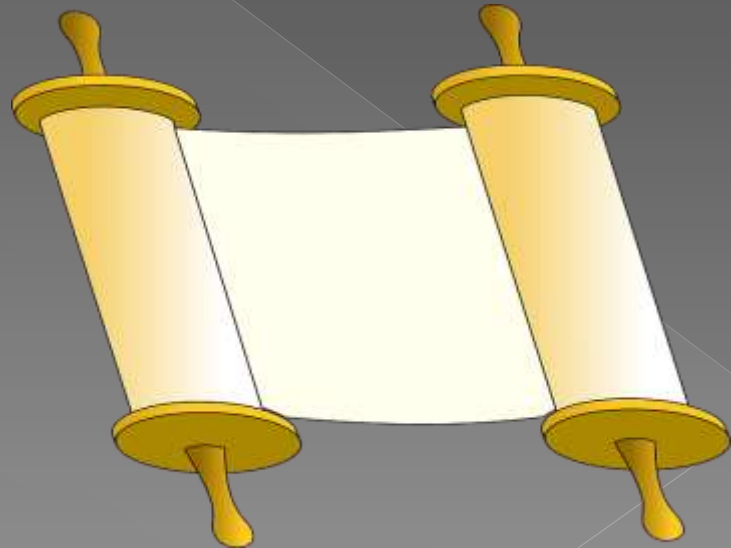
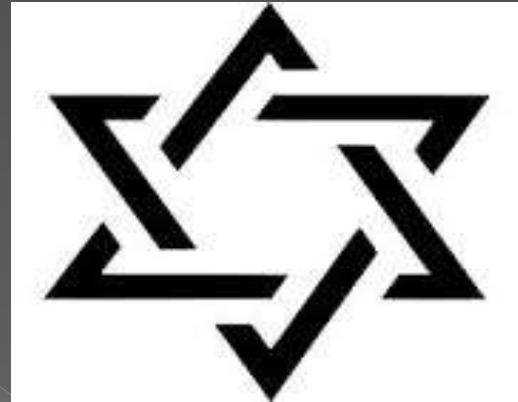
אבגדהוזהחטי  
כךלממנוסע  
פףצץקרשת

בארץ גשן ויאחזו בה ויפרו וירבו  
מאד ויחי יעקב בארץ מצרים  
שבע עשרה שנה ויהי מי יעקב  
שני חייו שבע שנים וארבעים  
ומאת שנה ויקרבו ימי ישראל  
למורת ויקרא לבנו ליוסף  
ויאמר לו אם נא מצאה לי  
רוח בעיניך שים נא ידך תחת  
ירכי ועשית עמדי חסד ואמת  
אל נא תקברני במצרים  
ושכבתי עם אבתי ונשארוני  
ממצרים וקברתני בקברתם  
ויאמר אנכי אעשה  
כדברך ויאמר השבעה  
לי וישבע לו וישתחו  
ישראל על ראש המטה

# Language

- Hebrew is the official language of Israel
- They thought this language was the language of the angels and God himself
- They pray in this language and the Torah is written in Hebrew
- Today's society it is common for them to speak English
- There is few denominations that speak Yiddish





# Religion

- They believed in one God who was the creator of the universe
- They stated if your mother was Jewish you were Jewish regardless of the father
- They celebrate what they call the Sabbath on Saturday
- Sabbath begins on Friday evening at sundown continuing until Saturday night at sundown

# Religion (cont.)

- ◉ During the Sabbath they do not work, they attend temple, worship, and spend time with family and friends
- ◉ Over time with interfaith marriages customs have changed or are not as stringent depending on the circumstances and denominations they come from



# Clothing

- Men typically wore a robe that came to their knees with colors ranging from yellow, blue, green, at times they were tan some stray away from color
- They wore sargenes during holidays it was a broad robe that was stitched on the right side to prevent carrying
- Women wore more luxurious clothing
- Yamakas or Kippah should be worn by Jewish men according to Jewish laws. The law states that men should use Yamakas to cover their heads while they offer prayer because it shows respect to God

# Marriage

- It is a two step process that is performed together
- They do what is called a Kiddushin which is when the woman accepts money, sexual intercourse, and a contract depicting the rules and terms of the marriage and what each party will get in case of a divorce

# Marriage (cont.)

- The contract they sign and agree upon is called Ketubah which they frame and display in the home
- The money involved is the ring that is purchased
- It is called Nisuin when the couple finally lives together as husband and wife
- They only allow divorce if it is agreed upon by the husband

# Marriage (cont.)

- The husband will not touch his wife while she is menstruating
- They will not make eye contact unless they are married because it is considered sexual





# Physical Characteristics

- The Jewish population tends to be one half the average height
- They have a shorter arm span compared to height
- They also tend to have a distinctive big nose
- With the interfaith marriages it tends to vary to the combination of two different cultures/religions

# Diseases and Healthcare

- They are prone to diseases especially tending to involve the nervous system
- One major disease is Tay-Sachs which is typically seen in infancy preventing proper development
- They embrace basic medical treatment they often see it as an obligation to be done

# Diseases and Healthcare (cont.)

- They often won't live in an area with a doctor
- They felt diseases are present because of Jacob and that aging hasn't occurred until Abraham
- Other diseases included: cystic fibrosis, Gaucher disease Type 1, Niemann-Pick disease, Familial, Aysautonmia, and Canavan disease

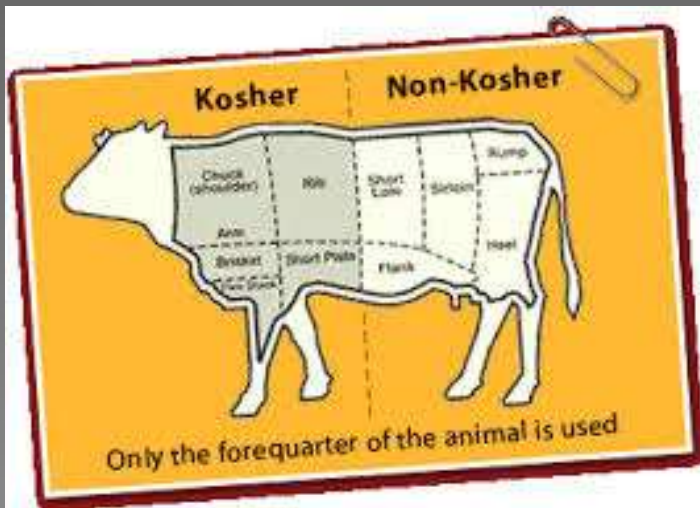
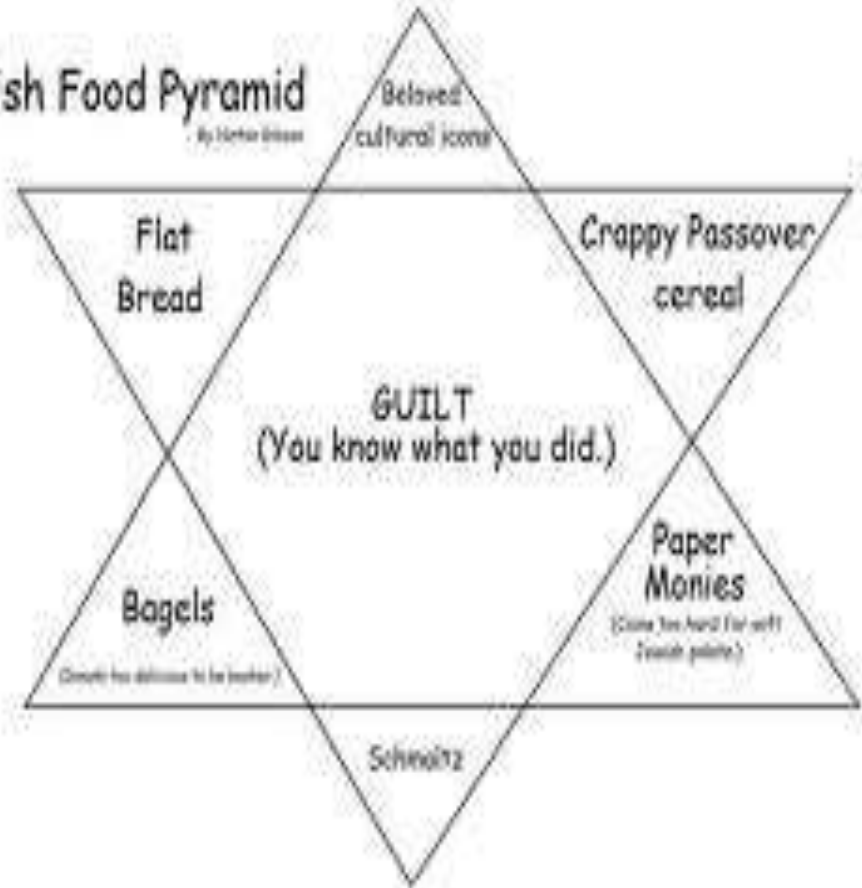
# Beliefs upon Birth

- Male circummcisions are not performed in the hospital at birth
- It is performed eight days later by a person called a Mohel
- The ceremony is called Bris
- The ceremony signifies the covenant God had with the Jewish people where it is believed Elijah is present
- Similar to baptism in the Catholic Faith



## Jewish Food Pyramid

By Herbert Gross



# Food

- ◉ All the food consumed by the Jewish is what is called Kosher
- ◉ Kosher is believed to be clean food and is prepared following Jewish law
- ◉ Jewish food is influenced by agriculture, culinary traditions, and the economics
- ◉ They do not allow pork products or the eating of rabbits.

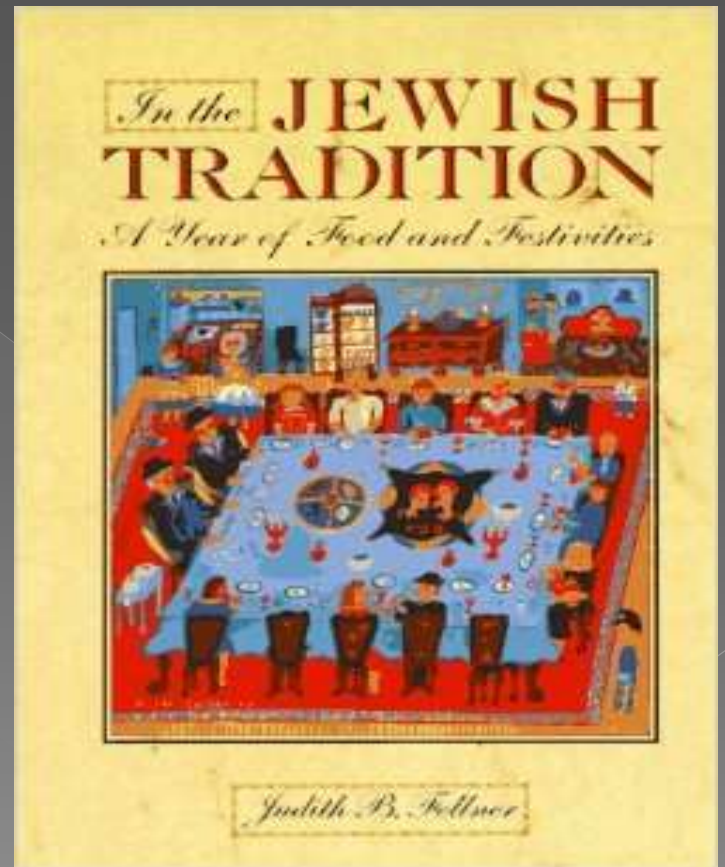
# Food (cont.)

- Only certain approved poultry products are allowed to be eaten
- Meat and dairy is to always remain separated it is even frowned upon to use the same utensil for each item
- When the animal is being slaughtered to eat it must be done by a specialized butcher called a shocket under the laws of shechita



# Food (cont.)

- ◉ During the eight days of Passover they only eat unleavened bread and unleavened products
- ◉ They do this to remember what their ancestors did not have in the desert
- ◉ During Passover they eat was is called Matzah
- ◉ Other examples of food are foods are bagels, lox, blintzes, falafel, couscous, and hummus



# Holidays and Traditions

- ◉ During Hanukkah, the festival of lights, foods are often cooked in oil to commemorate what the Lord has blessed them with
- ◉ The bread and wine is always blessed before the Sabbath meal
- ◉ Some other holidays are Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, Shavuot, or the Festival of Weeks.

# Holidays and Traditions (cont.)

- Yom Kippur is often considered the most important of all Jewish holiday, with many often unobservant Jewish people celebrating this most important day
- Passover also commemorates the escape of the Jewish population from Egypt



# Bat Mitzvah or Bar Mitzvah

- ◉ This is a very important celebration in the Jewish culture
- ◉ At the age of 12 or 13 a Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah, and confirmation takes place at age 16
- ◉ Bat Mitzvah is for girls and is usually just a coming of age party
- ◉ Boys are held to a higher standard at age 13 they are required to start reciting a blessing from the Torah in temple

# Bat Mitzvah or Bar Mitzvah (cont.)

- ◉ This procedure usually takes place on the Shabbat directly after the child's 13th birthday
- ◉ Today a male child is often required to learn the whole haftarah portion
- ◉ It is a day that the child becomes an adult and is to follow and understand the commandments

# Family

- It is the center of the Jewish culture
- Children are considered the highest value and a true blessing
- The female is typically in charge of cooking the meals and keeping up with the household
- The male is in charge of lighting the Menorah and blessing the wine for dinner



# Education

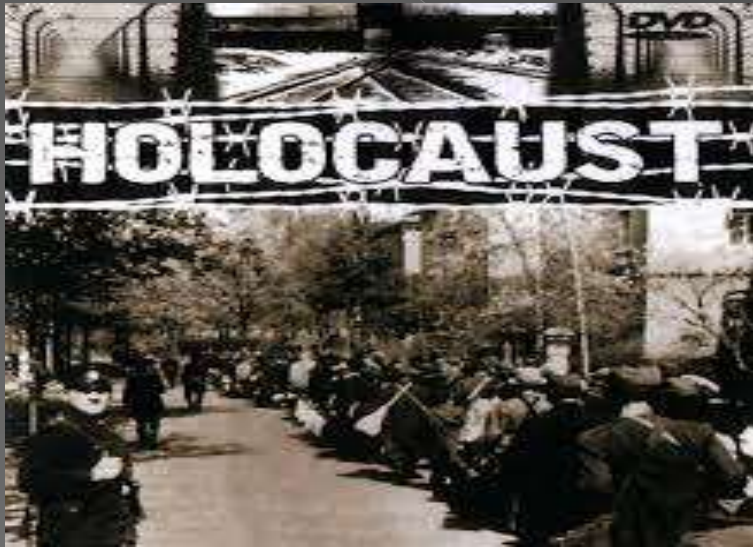
- Children will often receive religious education as often as 2 days a week, in addition to their regular elementary education
- Education is incredibly valuable to both male and female Jewish counterparts
- The early years they give the child the foundation of their beliefs and the Jewish history and then in later years they focus on preparing the student to be able to learn their heritage at a university level

# Education (cont.)

- They have “day schools” that teach them so much of their religion then the other part the basic reading, writing, and math skills
- Depending on what denomination they come from they might teach more from the Torah and Judaism and others might focus more on the history aspect, Hebrew language, food, Yiddish, and principles of Zionism

# Economy

- After a lot of the immigration and especially the people migrating to the city they had plenty of opportunity to expand any business projects or just opportunity for a career
- A lot of high ranking professionals especially doctors come from the Jewish decent
- Around the time of World War II economy for the Jewish culture suffered and they had no advancement or opportunity, but over time and the growth here in the U.S. they thrived and made great careers for themselves



# Hardships of the Jewish Culture

- ◉ The Holocaust was a horrible time in German and Jewish history, when Jewish people were basically gathered up like cattle, and taken to concentration camps, in an effort to make a clean society
- ◉ It was a horrid time that the Jewish people overcame, and came up with a saying, “Lest us not forget, for it may happen again”.

# Death

- ◉ Jewish people have some customs that are unique they value life above all else, but do wish a long and drawn out death
- ◉ They will create a written legacy for their families and if the person dies on the Sabbath, the body cannot be taken care of until 24 hours later
- ◉ The family will often assist with washing the body, as this is their time to say a loving good-bye.

# Death (cont.)

- Family member will stay with the body at all times until the burial
- If a person dies with their eyes open it is custom for someone to immediately close them and light a candle by the head and cover the body with a sheet
- They believe in opening a window so the soul can depart from the body to the spiritual side

# Death (cont.)

- They do not agree with autopsies
- They permit for organ donation if decided upon beforehand because it involves saving another life
- During the grieving and mourning periods they also believe to cover up all the mirrors because the mourners are not concerned with vanity
- Viewings are usually not held as it can be considered disrespectful to look at someone who can't look back.





# Burial

- ◉ Embalming is usually avoided
- ◉ Burials are usually held soon after death unless waiting for family members to travel
- ◉ A very simple wooden casket with no metal adornment is used and flowers are avoided as they are considered an unnecessary expense

## Burial (cont.)

- Funerals take about 20 minutes with some psalm reading, scripture readings, and a eulogy
- Prior to the funeral, the mourners perform the ritual of K'riah, the rendering of the garment
- If it is a parent who has died, the ribbon is worn on the left side all other mourners wear the ribbon on the left side

# Conclusion

- ◉ Jewish culture is steeped in tradition, beauty, and deep meaning for the individuals
- ◉ Jewish culture relates to many of our own beliefs today and they have overcome so many hardships, but still remain true to their culture and what they believe in

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