

**JEWISH BELIEFS**

In Judaism, actions are more important than beliefs, although there are 13 principles of faith:

1. G\_d exists.
2. G\_d is one and unique.
3. G\_d is corporeal (of the body).
4. G\_d is eternal.
5. Prayer is directed to G\_d alone and no other.
6. The words of the prophets are real.
7. Moses' prophecies are true and Moses is the greatest prophet.
8. The **Written Torah or the Five Books of Moses** (the first five books of the Bible) and the **Oral Torah** (teachings now contained in the **Talmud** and other writings) were given to Moses.
9. There will be no other Torah.
10. G\_d knows the thoughts and deeds of man.
11. G\_d will reward the good and punish the wicked.
12. The Messiah will come.
13. The dead will be resurrected.

**WHAT IS...?**

**Synagogue** – from Greek word meaning 'assembly', the most widely accepted term for a Jewish house of worship.

**Rabbi** – while a rabbi conducts weddings and sermons on high holidays, a rabbi is more than that. The ideal rabbi is a scholar of the Torah who guides the members of the Jewish community he serves. Women and men can be ordained as rabbi's.

**Shabbat** – the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week (Saturday), the day of worship, which begins on Friday at sunset and ends at sunset on Saturday. Orthodox Jews very strictly observe the Sabbath by doing NO WORK of any kind on that day. Some people do not even turn the lights on as that would be considered "work." Two themes fill this day – to commemorate the Creation of the universe of G\_d in six days, and his rest. The other is to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt.

**Menorah** – a candelabrum that holds seven candles, signifying the seven days of creation. The **Hanukiah** is the nine branched menorah with candles for the eight days of Chanukkah and a ninth for the shamash (the candle used to light the others).

**Talmud** – the book that contains the Oral Torah that describes the scriptures in the Torah and explains how to interpret them and apply the laws. Orthodox Jews believe that G\_d taught the scriptures to Moses, and he passed them down to the present day. It is made up of the Mishnah and the Gemara

**WHAT ABOUT G\_D?**

**G\_d is One**  
**G\_d is Personal**  
**G\_d is Saving**  
**G\_d is Faithful**

**THREE "SECTS" OF JUDAISM**

- Orthodox – most traditional group following closely the historical laws and traditions.
- Conservative – this group believes that the laws and traditions can change to fit with the current times.
- Reformed/Liberal/Progressive – believe that individuals can make choices about what traditions to follow.

It is important to know what group an individual is a part of in order to properly support them.

**WHY G\_D?**

Names are very important in the Jewish faith. G-d is written as a way of avoiding writing the name, to avoid the risk of the sin of erasing or defacing the Name. It is a respect issue.

**JEWISH CALENDAR AND HOLIDAYS**

The Jewish calendar is tied to the moon's cycle rather than the sun's. As a result, Jewish holidays fall on different days of the year. Jewish holidays begin at sunset the night before the holiday appears on the calendar.

Some holidays to be aware of, but not all, are:

**Passover** – The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Lasts seven or eight days and begins on the night of the full moon (usually in April).

**Rosh Hashanah** – Jewish New Year, and occurs between Labor Day and Columbus Day. It is also a time to begin preparing for the day of atonement.

**Yom Kippur** – Jewish day of atonement. A day of fasting and repentance to reconcile ourselves with the Creator for the mistakes we have made during the year. Occurs on the ninth day after the first day of Rosh Hashanah., usually late September or early October.

**Chanukkah** – the festival of lights commemorating the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after a successful revolt, and has to do with having enough oil to light candles for one day, but having it miraculously last for eight. So, it is an eight day candlelighting event. **This is not the same as Christmas**, and is a minor holiday in the Jewish faith.