

Example by StudyDriver

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Judaism Sense of Belonging Example

Religion is a staple in people's lives. Religion gives people a sense of belonging and a way to live. It sets a standard of how they should act and treat other people. People become passionate about their religious background and the community that surrounds them. Current day Jews have a community that surrounds them in their daily, weekly, and yearly traditions. These traditions set Jewish people apart from other religions. The traditions and celebrations that bring a sense of belonging to current Jews were derived from the challenges in history and central ideas of Judaism.

Judaism was built on the trust of many leaders. Leaders such as Abraham whom God trusted to create the first covenant for the Hebrews. Leaders like Moses, whom God gave the commandments and created the second covenant with the Hebrews. Judaism was built on both the actions and prophecies of these leaders. The central theme of Judaism are as follows: there is one God who is the creator of the world as stated in Genesis; the words of the prophets are truth from God; Moses received the ten commandments from God; God will send a Messiah; there will be a return of good in the world (Tremelin, 2015, p. 67). Hebrews, now referred to as Jews, live their lives based on these beliefs. These beliefs bring them a sense of belonging and bring them guidelines in which they live

by.

The Hebrews believe that Abraham, 1800 BCE, was the beginning of their communication with God (Tremelin, 2015, p. 37). God had asked Abraham to sacrifice his son and Abraham presented his son to God to sacrifice. This proved to God that Abraham was committed to Him, so God offered a ram as a sacrifice instead. God told Abraham that his seed would inherit forever which meant that Abraham started the Hebrew religion (Channel 4 Learning, 2012). The Hebrews were prospering in Egypt until they were captured by the pharaohs and forced to build pyramids.

Moses was a baby found in a river by the daughter of a pharaoh and was raised as an Egyptian. As he grew up he saw the mistreatment of the Hebrews. He had asked a pharaoh to release the Hebrews, but the pharaoh refused. When Moses spoke to God about the situation, God sent 10 plagues upon Egypt. During the last plague, the pharaohs set the Hebrews free but instantly regretted it. The Hebrews took this opportunity to flee but came across the Red Sea in which God had parted so they could cross. The Egyptians were following them, and God had released the sea and it swallowed the Egyptians. After escaping through the Red Sea, God led Moses to Mount Sinai where He spoke to Moses and gave Moses the Ten Commandments (Tremelin, 2015). Moses then went to speak to the Hebrews and they created a covenant with God that He would be the only one they worshiped. From Mount Sinai they begin their long trek back to Canaan, the land of Abraham. This is widely known as the Exodus, 1250 BCE (Tremelin, 2015, p. 37). When they returned to Canaan, God had spoken to Moses saying that there will be a Messiah coming.

King David, 1000 BCE, made Jerusalem the Israelite kingdom (Tremelin, 2015, p. 37). His son, Solomon, became king in 971 BCE built their First Temple in 950 BCE (Tremelin, 2015, p. 37). After King Solomon died, the northern tribe decided to become their own kingdom which made the two kingdoms both weak. The Northern Kingdom was destroyed, and the Southern Kingdom was captured and taken over by the Babylonians. The Jews were exiled into Babylon in 597 BCE (Tremelin, 2015, p. 37). King Cyrus took reign and released the Jews back into their kingdom in 537 BCE (Dinur Center and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2001). This led to both the creation of the Second

Temple and to the writing of the Hebrew Bible. The Second Temple was later taken over by Antiochus IV in 167 BCE. Antiochus IV wanted to worship the Greek God Zeus. The Jews rebelled which was led by the Maccabees (Tremelin, 2015). The victory is now celebrated by the holiday Hanukkah.

King Herod then took over Jerusalem and the Second Temple in 37 BCE (Dinur Center and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2001). He rebuilt the temple and named it Herod's Temple. The Jews then tried to flee and those who could not flee decided to commit suicide rather than be captured. The Jews were then exiled into many countries. This was called the Diaspora (Channel 4 Learning, 2012). Many of the Jews regrouped and reformed in Germany and later faced one of the greatest tragedies of Jewish History, the Holocaust and concentration camps during World War II (Tremelin, 2015, p. 64-65). Facing all of these challenges throughout the history of Judaism brought together a strong-willed community who fought for their religion and for each other. The Jewish holidays and traditions are celebratory means of overcoming these challenges.

From the history of Judaism comes many holidays and traditions to celebrate victories. The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, is in September and is usually celebrated by dipping apples in honey to bring a sweet year ahead. The Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish year, is spent fasting and praying for 25 hours. Much of this day is spent at the Synagogue. The Atonement is celebrated in late September or early October (Tremelin, 2015, p 96). Hanukkah is a celebration of the Second Temple being dedicated to the Hebrews again and is celebrated in December for 8 days. Purim is a festival in March that includes reading the book of Esther to remember the escape of Haman (Tremelin, 2015, p. 96). The Passover is a remembrance of the freedom of slavery in Egypt when God sent the last plague that killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. The Hebrew's sons were spared because they sacrificed a lamb and spread its blood on the doorframes which caused the angel to pass over their houses.

There are also traditions that are not based on history. Among these are the Bar and Bat Mitzvah. The Bar Mitzvah is the coming of age for boys who just turned 13. The Bat Mitzvah is for girls who just turned 12. In both of these, the boys and girls read from the Torah for the first time in the Synagogue (Channel 4 Learning, 2012). After this reading, the families usually celebrate with a party. Another tradition is a weekly tradition called the

Shabbat or the Sabbath. This is started on Friday evening with dinner and ends Saturday evening with dinner. The Shabbat is a day of rest and worship (Tremelin, 2015, p. 68).

Worshiping comes from the Hebrew Bible and is often done at the Synagogue, the place of worship. The Hebrew Bible, also called the Tanakh, is comprised of three sections: Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim (Tremelin, 2015, p. 39-40). The Torah, the teachings, is the first five books and is referred to as the sacred text. The Ten Commandments are outlined in the Torah which give guidelines to daily living. The Nevi'im, the prophets, has two parts: the former prophets and the latter prophets. The Ketuvim, the writings, includes story like literature, psalms, and proverbs (Tremelin, 2015, p. 39-40). The Hebrew Bible came from a group of Rabbis who took many written versions and combined them into one. Rabbis are the leaders of worship in the synagogue (Tremelin, 2015). The traditions of Judaism set the Jewish community apart from the other religions, but it brings their community together.

Jewish holidays are often a celebration of a victory in the history of Judaism and are now yearly reminders of how strong the Hebrews were. These challenges they faced seemed impossible at the time, but the Hebrews came together and conquered to become a stronger community. Through great leaders such as Abraham and Moses, the central ideas of Judaism were formed with the covenants made with God. With the central ideas, history, and traditions, the Jewish community have a sense of belonging together.