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Torah Scroll and Cover

Torah is a Hebrew word meaning 'teaching,' 'instruction,' or 'law.' It is the central and most important document of Judaism. Torah primarily refers to the first section of the Tanakh-the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, referred to as the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The term Torah is sometimes used in the general sense to include the whole body of Jewish law and teachings. The scriptures that are used in services are painstakingly hand written in a special script by highly qualified scribes on specially prepared parchment scrolls. The scrolls are kept in a cabinet in the synagogue called an ark, which means a 'holy cabinet'. This scroll is a printed miniature copy of the Torah, which would be used for private worship. Torah scrolls are covered with a mantel, meaning cloak. The mantel is an ornate covering that both protects and beautifies the Torah, typically made of velvet and embroidered with golden thread, silk, and ornamental beads.



Yad (pointer)

It is forbidden to touch the parchment of the Torah as it is sacred. Instead, you follow the text with a pointer, called a yad. Yad means 'hand' in Hebrew, and the pointer is usually in the shape of a hand with a pointing index finger. A yad can be made of any number of materials, but silver is the most common.



Shabbat Candle Holders

This circular metal container unscrews and can be turned into two candle holders. Candle holders are primarily used on the eve of Shabbat (Jewish day of rest) and other holidays. It is customary for the mother of a family to light the Shabbat candles while the rest of the family recite the appropriate prayer. Shabbat candlesticks always come in pairs.



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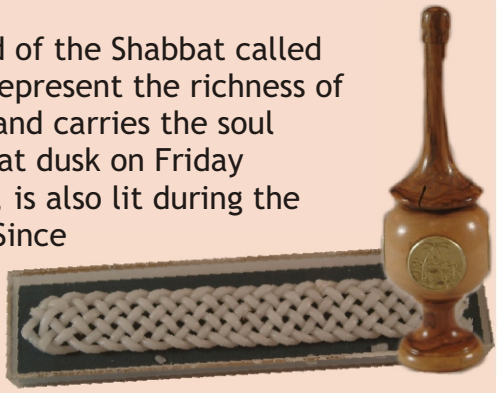
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Kiddush Cup



A kiddush cup is a small goblet, which is filled with wine or grape juice and used at many Jewish festivals, including Shabbat. The word kiddush actually refers to the blessing, which is recited over the wine before the meal begins. After kiddush has been made, everyone present shares the wine. The goblet may be used again at the Havdalah ceremony at the end of the Shabbat. A kiddush cup is sometimes made of a precious metal, such as silver, and beautifully decorated. Many people give kiddush cups as gifts for special occasions such as Bar Mitzvah.

Spice Box and Braided Candle



Spice boxes are used for a service at the end of the Shabbat called Havdalah, meaning 'separation'. The spices represent the richness of the Sabbath. Their scent enlivens the spirit and carries the soul through into the next Shabbat, which starts at dusk on Friday evening. A twisted candle, symbolising unity, is also lit during the Havdalah service, and sweet wine is drunk. Since spices were dried in towers in medieval times, the boxes often take the form of a tower.

Chanukah Candle Holder

The Menorah, one of Judaism's oldest symbols, is a seven-branched candelabrum or oil lamp. The Menorah was the most important ritual object in the Temple of Jerusalem, but was stolen by the Romans.



According to tradition, during the rededication of the Temple in the second century BC, the lamps of the Menorah burned for eight days on one day's worth of oil. To commemorate this, every year an eight-day holiday is celebrated, beginning on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev (November-December). During this festival, known as Chanukah, a candle is lit each evening in a menorah with nine branches. There is one branch for each day of the festival and a central branch for the candle that is used to light the others.

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Shofar



The shofar is a horn, which is blown somewhat like a trumpet. It is used on Judaism's high holy days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The shofar can be made from the horn of any kosher animal, except that of a cow or calf, although they are usually made from a ram's horn. Shofar are sometimes decorated with carvings.

Tallit (prayer shawl)



A tallit is a prayer shawl worn by Jewish men and boys. It is worn over the head and shoulders during prayer. The prayer shawl may be made of silk, wool, or other fabric. A new prayer shawl may be given to a thirteen year old boy at his Bar Mitzvah.

Seder Dish



A dish like this would be used at a seder, a special Jewish ceremonial dinner held on the first evening of the festival of Passover in Israel, and often both the first and second evenings outside Israel. Passover commemorates the story in Exodus of how the Israelites (Jewish slaves) were freed from slavery in Egypt. Seder means 'order' in Hebrew and the ceremonies are arranged in a specific order. Special cups and plates are used which are kept exclusively for Passover. This plate is specially designed to hold the symbolic foods, which are used in the ritual. These items are:

Egg (Beitzah)
A roasted egg or burnt hard boiled egg is placed on the dish (but not eaten) as a symbol of Spring and also to symbolise the first Passover sacrifice of a lamb in biblical times.

Bitter herbs (Maror)
Usually freshly grated horseradish is used. It is eaten in memory of the bitter life of the enslaved Israelites.

Shank bone (Zeroah)
Zeroah means 'arm' or 'wing' in Hebrew, as in the arm or wing of an animal. This is a cooked shank bone, thigh, or neck of a chicken or whatever animal the family is eating. It symbolises the first sacrificial lamb offering.

Sweet herbs (Charoset)
A mixture of chopped walnuts, wine, cinnamon and apples that represents the mortar the Jewish slaves used to assemble the Pharaoh's bricks.
Lettuce (Chazeret)
A second, different bitter vegetable such as lettuce, radish or cucumber.
Parsley (Karpas)
Symbolising Springtime, it is dipped in salt water and eaten in memory of the tears of the Jewish slaves.

Matzah Cover

This cloth is also used at the Passover Seder. It would be folded and three pieces of unleavened bread (matzah) would be put in the separate folds. Matzah symbolises the unleavened bread the Israelites had to bake in haste as they fled from slavery to freedom.



Challah Cover



The challah cover is used to cover the challah. Challah is a special type of braided egg bread that is served at the shabbat dinner and on holidays. Made of cloth, lace or any other material, the challah covering serves several purposes. Firstly, it is necessary because the bread may not be seen until the Kiddush (prayer over the wine) is said. The second reason for the cover is to provide a sense of dignity for the bread. Since the candles have candlesticks and the wine has a kiddush, it is believed the challah should have a special decoration too.

Afikomen Bag

During the Passover seder, one of three pieces of unleavened bread, called matzah, is broken in half and wrapped in a napkin or placed in a special bag like this one. This is hidden, and later retrieved to be served as the last piece of food eaten at the end of the feast. This bit of unleavened bread is called the 'afikomen'. It symbolises the Passover lamb.



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For Jewish children, the afikomen is used to hold their attention until the end of the seder. In some families the children pretend to steal the matzah and are paid a ransom in order to get it back to the table. In other families it is hidden and the children search for it and are rewarded.

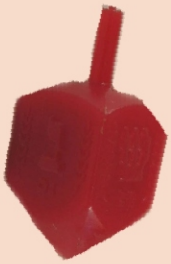
Passover Napkin

As Passover is a festive occasion, it is customary to decorate the table which will be used for the seder. Jewish shops sell Passover napkins and table cloths, which are often decorated with symbols from Jewish culture. This napkin features the title of a traditional Passover song 'Chad Gadya', which begins with a verse about a man going to buy a kid goat.



Dreidel

One of the best known symbols of Chanukah festival is the dreidel. A dreidel is a four sided spinning top with a Hebrew letter on each side. The four letters, Shin, Hey, Gimel, Nun, mean 'A Great Miracle Happened There.' In Israel the dreidel is different in that their letters mean 'A Miracle Happened here!'. Dreidel is also a popular game played during the Holiday. Players use pennies, nuts, raisins, or chocolate coins (gelt) as tokens or chips. The player spins the dreidel. When the dreidel stops, the letter that is facing up decides the fate. If it is nun, nothing happens and the next player spins the dreidel, if it is gimel, the player takes all tokens in the pot, if it is hey, the player takes half of the pot and if it is shin the player must put one token into the pot.



Mezuzah

In Judaism, a Mezuzah (meaning doorpost in Hebrew) is a small case affixed to the doorposts and gates of Jewish homes, synagogues, and businesses. The case generally features the Hebrew letter shin on the exterior. Inside it contains a parchment containing the Shema, a prayer that is fundamental to the Jewish faith. The prayer, which is recited twice daily, includes the commandment to post a mezuzah. The commandment is found in Deuteronomy 6:9, 11:20: 'And you shall speak of them [the Torah's Laws] when you lie down and when you rise up...and you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and your gates.'



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Kosher Food Label



When a food is labelled as kosher, it means that the food has been prepared in accordance with the rules of food preparation set forth in the old testament of the Bible and formalised in Jewish law. One of the rules is that meat and dairy products must be kept separate. This means that a meat sandwich cannot be eaten with butter, and coffee or tea cannot be taken with cream after meat has been eaten. A time interval must elapse after eating meat before milk products can be eaten. In Britain this is usually six hours, in Germany and some neighbouring countries the custom is to wait three hours and in Holland it is one. This instant cream mix is labelled to be kosher and suitable to be eaten with milk dishes only.

Aleph Bet Stencil



The Hebrew and Yiddish languages use a different alphabet than English. This stencil enables you to reproduce letters in Hebrew, which is written from right to left, rather than left to right as in English, so Alef, the first letter of the alphabet appears on the top right hand side.The Hebrew alphabet is often called the 'alefbet,' because of its first two letters, 'Alef' and 'Bet'.

Grace Card



This card has the Birkhath-Hamozon written in Hebrew. This is a Jewish prayer that is said after meals as a thanksgiving.

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Passover Handbook

This book is a guide to the Passover ceremony of the Seder and contains details about the rituals involved.



Two books on Judaism

These books give further information about Jewish culture and religion

