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# 1. 2015

## 1.1 October

### About (2015-10-12 00:51)

Ever wonder what kind of traditions Jewish people celebrate? Ever wonder if these traditions changed over time? Do you not know anything about the traditions they celebrate and why they were created? Well, this blog is meant for you. Throughout this blog all of these questions are answered. The difference between Orthodox and Reform Judaism is taken into consideration while evaluating why traditions have changed over time. Everything you need to know about Jewish dietary laws, prayer traditions, holidays, and rites of passage can be found here.

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## 1.2 December

### Everything You Need To Know About Jewish Traditions (2015-12-04 04:45)

Overtime the traditions of religions tend to evolve. This evolution doesn't necessarily take away important parts of traditions, it just simply adjusts them to fit society. Judaism transformed from Orthodox Judaism to Reform Judaism. What does this really mean though? Of course religions have to change with time, but what were these changes and why were they implemented? Orthodox Judaism is the approach to Judaism which follows the original traditions that are written in the Torah. Reform Judaism is a group of people that focus on evolving the traditions in the Torah to fit modern society. Both of these groups believe in the same God and principles of the Jewish religion, they just simply don't wee eye to eye when it comes to adjusting traditions written thousands of years ago in the Torah. Throughout this blog I'm going to discuss many of the traditions in the Torah, and also focus on how they have transformed. Some of the traditions I plan on discussing include dietary laws, prayer traditions including the wearing of the kippah, and different holidays celebrated in the Jewish religion. I hope you can enjoy learning about the Jewish culture and its change over time with me throughout my blog.

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### Why does that food package say Kosher? (2015-12-04 17:33)

Ever wonder what that kosher label on your hot dog package really means? One of the many traditions that was taught in the Torah include different dietary laws. The section of the Torah called the Kashrut is the body of the Torah

that deals with all dietary laws, going through what can and cannot be eaten by Jews. The word "Kashrut" is a Hebrew term that means fit, proper, or correct. The main goal of the dietary laws that are presented in the Torah, is to help people understand which foods are safe to eat and are "correct" to benefit your health. Most people would ask, but what does eating kosher actually mean? Kosher foods are foods that abide by the rules of the Kashrut. The rules that are presented in the Kashrut include:

1. "Certain animals may not be eaten at all. This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs and milk of the forbidden animals.
2. Of the animals that may be eaten, the birds and mammals must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.
3. All blood must be drained from meat and poultry or broiled out of it before it is eaten.
4. Certain parts of permitted animals may not be eaten.
5. Fruits and vegetables are permitted, but must be inspected for bugs (which cannot be eaten)
6. 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. (According to some views, fish may not be eaten with meat).
7. Utensils (including pots and pans and other cooking surfaces) 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. This applies only where the contact occurred while the food was hot.
8. Grape products made by non-Jews may not be eaten.
9. There are a few other rules that are not universal. " (<http://www.jewfaq.org/kashrut.htm>)



(The image above features a hot dog brand labeling it as "kosher" on the left)

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All of these rules have undergone some changes over time. These changes come back to the difference between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Orthodox Jews still take these laws very seriously. They tend to only eat foods with a clear kosher label, and eat at restaurants that are kosher. The reason for this is because they believe in sticking with the Torah and following everything that it brings. Reform Jews have changed to only following some aspects of the kosher dietary laws. It is said that in today's society only about 15 % of all Jews still follow kosher. The main rule that Reform Jews follow are the laws dealing with meat, for example they will not eat any meat coming from pigs. The reason that many Jews have steered away from following the strict rules set in place by the Torah is because in today's society it has become very difficult. There are so many foods and restaurants that do not clearly label what is used to make a product/meal and also how it is made.

To many followers of Judaism these laws are near and dear to their heart. As a member of society their choices of food should always be respected. Many more companies are beginning to make kosher foods, and label them clearly. For example Blue Diamond Almonds, Country Time Lemonade, Hunts, Post, and Tropicana are all kosher. Some stores have also begun to make it easier to find these products. While searching for kosher foods on Walmart's website, it was very easy to find over 25 pages of food that have been noted as Kosher.

With such a quick changing society traditions will tend to change. It is crucial that we respect these changes and continue to study them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifKFC4jYqS8>

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## **Jewish Prayers (2015-12-04 20:00)**

Every religion has their own traditions and certain rules of prayer. Christians base their prayers on their own relationship with God and do not follow many rules, Muslims prayer multiple times a day every day while bowing and pointing towards Mecca, but what do the Jews do to establish their traditions of prayer? Tefilah is the Hebrew word for prayer derived from the meaning of to judge oneself. Each prayer in the Jewish religion gives members a time to reflect on their placement in this world and their relationship with God. It is crucial to maintain a relationship with God, therefore people pray to him. It is thought that if you only pray when you feel inspired than you will not benefit your relationship with God.

Prayers are also crucial to many holidays and rites of passage such as the mitzvah. A mitzvah is a celebration of a young boy becoming a man on his 13th birthday. This rite of passage for them requires reading a prayer in Hebrew from the Torah. In today's society the bar mitzvah is for both boys and girls, and usually involves a large celebration of their accomplishments. Once again the difference between Orthodox Judaism and Reform Judaism become important. Orthodox Jews do not allow women to participate in any religious services, so if a bat mitzvah is celebrated at all it is very minimal compared to boys because they are not allowed to participate in such a big event. Now, in today's society Reform Jews gladly celebrate girls bat mitzvahs at the age of 12 when they become women. They do not think it is right to prevent girls from taking part in these services.





Prayers play a very important role in the Jewish religion, because the majority are read from the Torah their sacred text. Different events require certain prayers and blessings that are crucial to their religion. A lot of ceremonies also require specific attire for people to wear.

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### **What's the importance of the hat? (2015-12-04 20:39)**

A lot of people always ask what is the main reason that Jewish men wear the small cap on their head. This small little cap that is worn on the back part of a Jewish male's head is called a kippah. The word "kippah" literally means skullcap. This has long been a tradition of Jewish men. The reason behind the cap is that Jewish law requires men to cover their heads as a sign of respect and reverence for God. This cap is usually worn during prayer, studying of the Torah, and any Jewish holiday.

This is one tradition that does not differ very significantly between Orthodox Judaism and Reform Judaism. Orthodox Jews tend to wear this hat at all times not just during important activities. The Torah does not require people to wear the kippah at all times, they simply feel that they should. Reform Jews typically only wear the kippah during holidays and prayer services.

One of the main reasons that people still wear the skullcap is because they believe it is a way of proudly announcing to the world that they are Jewish and are showing pride for their religion. There are now hundreds of different kippahs. There are all sorts of sizes made for all ages, and different colors/ patterns that can be chosen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28JrULJb5fQ>

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### **Why do they break the glass? (2015-12-04 22:00)**

One of the most important traditions in Jewish religion is the celebration of marriage. Weddings include many small traditions including what is written in the seven blessings (Sheva Berakhot). There is not a big distinction between Orthodox and Reform Judaism when it comes to weddings because they both believe in following the traditions originally set by their elders.

Before a wedding may begin the bride and groom must sign a marriage contract. This contract is to bride and groom understand the obligations they will have after the wedding. This document is known as the ketubah. After the wedding this is usually framed and nicely decorated to display in the couple's home to help remind them of their obligations to their spouse. After the signing of the ketubah the bride is covered with her veil and proceeds to walk to the chuppah, a wedding canopy symbolizing the home of the couple. Once arrived at the chuppah she walks around the groom at least 7 times to start the ceremony. Next after rings are presented comes the seven blessings.

The seven blessings are read by a rabbi in the presence of the bride, groom, and their close family. This is a sacred tradition that contains many different aspects of Judaism, including creation of the world and the survival of the Jewish people of Israel. These blessings include:

1. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.
2. Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has created everything for your glory.
3. Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of Human Beings.
4. Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has fashioned human beings in your image, according to your likeness and has fashioned from it a lasting mold. Blessed are You Adonai, Creator of Human Beings.
5. Bring intense joy and exultation through the ingathering of Her children (Jerusalem). Blessed are You, Adonai, are the One who gladdens Zion (Israel) through Her children's return.
6. Gladden the beloved companions as You gladdened Your creatures in the garden of Eden. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who gladdens this couple.
7. Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who created joy and gladness, loving couples, mirth, glad song, pleasure, delight, love, loving communities, peace, and companionship. Adonai, our God, let there soon be

heard in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the voice of the loving couple, the sound of their jubilation from their canopies and of the youths from their song-filled feasts. Blessed are You Who causes the couple to rejoice, one with the other.

After the seven blessings have been completed the ceremony is over and it is time for the well-known breaking of the glass. The groom breaks a glass with his right foot as symbol of celebration. It isn't really known why this is done. There are multiple stories in the Torah that people believe influenced this, for example they believe it is a symbol for the burning of the temple

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=be789D0B9J8>

Weddings are a very important event in Judaism that require many small traditions that have continued for years. Although some of them may not have a definite meaning or representation they are equal in importance. These traditions are some of the few that have been relatively unchanged.

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### **Are you ready for that Passover feast? (2015-12-04 23:41)**

The Jewish holiday Passover is an eight day festival celebrated in early spring to commemorate the emancipation of Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. These people were saved from the Egyptian slavery when God saw the pain people were in. He sent Moses to the Pharaoh with a message let his people go. After the Pharaoh refused to release the Israelites he sent 10 plagues Egypt. These plagues included turning water into blood, a plague of locusts to kill their crops, and finally a plague of killing their first born children. During the last plague God saved the Israelites by passing over their doors. Hence where the name of the holiday came from.

The most important part of the holiday is the first two nights of the festival, known as Seder. A Seder involves a series of traditions that help to recreate the liberation of the Israelites. Some of the traditions that go on is eating the matzah, drinking wine, singing songs, and partaking in the plate of Seder food.

The plate of Seder food includes a hardboiled egg symbolizing sacrifice that was given to the Temple of Jerusalem, a roasted lamb symbolizing the sacrifice of the lamb (blood was used to represent Israelites home), a brown mixture used to represent the mortar used by slaves, bitter herbs symbolizing the harshness of slavery, and lastly a vegetable dipped in salt to symbolize the beginning of Seder.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQIDfUEpk10>

All of these small traditions included in the holiday of Passover have not undergo many changes and do not differ between Orthodox and Reform Jews. The reason for this is because all the traditions represent specific excerpts from the Torah that cannot be changed.

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Edited: December 5, 2015

