

OPERATION UNDERSTANDING

"Kindle The Lamp Of Understanding"



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INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

This year of 2004 marks the 350th anniversary of the arrival of 23 Sephardic (Mediterranean-based) Jews to New Amsterdam (later known as New York City). We as a collective Jewish community celebrate not only this anniversary but the history of Jewish life in North America. This is a special time in the history of our people, as we have flourished, free to express our religion, culture, ethnic roots, language and song without fear. For a timeline of Jewish achievements in North America, please visit www.ajhs.org.

Considering celebrating our North American history, it is incumbent upon us to work with other faith communities in developing a better understanding of each other's faith and traditions. Our communities aspire to better understand each other's tradition so that we can live in peace and work towards a better world, free of injustice, intolerance, hatred, poverty and social inequality.

We do hope that this booklet – which represents but a taste of our Jewish traditions – is a beginning along the journey to share our traditions with you, as well as our interest in learning the traditions, rituals and practices of other faith communities throughout Greater New Orleans.

This booklet will serve to educate the reader on the topics of the basic tenets of Judaism, the major holidays, and life-cycle events. If you have further questions, please contact the Director of Community Relations of the Jewish Federation of Broward County at 954-252-6900 and visit www.myjewishlearning.com.

PART I - JUDAISM

The religion of Judaism, like many others, takes on several different modern-day forms. All the denominations of Judaism believe in core values such as one G-d (in reverence of G-d's name some people do not write G-d's full name on paper) and the centrality of the Torah (Old Testament) and Jewish Law in the practice of the faith. Jewish houses of worship – synagogues – regardless of denomination, reflect this fact through the common attributes that they all share. However, in day-to-day practice of our faith and how our faith is observed, people do follow different paths in Judaism. But the ties that bind us together as a Jewish community are much stronger than those aspects of ritual that separate us as Jews.

Further, Judaism, while rooted in religious practice, is not just a religion. Judaism is also a culture, with ties to traditions in foods, song, language, geography, history and more. Jews throughout New Orleans, the United States and the world share many of these aspects of our religion and faith, and it is therefore common for Jews from anywhere around the world to understand their fellow Jews. It is what allows us as Jews to foster ourselves as "*Klal Israel*", the community of Israel.

This section will serve as a primer for important components of Judaism as well as for three of the largest denominations of Judaism in the world, and in Greater New Orleans. These are, in no order, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism. These three do not represent the totality of Judaism, but certainly the majority of the religion in terms of affiliation.

ORTHODOX JUDAISM

The oldest form of the practice of Judaism is Orthodox Judaism. In fact, Orthodox Judaism was the only type of religious Judaism until the 1800s when the Reform Jewish movement began to grow

Orthodox Jews are a very diverse group with roots from a variety of backgrounds: Spanish/Portuguese, Eastern European, Western European, Moroccan, Persian, and many others. Even though these groups differ in some ways, such as in their pronunciation of Hebrew, they all agree in the belief of the one personal G-d and in the divinely given, binding nature of the Torah and its commandments (*mitzvot*). Examples of the commandments are the observance of the Sabbath and Festivals and the dietary laws (kosher). Orthodox Jews follow the laws written in the *Shulchan Aruch*, the major code of Jewish law. In fact, Orthodox Judaism is based on a legal system called *halacha* (Jewish law) that governs daily personal behavior from sunrise to sunset, from birth to death.

At the heart of Orthodoxy is the love of Torah. Studying Bible, *Talmud* (name of the two collections of records of the discussion and administration of Jewish law), commentaries, and responsa is a part of daily life. The philosophy of Orthodox Jews is that Torah education never ends. From the day school to the *Yeshiva* (Jewish rabbinical academy), from child to adult, the Orthodox Jew will, for his/her whole life, discuss, read, and ponder the holy books. Study is seen as a true source of joy. In short, the life of the Orthodox Jew is one of commitment. The essence of Orthodox Judaism is observance of the commandments, a lifetime devotion to the service of G-d, the study of Torah, and the keeping of G-d's laws.



Shown above: Skullcaps (*Kippah* or *yarmulke*) worn by religious Jewish men to symbolize G-d's presence everywhere.

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Conservative Judaism maintains that the truths found in Jewish scriptures and other Jewish writings come from G-d, but were transmitted by humans and contain a human component. Conservative Judaism generally accepts the binding nature of *halacha*, but believes that the law should change and adapt, absorbing aspects of the predominant culture while remaining true to Judaism's values. The idea of flexibility is deeply rooted in Conservative Judaism and can be found within its own Statement of Principles, *Emet ve-Emunah* (true and faithful). The core values of Conservative Judaism are:

- The Centrality of Modern Israel - For Conservative Jews, as for their ancestors, Israel is not only the birthplace of the Jewish people, but also its final destiny. They visit Israel, send their children over a summer or for a year and support financially its many worthy institutions.
- Hebrew: The Irreplaceable Language of Jewish Expression - Conservative Jews believe Hebrew literacy is the key to Judaism, which joins the unending dialectic between sacred texts, between Jews of different ages and between G-d and Israel.
- Devotion to the ideal of *Klal Yisrael* (people of Israel) - In the consciousness of Conservative Jews, there resonates the affirmation of *haverim kol yisrael* (all Israel is joined in fellowship). Despite all the dispersion, dichotomies and politicization that history has visited upon them, Jews remain united in a tenacious pilgrimage of universal import.

- The Defining Role of Torah in the Reshaping of Judaism - After the loss of political sovereignty in 63 B.C.E. and the Second Temple in 70 C.E. to the Romans, the Rabbis fashioned the Torah into a portable homeland, the synagogue into a national theater for religious drama and study into a form of worship. Chanting the Torah each Shabbat is still the centerpiece of the Conservative service.
- The Study of Torah - Each generation and every community appropriated the Torah afresh through their own interpretive activity, creating a vast exegetical dialogue in which differences of opinion were valid and preserved. What Conservative Judaism brings to this ancient and unfinished dialectic are the tools and perspectives of modern scholarship blended with traditional learning and empathy.
- The Governance of Jewish Life by *Halacha* - *Halacha* expresses the fundamental thrust of Judaism to concretize ethics and theology into daily practice. The native language of Judaism has always been the medium of deeds.
- Belief in G-d - The seventh and most basic core value of Conservative Judaism is its belief in G-d. To speak of G-d is akin to speaking about the undetected matter of the universe. G-d is a felt presence rather than a visible form, a voice rather than a vision.

REFORM JUDAISM

Throughout history, Jews have remained firmly rooted in Jewish tradition, even as we learned much from our encounters with other cultures. Nevertheless, since its earliest days, Reform Judaism has asserted that a Judaism frozen in time is an heirloom, not a living fountain. The great contribution of Reform Judaism is that it has enabled the Jewish people to introduce innovation while preserving tradition, to embrace diversity while asserting commonality, to affirm beliefs without rejecting those who doubt, and to bring faith to sacred texts without sacrificing critical scholarship.

Reform Judaism affirms the central tenets of Judaism – G-d, Torah and Israel - even as it acknowledges the diversity of Reform Jewish beliefs and practices. Reform Jews believe that all human beings are created in the image of G-d, and that they are G-d's partners in improving the world. *Tikkun Olam* - repairing the world - is a hallmark of Reform Judaism as they strive to bring peace, freedom, and justice to all people.

In addition to the Reform Jew's belief that Judaism must change and adapt to the needs of the day to survive and the firm commitment to *Tikkun Olam*, the following principles distinguish Reform Jews from other streams of Judaism in North America.

- Reform Jews are committed to the principle of inclusion, not exclusion. Since 1978 the Reform Movement has been reaching out to Jews-by-choice and interfaith families, encouraging them to embrace Judaism. Reform Jews consider children to be Jewish if they are the child of a Jewish father or mother, so long as the child is raised as a Jew.
- Reform Jews are committed to the absolute equality of women in all areas of Jewish life. We were the first movement to ordain women rabbis, invest women cantors, and elect women presidents of our synagogues.
- Reform Jews are also committed to the full participation of gays and lesbians in synagogue life as well as society at large.

IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF JUDAISM

Synagogue

The synagogue is the modern house of Jewish worship. It has served as the focus of Jewish life since 70 CE, after the loss of the Temple to the Romans. The interior of the synagogue is relatively simple and functional. In the center of the synagogue, in the sanctuary for prayer, is the *bimah*, the raised platform on which the Torah is read. This emphasizes the central role of Torah in the synagogue worship. The Torah is handwritten by a trained scribe on parchment made from a kosher animal. The Torah has to be written with no mistakes; the letters must be clear, the writing must not be faded. If there is something wrong with the Torah it cannot be used until it is repaired by a scribe.

On the Eastern wall is the *aron ha-kodesh*, the Holy Ark, in which the Torah scrolls are kept. By facing the Eastern wall of the Sanctuary, Jews pray facing the land of Israel. Above the ark is the *ner tamid*--the eternal light. The Bible records that one of the priestly duties was to keep the candelabrum lit "before the Lord [to burn] regularly" (Lev. 24:4). It symbolizes the spiritual enlightenment which forever emanates from the Torah.

Tzedakah

To Jews today, the term *tzedakah* connotes giving charitable contributions. In the Bible, *tzedakah* means “righteous behavior” and is often paired theologically with the term “justice.” In Jewish thought and tradition, material support for those in need is not a matter of “charity” - a term that implies generosity beyond what may be expected - but a requirement. How Jews give *tzedakah* is as important as what they give. It is important not to humiliate the person receiving the *tzedakah*. Instead, the highest form of *tzedakah* is for neither the givers nor the recipients to know who one another is.

Israel

The history of the Jewish people begins with Abraham, and the story of Abraham begins when G-d tells him to leave his homeland, promising Abraham and his descendants a new home in the land of Canaan. This is the land known today as Israel, named after Abraham's grandson, whose descendants are the Jewish people. The land is often referred to as the Promised Land because of G-d's repeated promise to give the land to the descendants of Abraham. Through centuries of exile, Jewish hopes and prayers were focused on regaining and living in this land.

Anti-Semitism led some 19th-century Jews to see the establishment of a sovereign Jewish nation as the sole way to ensure Jewish survival. The idea of Zionism was then created. This, by definition, is the international, political and ideological movement devoted to securing the return of the Jewish people to Israel. Today, approximately five million Jews, more than a third of the world's Jewish population, live in the land of Israel. Jews make up more than eighty percent of the population of the land, and Jews are in political control of the land.

Israel is the site of the holiest places on earth for Jews. The Western Wall is regarded as the closest portion of the retaining wall supporting the Temple Mount. Therefore, it is considered the last remaining piece of the Second Temple and is the holiest place for Jews. During religious services in the United States and Europe, Jews face east, towards Jerusalem, as a symbol of religious connection to the land of Israel.

JUDAISM AND OTHER MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

Jews, Christians and Muslims all share the belief that there is one G-d and also share a common ancestor, Abraham. However, there are many differences between Judaism and other religions such as Christianity and Islam. A few are the following:

Jews, unlike Christians, do not believe in the concept of the Holy Trinity, nor do they believe in Jesus as *the* Son of G-d or their savior. Jesus is seen as a religious figure and a son of G-d, but not a religious figure for those of Jewish persuasion.

Additionally, Muslims believe Muhammad to be the true and last prophet of G-d. Muslims believe Muhammad's teachings are the final revelation of G-d and need to be followed in order to earn salvation after death. In comparison, traditional Jews follow the teachings of the Torah which is believed to have been passed down to Moses by G-d on Mount Sinai and do not believe that Muhammad to be the true and last prophet of G-d.

PART II - HOLIDAYS

SABBATH (SHABBAT) – AS CELEBRATED IN THE HOME

The holiest day of the Jewish year, Shabbat (the Sabbath), rivaled only by Yom Kippur, comes 52 times a year. The Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. It is the time of the week where Jews are commanded to take time off from their daily lives and NOT work so they can reflect on their relationship with G-d and their fellow human beings, especially their family. Traditional Jews (Orthodox and some Conservative) refrain from anything that is considered 'work', such as driving a car, watching television, or cooking (which is completed prior to the Sabbath). Jews that do not follow strict observance may celebrate the Sabbath in other ways. No matter to what degree a person practices their Judaism, does not define, detract or decrease their 'being' Jewish because one is Jewish through lineage or by way of conversion.

The Sabbath is the time of the week that many Jews attend synagogue services. It is during the Saturday morning service that a section of the Torah (a different section is read every week until the entire Torah is completed, which takes a full year) is read aloud for all to hear. The reading and listening to the Torah is the pinnacle event of the service, allowing one to listen to the word of G-d.

The Sabbath is marked not only by what takes place in synagogue but also in the home. Many families have a Sabbath meal on Friday night when the prayers for the lighting of the candles, drinking wine and eating bread (*challah*, a special type of braided egg bread) are said around the family table. Many Jewish families try to make Friday night meals special and different from those of any other night by staying home and being together.



Shown above: Essential elements for welcoming Shabbat through blessings over the lighting of the candles, drinking wine, and eating *Challah* (braided egg bread).

The end of the Sabbath is marked by the *Havdalah* (distinction) service, which means to separate between the weekend of rest and the work week. In this service one smells the scent of the spice box, sees the light of the braided candle, and drinks the wine, in order to hold on to these aspects of the Sabbath throughout the work week until the next Sabbath arrives.



Shown above: The spice box – an essential element of the Havdalah service.

ROSH HASHANAH

Rosh Hashanah (literally, "Head of the Year") refers to the celebration of the Jewish New Year. The holiday is observed on the first day of the Hebrew month of *Tishrei*, which usually falls in September or October, and marks the beginning of a ten-day period of prayer, self-examination and repentance, which culminates on Yom Kippur. These ten days are referred to as *Yamim Noraim*, the Days of Awe or the High Holy Days.

While there are elements of joy and celebration, Rosh Hashanah is a deeply religious occasion. The customs and symbols of Rosh Hashanah reflect the holiday's dual emphasis: happiness and humility. Special customs observed on Rosh Hashanah include; the sounding of the *shofar* (ram's horn), round *challah* bread, and eating apples and honey (and other sweet foods) in order to have a sweet new year.



Shown above: A *Shofar*, made from a ram's horn, is used for the New Year observance.

YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur is the "Day of Atonement" and refers to the annual Jewish observance of fasting, prayer and repentance. This is considered to be the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. In three separate passages in the Torah, the Jewish people are told, "the tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: You shall practice self-denial. . ." (Lev. 23:27). Fasting is seen as fulfilling this biblical commandment. The Yom Kippur fast also enables us to put aside our physical desires and to concentrate on our spiritual needs through prayer, repentance and self-improvement. It is customary in the days before Yom Kippur for Jews to seek out friends and family whom one might have wronged and personally ask for their forgiveness.

SUKKOT

Sukkot, a Hebrew word meaning "booths" or "huts," refers to the Jewish festival of giving thanks for the fall harvest, as well as the commemoration of the forty years of Jewish wandering in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt.

Sukkot is celebrated five days after Yom Kippur on the 15th of *Tishrei* and is marked by several distinct traditions. One tradition, which takes the commandment to "dwell in booths" literally, is to build a *sukkah*, a temporary booth or hut. A *sukkah* is often erected by Jews during this festival, and it is common practice for some to eat and even live in these temporary dwellings during *Sukkot*.



Shown above: Decorating the *Sukkah*

SIMCHAT TORAH

Simchat Torah, Hebrew for “rejoicing in the Law,” celebrates the completion of the annual reading of the Torah. *Simchat Torah* is a joyous festival in which Jews affirm their view of the Torah as a tree of life and demonstrate a living example of never-ending, lifelong study. Torah scrolls are taken from the ark and carried or danced around the synagogue seven times. During the Torah service, the concluding section of Deuteronomy is read, and immediately following, the opening section of Genesis, or *B’reishit*, as it is called in Hebrew, is read.

CHANUKAH

Chanukah, meaning “dedication” in Hebrew, refers to the joyous eight-day celebration during which Jews commemorate the victory of the Macabees over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. and the subsequent liberation and “rededication” of the Temple in Jerusalem. The modern home celebration of Chanukah centers around the lighting of the *Chanukiah*, a special 9- branch menorah for Chanukah; unique foods, such as potato pancakes called latkes and jelly doughnuts; and special songs and games.



Shown above: *Dreidels* are used to play a Chanukah game

PURIM

Purim is celebrated by the reading of the Scroll of Esther, known in Hebrew as the *Megillat Esther*, which relates the story of Purim. Under the rule of King Ahashuerus in Persia (known today as Iran) Haman, the King's prime minister, plots to exterminate all of the Jews of Persia. His plan is foiled by Queen Esther and her cousin Mordechai (who are both Jewish) who ultimately save the Jews of the land from destruction. The reading of the *megillah* is typically a rowdy affair, which is punctuated by booing and noisemaking when Haman's name is read aloud and people dressing up as their favorite Purim character.



Shown above: Children dressed up for Purim

Purim is an unusual holiday in many respects. First, Esther is the only book of the Bible in which G-d is not mentioned. Second, Purim, like Chanukah, is viewed by tradition as a minor festival. The elevation of Purim to a major holiday was a result of the Jewish historical experience. Over the centuries, Haman became the embodiment of every anti-Semite in every land where Jews were oppressed.

PASSOVER (PESACH)

Pesach, known as Passover in English, is a major Jewish spring festival, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt over 3,000 years ago. The ritual observance of this holiday centers around a special home service called the *seder* (meaning "order") and a festive meal; the prohibition of *chametz* (leaven); and the eating of *matzah* (an unleavened bread). On the eve of the fifteenth day of *Nisan* in the Hebrew calendar, we read from a book called the *Hagaddah*, meaning "telling," which contains the order of prayers, rituals, readings and songs for the Pesach seder. The Pesach Seder is the only ritual meal in the Jewish calendar year for which such an order is prescribed, hence its name. The seder plate contains various symbolic foods referred to in the seder itself.



Shown above: elements of the ritual observance of the Pesach seder

SHAVUOT

Shavuot is a Hebrew word meaning "weeks" and refers to the Jewish festival marking the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Shavuot, like so many other Jewish holidays began as an ancient agricultural festival, marking the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. Shavuot was distinguished in ancient times by bringing crop offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Shavuot, also known as the Festival of the Giving of the Torah, dates from biblical times, and helps to explain the holiday's name, "Weeks." The Torah tells us it took precisely forty-nine days for our ancestors to travel from Egypt to the foot of Mount Sinai where they were to receive the Torah. Thus, the book of *Vayikra*, known in English as Leviticus 23:21 commands: "And you shall proclaim that day (the fiftieth day) to be a holy convocation . . ." The name Shavuot, "Weeks," symbolizes the completion of a

seven-week journey. The ceremony of Confirmation for young men and women who have completed the 10th grade in Sunday Religious School takes place during or near Shavuot.

A special custom on Shavuot is the reading of the Book of Ruth, which reminds us that we too can find a continual source of blessing in our tradition.

OTHER JEWISH OBSERVANCES

YOM HASHOAH

Yom HaShoah, also known as Holocaust Remembrance Day, occurs on the 27th of *Nisan*. "*Shoah*," which means catastrophe or utter destruction in Hebrew, refers to the atrocities that were committed against the Jewish people during World War II. This is a memorial day for those who died in the *Shoah*.

YOM HA'ATZMA-UT

Yom Ha'atzma-ut, Israeli Independence Day, marks the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948. It is observed on the 5th of *Iyar* in the Hebrew calendar, which usually falls in April.

PART III – THE JEWISH LIFECYCLE

As in most religions, lifecycle events are special – a baby being born, a boy or girl becoming an adult (coming of age), the marriage ceremony and, of course, the loss of life through death. As in any other religion, Judaism has its own customs for each of these lifecycle events.

A Baby is Born

When a baby is born, it is traditional to have a ceremony that establishes a covenant between the newborn and the Jewish faith. For a boy, this is a Brit Milah (the Covenant of Circumcision), and for a girl, a Brit Bat (daughter's covenant) is sometimes performed, depending on a family's religious practice. At each ceremony the name of the newborn is officially given. Ashkenazic Jews traditionally may name their children after deceased members of the family. Sephardic Jews may traditionally name their children after living relatives.

Brit – covenant, promise, agreement, contract.

Brit Milah – A ceremony where the newborn son is circumcised eight days after birth and when his name is officially given. Circumcision is the oldest ritual in Judaism, going back to Abraham. The Patriarch was instructed to circumcise himself at the age of 99 and circumcise his 13 year old son Ishmael and later his infant Isaac when he was eight days old. Throughout history, circumcision has been the physical mark that distinguished Jewish males from their non-Jewish neighbors.

Brit Bat – The daughter's covenant is a relatively new ceremony also called Simchat Bat, the daughter's joy. She is blessed and given her Hebrew name, either at synagogue or at a celebration at the house.

Jewish Education

Jews have often been called 'the People of the Book', commonly referring to the Torah. However, educating Jewish children has always been a very important aspect of the tradition and culture throughout history. According to Jewish law, a community must build a school before it builds a synagogue, indicating the emphasis placed on education.

Consecration – A ceremony to celebrate the first steps taken in the formal Jewish education. Kindergarten children in Sunday Religious School are consecrated (blessed) and often given the gift of a little, plastic Torah, symbolizing the start of their Jewish education.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah - When a boy or girl turns 13 he/she is considered able to fulfill the adult rituals of the religion, and take on the responsibilities and obligations that being an adult entails, as well as being fully included in rituals (depending upon the denomination). To celebrate this special occasion, many children study for an extended period of time and, on a specific day, lead a service for the first time, as they become children of the commandment. The date of this event is often closely tied into the English or Hebrew birthdate of the child.

Kiddushin – The Jewish Wedding Ceremony

A Jewish wedding is like that of any wedding, with a ceremony, a meal and lots of singing and dancing. And, like other faiths, the wedding ceremony also includes a number of traditions symbolizing aspects of Judaism.

Prior to the ceremony, the bride and groom sign a Jewish marriage contract called the *Ketubah*. Also immediately prior to some weddings, the groom veils the bride in a process called the *Bedecking*. This refers back to when Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah over Rachel and did not know that he was marrying the wrong sister. This is to 'ensure' that the groom is marrying the women he thinks that he is supposed to marry.

The bride and groom stand under a *Chupah* or wedding canopy. The *Chupah* is the symbol of the Jewish home for the couple. Under the *Chupah* the bride and groom traditionally exchange rings that are plain and perfectly round, absent of stones, representative of their continuous, unending love. The ceremony is marked by seven blessings, and the traditional encircling of the groom by the bride during the reading of these blessings. The ceremony is ended by the breaking of a glass by the groom, reminding both of the fragility of life and the constant need to work together to ensure good times amongst the sad ones. In some cases, the breaking of the glass is considered a reminder of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.



Shown above: A Jewish marriage taking place under the *Chupah* (wedding canopy)

Following the marriage and before being announced as a new couple, the marriage traditionally must be consummated. The bride and groom go off into a separate room to be alone for a few minutes, representing the consummation of the marriage.

Death, Burial and Mourning

From a Jewish perspective, death and dying are seen as being part of life and living. There is a time to be a born, and a time to die. From dust we are fashioned and to dust we return. The art of Jewish dying is a fundamental factor in the art of Jewish living.

The burial process for a Jew is somewhat simple and somewhat complicated. There are set procedures for the preparation of a body to be buried, with attending prayers. In some denominations, only Jews are allowed to conduct these procedures, including the funeral itself and the place of burial has to be a plot of land that has been marked as a Jewish burial site. In the aftermath of the funeral, family can 'sit' *shiva* for a seven-day period immediately following the burial. During this period of time, visitation to the home of the mourners takes place, and mourners are not expected to work or conduct other aspects of normal daily life. The next thirty days (*shloshim*) traditionally is the mourning period for everyone, except when mourning parents. If a parent passes away, the full mourning period traditionally is for eleven months and at the end of this year period an unveiling ceremony takes place, where the headstone for the grave is unveiled.

Aron – Casket traditionally is as close to a plain pine box as possible (to represent that we are all equal in death).

K'riah – The tearing of one's clothes upon hearing of the death of a loved one.

Shivah – From the Hebrew word for seven, it is a seven-day mourning period immediately following burial. Mourners traditionally stay at home and refrain from joyful activities except for Sabbath.

Shloshim – The Hebrew word for thirty. The next thirty days of mourning traditionally for all except when mourning one's parents. The 30th day concludes the mourning period. Mourners begin to slowly return to normal life.

Shanah – For death of a parent the full mourning period traditionally is for 11 months beginning from the day of death.

Yahrzeit – The anniversary of the death. It is the Yiddish word for year-time. One lights a 24-hour candle traditionally in the home at sundown on the anniversary of the death. At synagogue, a special prayer called *Kaddish* is said by the family.