

Handout 2-A

Excerpts from the Talmud

On the power of the spoken word

63. R. Eleazar said, "Whence do we learn that speech is equivalent to action? Scripture states: (Ps. 3:6) 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.'" [See Gen. 1:6f] Sabbath, 119b

On the evil potential of speech

64. R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Johai, "Verbal wrongdoing is more evil than cheating in matters of money; for concerning the former, Scripture states: (Lev. 19:14) 'but thou shalt fear thy God, while this is not said of the latter.'"

R. Eleazar said, "Harmful speech is more wicked because it affects the person of the injured while the latter affects only his money." And R. Samuel b. Nahmani declared, "Harmful speech is worse because money can be returned, but words once uttered cannot easily be recalled." Baha Metzia, 58h

On honoring one's parents

48. R. Judah said, quoting Samuel, that R. Eliezer was once asked, "How far should one go in honoring his father and mother?" He replied, "Just see what a Gentile of Ashkelon, Dama ben Nathina, did. The Sages wanted to buy a jewel from him for the ephod [a sacred ritual object], but the key [to the safe where it was kept] was under the pillow of his father [who was asleep]. Dama refused to disturb him [and lost the sale].

"The following year the Holy One rewarded him with the birth of a red heifer. When the Sages offered to buy it, he said to them, 'I know that I could ask of you any amount of money, and you would pay the price. However, I only want you to make good the loss I sustained in honoring my father.'"

R. Hanina declared that if one who is not commanded to honor his parents does so, and is so richly rewarded, how much more certain is the reward of one who is commanded to do so!



On the Messiah's role in creation

792. Our rabbis taught that seven things were created before the world itself—the Torah, repentance, the Garden of Eden [Paradise], Gehinnom, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah. Nedarim, 39b

On the terrible conditions that will precede the Messiah's coming

793. R. Isaac said in the name of R. Johanan, "In the generation in which the son of David will come, scholarly men will be few in number, and the eyes of the people will protrude from sighing and sorrow. Many afflictions and many evil government decrees will be imposed upon them; one will not have passed when another will come." Sanhedrin, 97a

794. R. Nehorai said, "The Messiah, son of David, will appear when the young will expose the old to shame in public, and the old will rise up in respect before the young; a daughter will rebel against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. The leaders of that generation will be like dogs, and a son will feel no shame when reproached by his father." Sanhedrin, 97a

This material is quoted from *The Talmud for Today*, ed. and trans. Rabbi Alexander Feinsilver (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980).

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Handout 2-B

The Four Branches of Judaism

	<u>ORTHODOX</u>	<u>CONSERVATIVE</u>	<u>REFORM</u>	<u>RECONSTRUCTIONIST</u>
Torah	Literal interpretation Accepts Jewish law and teachings as binding	Subscribes to the divine authority of Torah but respects biblical scholarship	Repository of ethical teachings rather than divinely revealed Commandments lacking in moral purpose ignored	Torah not given by God Emphasis on Jewish culture and history
Observances	Strict observance of dietary and kosher laws Separation of men and women in worship services Strict attention to details of customs found in traditional texts Wears traditional skullcap, prayer shawl, and phylacteries Prayers exclusively in Hebrew recited at fixed time and minyan in attendance	Permits modification and modernization of observances Preserves the uniqueness of that which is Jewish Traditional dress just at services Uses more Hebrew than vernacular No separation of men and women	Removed traditional garb Eliminated repetition of prayers and references to the Temple sacrificial system Introduced musical instruments and choir in place of cantor Modified the liturgy, use of Hebrew limited, most in vernacular, sermon by rabbi as focal point of services No strict observance of dietary laws Call house of worship a "temple"	Reflects the needs of the community rather than prescribed observances
Jewish law and teaching	Accepts as binding	Accepts as binding	Does not see Jewish law and tradition as divinely in origin Men and women equal	Jewish law created by people

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Handout 2-C

Types of Literature in the Hebrew Bible

LITERATURE TYPE	EXAMPLE
Poetry	Book of Psalms
Work Song	Numbers 21:17-18
Harvest Song	Judges 9:27; 21:21
Marriage and Love Songs	Song of Songs 4:1-10; 5:10-16
Song of Victory	1 Samuel 18:6-7
The Lament (individual and political)	2 Samuel 1:19-27
The Mocking Song	Isaiah 14:4-21
Poetic Stories	
Saga	Genesis 3:13-15
Legend	Joshua 5:13-6:27
Parable	2 Samuel 12:1-4
Anecdote	Judges 15:1-7
Historical Literature	
Recording of History	1 Kings 9:10-28
Speeches	1 Samuel 12
Letters	Jeremiah 29:4-23
Prophetic Literature	Isaiah
Wisdom Literature	Proverbs
Laws	
Ten Commandments	Exodus 20:1-17
Priestly Laws	Leviticus
The Holiness Code	Leviticus 17-27
Deuteronomic Code	Deuteronomy 12-26

Handout 2-D

▶▶▶ Women in the Hebrew Bible ◀◀◀

Directions: Read through the Scripture passages given below and write a two- to three-sentence profile that includes one or more of the following pieces of information about each person: (1) physical description; (2) important descriptors; and (3) how she shares God’s message.

	SCRIPTURE	PROFILE
▶ Sarah	Genesis 17:15-16 and Genesis 21:1-8	
▶ Rachel	Genesis 30:1-24 and Genesis 35:16-26	
▶ Deborah	Judges 4-5	
▶ Ruth	Ruth 1-4	
▶ Bathsheba	1 Kings 2:20	

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Handout 2-E

Judaism Word Search

Directions: Test your knowledge of Jewish terms by completing this word search. Words can be found horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Words may be spelled from left to right or right to left, from top to bottom or from bottom to top. Letters may overlap between two words.



Clues

1. Jews who were forced to live outside Israel
2. An ancient term for "Hebrew"
3. That which is "proper" or "clean"
4. Hangs on the doorpost of many Jewish homes
5. The title for a religious leader in Judaism
6. A ram's horn
7. Where Jews hold their community religious services
8. Contains commentaries on the Torah
9. A Hebrew term for returning to proper behavior
10. Traditional Jews believe Moses wrote this

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Handout 2-F

How Do You Live the Torah?

Our calling as followers of the one true God is to love God and love neighbor. These requirements are expressed in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (the Shema) and Leviticus 19:18 (the Holiness Code).

Questions

- Using this standard for living as a devout Jew, how have you answered the call to become holy in your life?
- How is the Torah penetrating every aspect of your life?

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Handout 2-G

The Sabbath or Shabbat

Jews celebrate the Shabbat from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. They spend this twenty-four-hour period in rest, joy, and prayer. Here are some of the rules or customs that Jews observe on the Sabbath:

1. Many Jewish families prepare for the Sabbath by cleaning the house, cooking a special meal, bathing, and dressing in nice clothes.
 2. Some Jews attend synagogue services on Friday night or Saturday morning.
 3. Families eat a festive meal on Friday night. A tablecloth adorns the table. The mother of the family lights candles to announce the beginning of the Sabbath. There is a blessing of family members, the reading of Bible passages, and the singing of songs.
 4. Many Jews change the pace of their week on the Sabbath. They refrain from work. They take longer to eat. They walk slower. They try to be more patient in listening. They spend time in spiritual reading. (*Note:* Biblical prohibitions pertained to thirty-nine types of work, including the following: lighting a fire, clapping the hands, jumping, slapping the thigh, or walking more than three thousand feet.)
 5. Jewish spouses make time for one another on Friday evening.
 6. Many Jews practice hospitality; they invite guests or strangers to the community to celebrate the Shabbat with them.
 7. Some Jews reach out to others by visiting the sick, the shut-in, and the elderly on Saturday.
 8. No funerals are permitted on the Shabbat.
 9. At the end of the Sabbath, there is a special ceremony, called the *havdalah*. The family says goodbye to the Sabbath with the taste of wine, the fragrance of spices, and the light of a braided candle.
- What are some ways you and your family can make Sunday—the Christian day for worship and rest—a day of rest, joy, and prayer?

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Handout 2-H

Comparing the Exodus with the Catholic Liturgy

Directions: Using what you know about the Catholic liturgy, complete the right column of the chart.

EXODUS SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE	CATHOLIC LITURGY EQUIVALENT
Wandering in the Wilderness	
The Law	
The Bread from Heaven	
The Ark of the Covenant	
Returning to the Promised Land	