

Chaplain's Guide to Jewish Beliefs and Practices

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The following menu has been provided for convenience in navigation of this web page and for purposes of quick reference. However it is strongly recommended that Chaplains read and abide by the following manual in its entirety, as its scope is not limited to any single section listed below.

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History/Background of Judaism

Judaism is the religion of the Jews. There are an estimated 13.5 million Jews in the world, approximately 6 million in the United States, 4.8 million in Israel and the remainder dispersed throughout the world, many of them in Eastern Europe. In the Holocaust of World War II, some six million Jews were annihilated in Nazi-occupied Europe, as Hitler's armies sought to "purify" the "Aryan race."

Early Jewish history is told in the Hebrew Bible, beginning with the "Pentateuch" [Five Books of Moses], also known as the "Torah" [written law], which is only complete with the inclusion of other holy writings *and* an oral tradition. The holy Torah is a compendium of history, law and ethical teachings. Beginning with the pre-history of Creation and the first humans, the Torah focuses on the Patriarchs [founding fathers] and Matriarchs [founding mothers] of the Jews, most notably the first patriarch Abraham who is said to have made a direct Covenant with G-d that would then extend to all of Abraham's descendents. To this day, Jewish prayer invokes the names of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of the Matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. In about 1800 BCE*, Abraham and his family settled in Canaan, roughly the same location as the present State of Israel. In biblical times, these Hebrew speaking people came to be known as the "Israelites" [Children of Israel], from the name given to Abraham's grandson Jacob by G-d, and then during the post-biblical Kingdom of Judah they became known as "Jews."

Facing famine, the tribal retinue of Jacob and his children entered Egypt, where their descendents became slaves. In 1312 BCE* [the Hebrew year 2448], the Israelites were led out of Egypt by Moses on direction from G-d. This singular event, called "The Exodus", freed the enslaved

Israelites and enabled them to re-affirm their covenantal relationship with G-d, culminating in the receiving of Torah - symbolized by the first "Ten Commandments" - at Mt Sinai.

Though Moses himself was unable to enter "The Promised Land" [Canaan/Israel], the Israelites re-settled the land in 1272 BCE* and established a centuries long presence there, led by selected judges, priests, prophets and kings. Toward the turn of the millennium, rabbis [teachers] led the people's search for an understanding of the correct ways to serve G-d. By the second century CE*, Judaism as a faith system of prayer and commandments had become the binding experience for the people, particularly crucial in the aftermath of the 70 CE Roman destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which had been Judaism's holiest site and the center of post-biblical Jewish life. In about 500 CE*, the rabbis' teachings of written and oral law were compiled into the written volumes of the "Talmud". Conscious of their covenantal relationship with G-d, the Jews retained their religious, cultural, and communal identity wherever they went, and no matter what circumstances they lived, whether they were persecuted or prospered.

The Judaism of today is based mainly on the Talmud and 613 Commandments derived from the Torah (by early renowned rabbinic scholars), several of which cannot presently be fulfilled without the existence of the Holy Temple. The central tenets of Judaism were well defined in the 12th century CE* by Rabbi Moses ben Maimon [the "Rambam" or "Maimonides"] in his *Thirteen Principles of Faith*, which include a belief in one G-d and the eventual coming of a Messiah [an "Anointed One"]. Judaism's tenets and practices have been further defined to varying degrees by various branches of the faith.

In 1948, shortly following World War II, the tiny state of Israel was born. It was intended to create a secure, permanent homeland for the Jews. Israel's short history has been one of remarkable economic and artistic achievement, and of painful struggle for recognition, identity, and survival.

***As are also employed by most historians, the terms BCE [Before Common Era] and CE [Common Era] are generally used by Jews as they do believe that a Messiah has yet been revealed and they, therefore, do not use the Christian terms BC [Before Christ] or AD [Year of Our Lord].**

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Theology/Major Teachings/Belief

Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people. Is the oldest of the three western monotheistic religions and so is the ancestor of both Islam and Christianity. The heart and underlining promise of Judaism is the belief that there exists only one eternal God who is the creator and the ruler of the universe and all that its in it; God is ranscendent and eternal, knowing and seeing everything. God has revealed the law (Torah), which is of utmost importance to the Jewish People, the chosen people, who are to be a light and example to all the world. Abraham, the biblical patriarch was the first to give expression to the Jewish faith, and it is through him that the blessing and the inheritance from God to the Jewish people comes, particularly the promise of the land, that has a central place in Jewish thought and practice.

The essence of the Jewish faith is contained in the "Shema" that is recited every morning and evening by a devote Jew: "Here O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be upon your heart." (In Deuteronomy 6:4-6). Basic to Judaism is the dynamic that God's revelation is contained in both written and oral Torah – scripture and its ever-growing body of commentary and interpretation.

In modern Judaism, Jews have disagreed on the binding role of written and oral Torah as religious law. Within the following major groupings there have developed variations with respect to religious belief and practice, ritual observance, lifestyles, and degree of acculturation.

Orthodox Judaism

The traditionalist approach that believes in the Divine origin of the Torah is seen as the changeless of revelation of God's eternal will and therefore fully authoritative. Following Halachah (i.e., Rabbinic Law) is obligatory, and thus, of all the branches of Judaism, Orthodox Judaism places the greatest and strictest demands on its adherents in its concern for preserving religious belief and observing strict religious codes of behavior. Hassidim—some times termed “Ultra-Orthodox Jews”—are considered the most pious of Orthodox Jews.

Conservative Judaism

The historic development of the Jewish tradition is emphasized. This allows it to make adjustments and changes since it views the basic Jewish theological and ritual concepts as objects of continuing and evolving change. With Conservative Judaism there is also a strong emphasis on preserving “the people of Israel” and on Zionism.

Reform Judaism

This variation of Judaism views Jewish religious law as guidance rather than as divine revelation. It emphasizes the ethical concepts of Judaism more than the ritual Law. Reform Judaism believes that Judaism is still evolving, since revelation is thought to be a continuing process. Reform Judaism is, therefore, not authoritative.

Reconstructionist Judaism

The smallest and most recent branch follows an approach to Judaism developed by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan who emphasizes human values and the centrality of Jewish peoplehood. In practice it is very close to Conservative Judaism.

In general, however, Judaism remains relatively constant in terms of basic beliefs and practices, and most Jews see themselves as members of the Jewish community rather than as members of a single branch.

Religious Law

Jewish life is guided by a total of 613 Godly commandments derived from the Torah. The Talmud (based on oral Torah), and the Code of Jewish Law (Shulchan Aruch), arranged rabbinic (i.e., scholarly) commentary on religious law, are highly specific about individual and community conduct.

Religious law defines a Jew as one who is born of a Jewish **mother** or one who has been properly converted to Judaism. Although most prison systems allow inmates to simply designate their own religious status, the Jewish community only recognizes those who meet the above criteria as being Jewish.

Conversion is a difficult process, requiring lengthy study of Judaism and confirmation by a rabbinic body (Beis Din). Jews do not proselytize and conversion is generally discouraged. It would be highly unusual for an inmate to be converted to Judaism while still incarcerated.

Consistent with the patriarch Abraham's covenant with God, all Jewish males must be ritually circumcised. Religious law specifies that this be performed when the male child is 8 days old. In the case of a convert, ritual circumcision would be done at the time of conversion.

Note: Elements of the Reform movement have recently broken with established religious law by affirming patrilineal descent, seeking converts, allowing women to practice certain liturgical duties and customs previously reserved for men (e.g., ordaining women as Rabbis, women publicly reading from the Torah, and women donning items such as skull caps, prayer shawls, and phylacteries, etc.).

Mainstream Judaism does not recognize "Messianic Judaism" [i.e., Christian Jews], the "Hebrew Israelite", "Black Hebrew" and Yahweh ben Yahweh" sects or similar groups as being bona fide branches of Judaism.

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Worship/Rites/Ceremonies

Private

A devout Jew is required to pray three times a day -- morning, afternoon, and evening -- either in the home or synagogue. An additional morning prayer service is added on the Sabbath and Festivals; these prayers can be private or corporate, but corporate worship is preferable. A Hebrew or Hebrew/English book containing the prayer service is used during prayers. For all Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and some Reform Jews, the head is covered during prayer with a skull-cap (yarmulke) or ordinary hat. **Note:** Most Orthodox Jews will continue to cover their heads all day as a sign of reverence to God. During morning prayer, a prayer shawl (tallit), which has fringes at the four corners (in obedience to a command found in the Torah), is worn by adult males. On weekdays, small black leather boxes, phylacteries (tefillin) may also be worn by adult males. They contain four passages of scripture -- Exodus 13:1-10 and 13:11-16, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 -- and are strapped to the forehead and the arm. Although these items may be inspected, the Tefillin, in deference to correctional concerns is to be kept in the inmate groups cabinet located in the religious Activities center and is to be handled with care. **Only a qualified Rabbi or Scribe may open the sewn closed portion of the boxes. Whenever possible, a Jewish inmate should not be required to pray in a room that contains either a toilet or symbols of any other religious denominations.**

A mezuzah is a small parchment scroll on which is written the opening paragraphs of the Shema (which prescribes this practice). The scroll is placed within a protective container that is affixed to the upper right-hand doorpost of the front door of the home. In the homes of more observant Jews, mezuzahs are also placed on the doorposts of every other living room (except bathrooms). **A prison is not considered an appropriate place to post a mezuzah.**

Corporate

Although a quorum (minyan) of ten adult Jewish males is required to conduct a complete Jewish worship service, a lesser number of Jewish males (and females) can conduct corporate prayer with certain proscribed sections of the service being omitted. Those who are not properly Jewish cannot serve in a minyan. Likewise, non-Jews should not utter some particular Jewish liturgies or participate in certain Jewish liturgical functions.

The Torah (Five Books of Moses) is divided into weekly portions which are publicly read throughout the Jewish calendar year in synagogues each Sabbath.

Parts of these are further publicly read each Monday and Thursday. Related sections of the writings of the Prophets are also publicly read on the Sabbath. Certain other holy writings are publicly read on various holy days. A specially trained person is required to accomplish these readings and certain conditions would have to be met in order for these readings to be made in a prison setting.

The Sabbath and Festivals

As previously mentioned, observant Jews do not work on the Sabbath or Festivals—they worship together as a group on these days. The celebration of these holy days should be part of a shared religious experience by as many Jewish inmates as possible. Prayer books may be obtainable from local Jewish communities and/or Jewish prison outreach programs. See the Diet section for special dietary needs. Basic observances/customs for the Sabbath and individual festivals are as follows:

The Sabbath

This is a day of rest, devoted to God, during which some 39 categories of prohibitions are applied (e.g., no creative work, no cooking, etc.). The beginning of the Sabbath is marked by the lighting of candles — a minimum of two per household — which must be capable of burning for at least one-half hour and which must be allowed to burn out by themselves. A special prayer is recited over the candle lighting. Following evening and morning services, a special prayer (kiddish) is recited over wine. **Note:** It is permissible to use grape juice as a substitute for wine, provided that the grape juice meets religious dietary (i.e., kosher) standards. It is also traditional to say a prayer over and eat special braided bread (challah) before meals on the Sabbath. The end of the Sabbath is marked with a special service (Havdallah), during which candles, wine (or grape juice), and spices are used. **Note:** As Jews are not permitted to work on their Sabbath and certain festivals, it is appropriate to request that Jewish inmates work as substitutes for other inmates on non-Jewish holidays.

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Death and Burial Practices

Cremation, embalming and other defilements of the body are prohibited in Judaism. Autopsies are only permitted as required by law. Internment should be completed prior to sundown of the day following death (unless that day falls on the Sabbath or certain Jewish holidays). Internment must be in a Jewish cemetery. As proper preparation for burial and other procedures need to be followed, the Jewish chaplain and/or family rabbi should be notified as soon as possible following a Jewish inmate's death.

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Festivals/Holy Days

Biblically mandated festivals generally follow the same rules as the Sabbath, with the addition of particular observances and customs. Post-biblical holy days are generally not as restrictive and have their own observances and customs. The following are in sequential order as they occur through the Jewish calendar year, beginning in early autumn.

The Jewish calendar is a lunar one, as opposed to the solar or Gregorian calendar used by most of the world.

Published calendars that list the Gregorian and Jewish dates are readily available from most synagogues and other Jewish community organizations.

Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur

The Jewish New Year is a period of self-examination and resolution. A ram's horn (shofar) is blown as a call to look into one's soul and improve one's ways. It is customary at the meal on the eve of Rosh Hashanah to eat apple dipped in honey and to wish others a "a good and sweet year." A new fruit (usually a pomegranate), a sweet carrot dish (tizimmes), honey cake, round challah bread, and other foods are traditional. It is also customary to send greeting cards to one's relatives and friends.

The ten days of Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur are considered to be the "days of awe and repentance."

Yom Kippur is the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar, a day of atonement and God's forgiveness. The day is spent fasting and praying. White garments are worn and the ram's horn is blown (as on Rosh Hashanah). On the afternoon prior to the fast, it is traditional to eat a special meal of pieces of dough filled with meat or chicken (kreplach).

Sucloth

This is the "season of rejoicing" on which temporary shelters (tabernacles) of branches are built on porches, terraces, roofs, in the yard, etc., and observant Jews eat their meals and may sleep within these huts. Four species of plants—the citron (Esrog), palm branch (Lulav), myrtles (Hadassim), and willows (Aravos)—as enumerated in the Torah, are bound together and used by each Jew individually during services in the synagogue and huts.

Shemini Atzeres

This holy day corresponds to the 8th day of Sucloth, but is a separate and complete holy day in its own right. It is a day of special feast and celebration.

Simchat Torah

This is a day of great rejoicing, corresponding with the end of Sucloth and marking the completion of the annual reading of the Torah and start of the next reading cycle. Scholars and laymen alike "dance" with the Torah scrolls on this day.

Channukah

This celebration commemorates the recapture of the Holy Temple in 165 B.C.E. from Assyrian-Greek oppressors. In preparation for rededication of the Holy Temple, which had been spoiled by the enemy, only one small jar of acceptable oil was found with which to rekindle the Temple's candelabra (menorah). This single day's supply lasted for the entire eight days required to prepare acceptably pure olive oil to burn. In honor of this miracle, Jews today light candles on each of the eight evenings of Chanukah, beginning with one candle on the first evening, two in the second evening, etc. Each evening an additional candle is used to light the others, requiring a total of 44 candles for the entire holiday. Children are often given gifts of coins and they play a traditional game with a spinning top (dreidel). Because of the significance of oil in the Chanukah miracle, it is customary to eat potato pancakes fried in oil (latkes) and/or jelly-filled donuts (suf ganiyot) during the holiday.

Purim

This day commemorates the saving from massacre of the Jewish community under Persian rule in 450 B.C.E., as recalled in the Book of Esther, which is publicly read on this day. This is a particularly joyous holiday, during which gifts of food and charity are given. A festival meal is required and it is traditional to eat pastries shaped in the form of the hat of the villain in the Purim story.

Pesach (Passover)

This, the best known of all Jewish festivals, recalls the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt during biblical times and marks the beginning of the Jewish Nation. It lasts for eight days, beginning with the Passover feasts (Seder) on the first two evenings, during which the deliverance from Egypt is recounted from a special book (Haggadah). Certain ceremonial foods are eaten—including unleavened bread (matzah) and bitter herbs—and four cups of wine (or grape juice) are consumed. No products containing any leavening can be consumed during this period. The seders are required to be particularly festive and they are often the highlight of the year for Jewish inmates. A proper authority should be consulted regarding approved Passover foods.

Lag B'Omer

This holy day occurs during the 49 days that are counted to mark the time between the going out from Egypt and the giving of the Torah to the Jewish Nation. On the 33rd day of "Counting of the Omer" -- Lag B'Omer -- Jews commemorate the ending of an epidemic that befell students of the great scholar Rabbi Akiba. It is also the anniversary of the passing of the great sage Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. It is customary to take children on outings in parks and woods on this holiday.

Shavuot

Shavuot commemorates God's gift of the law (Torah) to the Jewish Nation. On the eve of Shavuot, it is customary for adult males (those over the age of 13) to stay up all night and study the Torah.

Tisha B'Av

This is the final day of three weeks of mourning the destruction of the HOLY Temple on the same date in 587 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. Work is discouraged on this fast day.

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Holy Books

The most common and most important Jewish holy book is a Tanach. Tanach is an acronym for Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim, and is the most likely Jewish holy book to be found in a prison. While there are other Jewish holy books of great importance, due to their volume it is often not feasible to have them readily available to prisoners in a prison setting.

A brief description of what a proper Tanach contains is as follows:

Torah	The Five Books of Moses: Genesis/Bereshit, Exodus/Shemot, Leviticus/VaYikra, Numbers/BeMidbar, Deuteronomy/Devarim
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Nevi'im	21 books of the Prophets: First Prophets -- Joshua/Yehoshua, Judges/Shoftim, Samuel/Shmu'el (I/II), Kings/Melakhim (I/II); Latter Prophets -- (Major:) Isaiah/Yeshayahu, Jeremiah/Yirmiyahu, Ezekial/Yehezq'el, (Minor:) Hosea/Hoshea, Joel/Yo'el, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah/Yonah, Micah/Mikhah, Nahum/Nachum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah/Tsefania, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.
Ketuvim	13 books of Writings, including: Tehillim/Psalms, Mishlei/Proverbs, Iyyov/Job, Shir ha-Shirim/Song of Songs, Ruth, Eikhah/Lamentations, Kohelet/Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra (including Nehemiah), Divrei ha-Yamim/Chronicles.
Talmud	An official record of Jewish law including the Mishnah and Gemara. The Mishnah or oral law dates back to the time of Moses. The Gemara contains discussion of the Mishnah dating back to the 3rd century CE. These volumes have in large part determined for centuries how Jewish law is to be practiced, and continue to do so even today.

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Holy Days/Festivals - Reference

Within Judaism, the Sabbath (Shabbos) is considered to be the most important of all Jewish religious holidays. On the Sabbath, which is observed from 18 minutes prior to sunset Friday until three stars are visible (approximately one hour) past sunset Saturday, the observant Jew does not engage in such weekday pursuits as work, business transactions, or travel. Religious services commence on Friday evening before sunset and are also held on Saturday morning, afternoon, and again at sunset.

Similarly, Jewish holy days are reckoned from sundown of the prior evening through sundown.

Dates are reckoned by the Jewish lunar calendar months and, therefore, will vary in relation to Gregorian calendar dates. Jewish holy days and festivals begin the evening prior to the specified dates.

Rosh HaShanah	The New Year -- Day of Repentance and Judgement. Celebrated on the 1st and 2nd of Tishrei.
Yom Kippur	Day of Atonement -- the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar. Celebrated on the 10th of Tishrei.
Succoth	The Festival of Tabernacles. Celebrated from the 15th to the 23rd of Tishrei (the first two days of Succoth and the last two days of Succoth -- also known as Shemini Atzeres and Simchat Torah -- are work proscription days).
Shemini Atzeres	Special celebration ending Succoth. Celebrated on the 22nd of Tishrei.
Simchat Torah	The Rejoicing of the Torah. Celebrated on the 23rd of Tishrei.
Pesach (Passover)	The Festival of Freedom. Celebrated from the 15th to the 22nd of

Nissan (Only the first two days and the last two days of these holidays are work proscription days).

Shavuot	The Festival of Weeks - commemorating the giving of the Torah. Celebrated on the 6th and 7th of Sivan.
Chanukah	The Festival of Lights - celebrated from the 25th of Kislev through the 2nd of Tevet.
Purim	Commemoration of the Jewish Community saved from massacre, as recalled in the Book of Esther. Celebrated on the 14th of Adar.
Lag B'Omer	Commemorates the ending of an epidemic suffered by the students of Rabbi Akiba. Celebrated on the 18th of Iyar.
Tisha B'Av	A day of mourning, commemorating the two destructions of the Holy Temple. Celebrated on the 9th of Av.

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Work Proscription Days

Within Judaism, the Sabbath (Shabbos) is considered to be the most important of all Jewish religious holidays. On the Sabbath, which is observed from 18 minutes prior to sunset Friday until three stars are visible (approximately one hour) past sunset Saturday, the observant Jew does not engage in such weekday pursuits as work, business transactions, or travel. Religious services commence on Friday evening before sunset and are also held on Saturday morning, afternoon, and again at sunset.

Also the first two days and the last two days of Pesach (Passover) are work proscription days. And the first two days and the last two days of Succoth are work proscription days.

Purim, Shavuot, Tisha B'Av (prior to midday only)

Rosh HaShanah

Yom Kippur

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Fast Days

In addition to the full fast days (from before sunset to the following night) on Yom Kippur and Tisha B'av, there are daybreak through nightfall fasts on the 10th of Tevet, the 17th of Tammuz, and the 3rd of Tishrei which are associated with mourning the destruction of the Temple; on the 13th of Adar commemorating Esther's own Purim fast; and on the 14th of Nisan for first-born males (only) commemorating the killing of the first-born during Pesach.

Eating and drinking are prohibited on fast days by all Jewish males over the age of 13 and all Jewish females over the age of 12, except for pregnant and nursing women and people requiring special medical care. On Yom Kippur and Tisha B'av wearing leather shoes, washing for pleasure,

using perfumes, and having marital relations are also not permitted. It is traditional to end the fast with a light snack, followed about one-hour later with a regular meal.

Except for Yom Kippur, fast days are rescheduled if they fall on the Sabbath or Friday (the day of preparing for the Sabbath). A Jewish calendar should be consulted for actual fast dates.

Yom Kippur - 10th of Tishrei (25 hour fast).

Tisha B'Av - 9th of Av (25 hour fast).

10th of Tevet - Daybreak through nightfall fast.

17th of Tammuz - Daybreak through nightfall fast.

3rd of Tishrei - Fast of Gedaliah - Daybreak through nightfall fast.

13th of Adar - Commemorating Esther's own Purim fast - Daybreak through nightfall fast.

14th of Nisan - For first-born males only. Commemorates the killing of the first-born during Pesach. Daybreak through nightfall fast.

Jewish offenders should be provided with extra nourishment prior to the two 25 hour fasts.

Any Jewish inmate, whether or not participating in a regular Jewish religious and/or Passover diet program, must be permitted to fast on any religiously prescribed fast day, provided that such fasting would not be detrimental to his or her medical condition. Any Jewish inmate observing a prescribed religious fast must be provided with adequate nourishment directly following the end of any such fast.

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Dietary Restrictions

Jewish dietary law (Kashruth) is an important aspect of religious observance for all Orthodox, many Conservative, and some Reform and Reconstructionist Jews. Foods that are fit (kosher) for consumption and the manner in which they are handled are specified in the Torah and further defined through Rabbinic law. These foods fall into three categories—Meat, Milk, and Pareve. Meat and Milk products cannot be cooked, served, or eaten together, requiring separate cooking and serving utensils for each.

Milk products (e.g., liquid milk or cream, cottage cheese, cheeses) are considered kosher if proper supervision has been provided to ensure there is no contact with any meat product (e.g., rennet used in the production of many hard cheeses) or milk from prohibited animals. Milk products may not be eaten with or immediately after meat products. An interval of time, usually a minimum of three hours, depending on the custom of the community, must elapse between Meat and Milk.

Meat of only kosher animals and fowl is permitted. Kosher animals, as specified in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, are those that chew their cud and have divided hooves (e.g., cows, goats, sheep, etc.). Kosher fowl are primarily those which are not birds of prey (e.g., chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys) and fowl is treated as meat. All of these must be slaughtered and dressed in a prescribed manner (by qualified butchers) to be considered kosher. Meat may be eaten following short interval after eating

most soft milk products. However, aged cheeses require the same time interval as applies for Meat to Milk.

Pareve products consist of all neutral substances such as fruits, vegetables, grains, etc. Pareve products may be cooked and eaten together with either Meat or Milk products.

Fish are considered Pareve, but they must have both fins and scales to be kosher. Shellfish are prohibited. Fish do not have to be slaughtered or dressed in a prescribed manner and generally may be eaten together with Milk and Meat products.

Utensils used for the preparation and serving of non-kosher food may not be used for kosher food.

There are several organizations that supervise the production of kosher food products. These organizations can usually be identified by their registered symbols prominently placed on product labels. As the degree of supervision varies from one organization to another, **it is best to only use products that meet the highest (i.e., Orthodox) degree of supervision**, as this will cover the requirements of all inmates on a religious diet program. Kosher foods are easily obtained through various retail outlets and kosher purveyors.

A qualified kosher food supervisor should always be consulted regarding any questions pertaining to certification and/or handling of foods served to Jewish inmates on a religious diet program. Contact with kosher food supervisors can usually be made through the Department of Corrections' Religious Programs section or through various Jewish community organizations such as synagogues and Jewish prison outreach programs.

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Leadership/Meetings and Worship

Rabbis are ordained spiritual leaders in Judaism. However, as there are no sacraments in Judaism, there is no liturgical distinction between clergy and laity. Thus, a trained lay person may lead a prayer service.

Cantors are persons specifically trained in prescribed ritual for public worship. Many lay persons are also trained in specific aspects of Jewish religious practice such as liturgical reading, kosher slaughtering, dietary supervision, ritual circumcision, etc.

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Requirements for Offenders in Prison

Because they are not in total control of their circumstances, Jewish inmates may be exempted from certain religious law requirements. However, before any such exemption might apply, every effort must be made to seek a religiously acceptable alternative.

In determining minimum standards, levels of observance of individual inmates must be taken into account. Previous sections and/or proper authority should be consulted regarding specific practices.

Depending upon level of observance, the individual inmate may require all or some of the following:

Holy Book

All Jewish inmates must be permitted to possess a copy of the Torah (including Pentateuch, Neve'im, and Ketuviah with Psalms), a daily prayer book, a Sabbath prayer book, and Holy Day/Festival prayer books (or combinations of the preceding).

Holy Days/Festivals

All Jewish inmates must be permitted the opportunity to observe the Sabbath, holy days, and festivals to their individual degree of observance, including possession of materials necessary for proper observance of these events.

Head-Covering

All Jewish inmates must be permitted to possess a head-covering, preferably a skullcap (yarmulke) for use during prayer. Orthodox Jewish inmates must be permitted to wear their head-covering at all times (outdoors and indoors).

Work Proscription Days

Within Judaism, the Sabbath (Shabbos) is considered to be the most important of all Jewish religious holidays. On the Sabbath, which is observed from 18 minutes prior to sunset Friday until three stars are visible (approximately one hour) past sunset Saturday, the observant Jew does not engage in such weekday pursuits as work, business transactions, or travel. Religious services commence on Friday evening before sunset and are also held on Saturday morning, afternoon, and again at sunset. The following are also work proscription days.

The first two days and the last two days of Pesach (Passover).

The first two days and the last two days of Succoth.

Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

Purim, Shavuot, Tisha B'Av (prior to midday only).

Private Worship

All Jewish inmates must be permitted the opportunity for private worship to their individual degree of observance, including possession of any materials necessary for such prayer.

Corporate Worship

Although a quorum (minyan) of ten adults Jewish males is required to conduct a complete Jewish worship service, a lesser number of Jewish males (and females) can conduct corporate prayer with certain proscribed sections of the service being omitted. Those who are not properly Jewish cannot serve in a minyan. Likewise, non-Jews should not utter some particular Jewish liturgies or participate in certain Jewish liturgical functions.

All Jewish inmates must be permitted the opportunity corporate worship to their individual degree of observance, including possession of any materials necessary for such prayer.

Dietary Restrictions

Any Jewish inmate must, upon request, be provided with a religiously acceptable (kosher) diet. These inmates must also be permitted to purchase religiously acceptable food items from inmate stores and outside vendors, consistent with that allowed for other inmates. Any Jewish inmate, whether or not participating on a regular Jewish religious diet program must, upon request, be provided with a diet during the eight days of Passover that meets all the religious requirements of that period (i.e., no leavening, etc.). Any Jewish inmate who is participating in a regular Jewish religious and/or Passover diet program may be removed from such program if found in violation of Jewish dietary law (e.g., consuming non-kosher food).

Washington State DOC provides prepackaged kosher meals that are prepared with Orthodox supervision. Those offenders who meet the requirements of DOC 560.200 will be provided a Kosher diet.

Leadership/Meetings and Worship

Rabbis are ordained spiritual leaders in Judaism. However, as there are no sacraments in Judaism, there is no liturgical distinction between clergy and laity. Thus, a trained lay person may lead a prayer service.

Cantors are persons specifically trained in prescribed ritual for public worship. Many lay persons are also trained in specific aspects of Jewish religious practice such as liturgical reading, kosher slaughtering, dietary supervision, ritual circumcision, etc.

Other Items

All Jewish inmates must be permitted to possess a Jewish calendar. Jewish inmate must be permitted to possess and use in the prescribed manners any other religious materials (e.g., prayer shawl, phylacteries, tzitzes, Sabbath/holy day/festival materials such as candles, candle holders, spices, a ram's horn, etc.) to their individual degree of observance. Whenever possible, Jewish inmates should also be allowed to possess religious study materials such as books, correspondence courses, etc.

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Sources for This Document

WA State DOC Handbook of Religious Beliefs and Practices; *Religions* by Myrtle Langley; *Inmate Religious Beliefs and Practices* by U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons; Jewish Prisoner Services International.