

## KEYWORDS

**Monotheist** = someone who believes in only one (mono) god

**Synagogue** = Jewish holy building

**Covenant** = an agreement between G-d and His people

**Mitzvot** = a commandment in the Torah

**Shabbat** = the Jewish day of rest. For Jews this is on a Saturday.

**Torah** = the law of G-d that was revealed to Moses

**Rabbi** = a Jewish teacher or religious leader

**Menorah** = a sacred candle holder with seven branches

**Kosher** = allowed in Jewish law

**Ark** = An ornamental cabinet where the Torah and other scrolls are kept

## JEWISH BELIEFS ABOUT G-D

Jews believe in one G-d (monotheism). The **shema** prayer states 'Hear O Israel the Lord Our G-d, the Lord is one'. G-d is believed to be all knowing (omniscient), all powerful (omnipotent) and always existing (omnipresent).

In the **Torah**, G-d made relationships through a covenant or agreement with individuals or groups. Each marks a special time in G-d's relationship with the Jewish people.

There are three main parts of the **covenant** between G-d and Abraham. Firstly, G-d called Abraham and his family to the new land of Canaan (called the Promised Land). Secondly, G-d promised Abraham he would make a great nation from him. Thirdly, G-d promised to bless Abraham and his family.

**Synagogues** demonstrate the belief of G-d being omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent by not having statues of any living beings. Some Jews believe the name of G-d is so special that anything



with G-d's name must be buried if no longer used.

*'Hear O Israel the Lord Our G-d, the Lord is one'*

# Judaism

## SHABBAT

The word 'Shabbat' comes from a word meaning 'to rest'. It is seen as a precious gift from G-d. It is a time set aside for spiritual things. Shabbat is a joyful day of rest and has two commandments: to **remember** and to **observe**.

The Sabbath begins at nightfall on Friday and lasts until nightfall on Saturday. God commanded the Jewish People to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy as the fourth of the Ten Commandments.



People look forward to Shabbat all week. They see it as God's gift to his chosen people of a day when they take time out from everyday things to feel special. People don't think about work or other stressful things, but instead spend time with family.

## HANNUKAH



Hanukkah is a Jewish festival that remembers the dedicating of the second temple in Jerusalem.

In 164 BCE, the Jewish people revolted against the Greeks in the Maccabean War. After their victory they cleansed the temple and re-dedicated it. There was an oil lamp there that only had one day of oil, but the lamp burned for 8 days. This is called the miracle of the oil and is where the 8 days of celebration comes from.

Each day of the festival Jews will light an additional candle on a special menorah. People sing special hymns, eat traditional foods, and children often play with **dreidels**.



## PESACH

Jews celebrate Pesach (Passover) to remember the freeing of the Children of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses after being slaves for 210 years. It lasts for 7 days.

### Symbolism and features of worship for Pesach:

**Matzah** - the Pharaoh told Moses and the Israelites to go at once. They left in such a rush that their bread did not have time to rise! This is why, before Passover, Jewish people eat unleavened bread called Matzah.



**Seder plate** - a Seder takes place over a family meal. The Seder plate consists of: a lamb bone, roasted egg, green vegetable, bitter herbs, charoset (a paste of apples, walnuts and wine) romaine lettuce. On the table, there are several Matzot (plural of Matzah) on top of each other. At the start the middle Matzah is broken and the largest piece is hidden. The children hunt for it. The one who finds it receives a small prize.

**Wine** - of wine represents joy and happiness. An extra cup is left for the prophet Elijah. Jews believe that Elijah will reappear to announce the coming of the Messiah.

**Cushion** - the story of how the Israelites fled from Egypt is retold. Everyone at the Seder has a cushion to lean on. This is because in the past people reclined on cushions during meals. It reminds Jews that they are now free.

**Exodus** - Everyone imagines as if they were saved from Egypt themselves. The evening, which includes stories and songs, is a mixture of joy and sadness. Jews do not forget that they were once slaves, but they also celebrate their freedom.



## SYNAGOGUES

The word 'synagogue' comes from Greek; it means 'a coming together' or 'a meeting place'. The synagogue is much more than just a place of prayer. The Jewish community gathers in a synagogue for functions and meetings.



Synagogues have many different features that all have specific roles and importance:



- **Ark**—is used to store the Torah and other important scrolls. It is the most important feature in the synagogue. The Ark is situated at the front of the synagogue again showing its importance to the Jewish community. It symbolises protection, safety and respect.

- **Bimah**- a platform in the centre of the synagogue. The Torah is read from here. It symbolises stepping up to show respect, and that the Word of G-d is above the word of man



- **Ner Tamid**—an everlasting light that always shines. The light is never extinguished. It symbolises the eternal and everlasting nature of G-d, and shows G-d's presence

- **The Scrolls** - There are a variety of different scrolls kept within the synagogue. The most important scroll is the Torah. They are covered to show respect and to keep the scrolls clean.

