

Chapter 1 : Jewish Beliefs and Practices Â« Jewish Prisoner Services

Key Difference: Christmas is a festival that is celebrated in order to commemorate the birth of Jesus, the son of God. Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights or the Feast of Dedication, is celebrated to commemorate the day rededication of the Holy Temple (the Second Temple) in Jerusalem.

Donut-shaped bread that is boiled before it is baked. See Zionism and the Formation of the State of Israel. Son of a Star. Simeon ben Kosiba, the leader of the last and most successful Jewish rebellion against Rome in C. He died in battle when the rebellion was defeated. Rabbi Akiba believed he was the Mashiach Messiah. A boy who has achieved the age of 13 and is consequently obligated to observe the commandments. Also, a ceremony marking the fact that a boy has achieved this age. For a girl, the ceremony is called a Bat Mitzvah daughter of the commandment. A girl who has achieved the age of 12 and is consequently obligated to observe the commandments. Also, a ceremony marking the fact that a girl has achieved this age. For a boy, the ceremony is called a Bar Mitzvah son of the commandment. There are points of Jewish law that allow some shaving, so you may see Orthodox Jews without full beards or peyot. Chasidic Jews do not follow this leniency. This subject has not yet been addressed in a page. A day on the Jewish calendar begins at sunset. When a date is given for a Jewish holiday, the holiday actually begins at sundown on the preceding day. See When Holidays Begin. A rabbinical court made up of three rabbis who resolve business disputes under Jewish law and determine whether a prospective convert is ready for conversion. A school of thought during the Talmudic period, generally contrasted with the stricter, more legalistic views of Beit Shammai.

Chapter 2 : Obligations and Rights in the Jewish Political Tradition: Some Preliminary Observations

Discover 10 Jewish wedding traditions that are standard at orthodox and reformed ceremonies. Read on to understand the significance behind the chuppah and more!

For the day of the Lord is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand: What is the Day of the Lord? So, it could be said that there seems to be a type of connection. But what about the seeds of pomegranates? Notice what one Jewish rabbi wrote: According to rabbinic tradition, a pomegranate rimon has seeds. The pomegranate is used in rabbinic tradition as an example of a fruit that contains many seeds, but not necessarily If, in the dream, the pomegranates are split open, if the dreamer is a scholar he may hope to learn more Torah while if he is unlearned, he can hope to perform mitzvot. It should be clear, however, that the gemara uses pomegranates to imply an abundance. Jewish Action, September 20, What about the so-called Jewish statutes of Moses? Instead, they were developed by a Jewish rabbi and based upon various traditions, many of which were not adopted from the Bible. See also Which Laws were Superceded? What about the mitzvot? Moses did NOT write all of the statutes that Jews and certain others believe they need to keep. Anyway, as far as the Feast of Trumpets goes, some of the Jewish points are accurate, some have a scriptural connection, and some others are based more upon tradition than biblical truth. We in the Continuing Church of God are Christian. And while we believe that the Bible and church history enjoin the observance of the Feast of Trumpets on true believers, we are not Messianic Jews many of whom claim that they should keep the mitzvot nor do we fully share the views of the Jews on this Holy Day. In the New Testament, the Bible shows that during the time period known as the Day of the Lord there will be seven trumpets blown. And the last one, the seventh one, announces the return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the saints, and meeting Jesus in the air: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. And the dead in Christ will rise first. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. As Christians, we can draw comfort from the words of the New Testament, while we appreciate that there is a tie to the Old Testament. Some items of possibly related interest may include: Why Should You Keep It? What does the Bible say? What does this festival picture? A related sermon is available: Some call them Jewish holidays, but they were kept by Jesus, the apostles, and their early faithful followers. Should you keep them? What does the Bible teach? What do records of church history teach? Here is a link to a related sermon: The Book of Life and the Feast of Trumpets? If not, where not? Related sermon videos include: The article has links to hear shofar blasts. Blowing the Trumpet Why should there be an offertory on the Feast of Trumpets. How is the Continuing Church of God reaching the world with the gospel of the kingdom? Do those in the Church of God also need to pay attention to the trumpet? Shofar blowing is also heard in this video. Here is a link to the: What is the Feast of Trumpets? Why do the Jews refer to it as Rosh Hashanah? What is the seventh year of release? Should it be restored and proclaimed? Did early Christians keep the Feast of Trumpets? Why should any one keep it now? What will happen with the seven trumpets of Revelation? Why do many not understand aspects of it? Messianic Judaism Beliefs Differ from the Continuing Church of God Both groups keep the seventh-day Sabbath , but have important differences in doctrines and practices. Which Laws were Superceded? What about the Ten Commandments? What about the regulations called Mitzvot in the Old Testament? Does the Bible allow for the creation of the universe and earth billions of years ago? Why do some believe they are no older than 6, years old? What is the gap theory? Where the days of creation in Genesis 1: Questions and Answers from Genesis Many wonder about certain early events that this article discusses. Plus, His arrival was consistent with specific prophecies and even Jewish interpretations of prophecy. When Will the Great Tribulation Begin? Can the Great Tribulation begin today? What happens in the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord? Is this the time of the Gentiles? When is the earliest that the Great Tribulation can begin? Who are the ,? Here is a version of the article in the Spanish language: You can also see the English language sermon videos: A shorter video is: Can the Great Tribulation begin in ? The Times of the Gentiles Has there been more than one time of

the Gentiles? Are we in it now or in the time of Anglo-America? What will the final time of the Gentiles be like? A related sermon is available and is titled: The Times of the Gentiles. What is the Jubilee? Here is a link to a sermon: How Jesus fulfilled His part for the Atonement. Here is a link to a related article in the Spanish language: The Feast of Tabernacles: A Time for Christians? Is this pilgrimage holy day still valid? What is the Last Great Day? What do these days teach? A related sermon video is Feast of Tabernacles from Israel. The Feast in Services will begin the evening of October 4th. Holy Day Calendar This is a listing of the biblical holy days through , with their Roman calendar dates.

Chapter 3 : Judaism - The Judaic tradition | blog.quintoapp.com

About Hyphen Parent. Dorothy-Ann Parent (better known as Hyphen) is a writer, a traditional Jew, a seeker of justice, a lover of stories, the self-proclaimed Jewish Molly Weasley, hobbit-sized, and best not left unattended in a bookshop or animal shelter.

By Hyphen Parent Our family is in the process of moving, so I figured this would be a great time to focus on new home and moving traditions in Judaism. The first thing I think of when I think of a Jewish home is the mezuzah. We kiss our fingers and touch the mezuzah when we come and go. It serves to remind us to behave Jewishly both out in the world and at home with our family. Often the homeowners bring those in themselves. Bread is required for many things in Judaism. A meal is not considered a meal unless bread is eaten. Challah and salt are a ritual part of Shabbat. When we bring bread and salt, we can truly have a Jewish home where Motzi the blessing before meals is said and Shabbat is celebrated. There are also far more philosophical and religious reasons related to history and excerpts from Torah. Some visitors also include something sweet in the gift basket along with bread and salt. This is often sweet baked goods or wine. Wine too is a necessary part of Shabbat. In addition, the idea is that, in bringing something sweet, the family and home will always know sweetness. Certain books are to be handled very carefully. There are particular and delicate ways to package them. So special consideration needs to be taken when packing and then transporting them. Moving dates can be tricky. There are many days where the work associated with moving is prohibited. This includes Shabbat which happens every week and other holidays which pop up throughout the year. So Tuesdays are considered particularly good days for important things like weddings and moving. It thanks G-d for granting us life, sustaining us, and allowing us to reach this season.

Chapter 4 : Jewish Traditions for Moving - SpokaneFÄ•VS

In A Question of Tradition, Kathryn Hellerstein explores the roles that women poets played in forming a modern Yiddish literary tradition. Women who wrote in Yiddish go largely unrecognized outside a rapidly diminishing Yiddish readership.

But scratch the surface and they begin to look like twins separated at birth. The stories of these two wandering tribes share many extraordinary parallels. The Irish writer Brendan Behan once remarked, "Others have a nationality. The Irish and the Jews have a psychosis. These two ancient peoples were destined to wander the world as outsiders, knowing suspicion and derision wherever they went. Through it all, both maintained tight and close bonds with their own kin, even in the farthest corners of the earth. Both have homelands that are small, sacred and contested. Ireland and Israel both boast monuments far older than the pyramids of Egypt. Some even dare to speculate that the Irish may be connected to one of the "lost tribes" of Israel. Certainly, stone burial chambers called dolmens are found in both Ireland and Israel. These date from about 4, BC. Yet any such mysterious common origins are now lost in time. In more recent centuries, the Irish and the Jews have inordinately swollen the ranks of genius. A disproportionate number of Nobel laureates have Jewish or Irish origins. While many now live in the small, beautiful, and intense homelands of Ireland and Israel, the greater portion of both tribes remain scattered to the four corners of the earth. Both tribes most particularly found a home in the United States. From humble beginnings in America, these two ethnic groups rose to prominence by the middle of the 20th century. By the time of president John F. When these two peoples melded together in the great melting pot of America, they collaborated in some part of the most extraordinary human achievements of all time: This latter enterprise is attested to in cold white marble at the American cemetery in Normandy, where many Irish-Americans and Jewish-Americans lie side by side. In AD, St. Patrick brought the Christian teachings and the ancient Jewish law to Ireland. Embedded intrinsically within Christianity is the Jewish law, the sacred Ten Commandments, and the knowledge of the one God, which both peoples hold in common to this day. We remember too that Jesus himself was a Jew. Here it was stored and nurtured it through the Dark Ages. From Ireland, wandering monks then brought these teachings to Scotland, Scandinavia, and Continental Europe. From there, Christianity and its core of Jewish law eventually traveled onward to America, Africa and Asia. In the span of human history, Israel and Ireland both played pivotal roles in disseminating to the world the moral teachings of ancient Israel. Israel declared Independence on 20 April ; Ireland, already partly independent, became a republic on 18 April Sadly, both nations have known much discord and violence since. Yet, amid the rights and wrongs, and the complexities, there is hope. As the Irish and the Israelis now hope to build lasting peace in their own homelands, it is heartening to note that in the tapestry of human life, we all share far more similarities than differences. A version of this article originally appeared in The Jewish Chronicle on 19 March

Chapter 5 : A question of tradition : women poets in Yiddish, (eBook,) [blog.quintoapp.com]

Jewish culture is the culture of the Jewish people from the formation of the Jewish nation in biblical times through life in the diaspora and the modern state of Israel. Judaism guides its adherents in both practice and belief, so that it has been called not only a religion, but an orthopraxy. [1].

Obligations and Rights in the Jewish Political Tradition: Some Preliminary Observations Daniel J. Elazar In the modern concept of rights developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, variously formulated as "life, liberty and property" or "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," rights transcend civil society, which then translates them into constitutional, civil, criminal, and property rights. In contrast, the traditional Jewish view on rights is derived from the biblical sense of the obligation of all humans to God as their creator, sovereign, and covenant partner. Fundamental to the Jewish conception is the principle that God is the creator and sovereign of the universe, all of which ultimately belongs to Him including all life within it. What emerges out of the biblical approach are a series of protections and limitations which can roughly be translated into rights and obligations. While there may not be natural rights, there are fundamental rights in the sense that all humans are bound by covenant with God, at least through the Noahide covenant. These fundamental rights are in that sense constitutional or federal rather than inherent. A different agenda for the studying of obligations, rights, liberties, and protections must be developed to deal with classical Jewish thought and the subsequent Jewish experience. Rights in the Contemporary World The conventional wisdom in our rights-conscious age is that there is nothing quite as fixed and permanent as rights. The only changes that take place in connection with them are in connection with an expanded understanding of what constitute individual rights, their scope, and meaning. Present understandings of rights are all derived from modernity; hence we can begin with the two most prominent modern formulations, that of Locke -- "life, liberty and property" -- and that of the U. Declaration of Independence -- "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Under modern and post-modern rights doctrine, at least these rights are inherent in all humans and inalienable. At most, humans can come together for collective action in such a way that they delegate some control over the expression and effectuation of these rights to their common association in which they retain a decision-making role, directly or indirectly. These rights transcend civil society, which then translates them into constitutional, civil, criminal, and property rights. Throughout much of the modern period, the rights directly associated with the two triads were considered to be natural rights. In the postmodern epoch they are defined as human rights. In either case, the theory provides that humans start with those rights and assume obligations only as they agree to enter civil society. In that sense, at least, obligations are secondary to rights and so they have come to be treated in rights-based Western democracies. The notion that for every right there is a corresponding responsibility or duty is not unknown and indeed is embodied in a number of contemporary constitutions, but it has been principally associated with less-than-democratic if not totalitarian regimes, offering them a means to pay obeisance to human rights while at the same time making it possible for the state to radically or drastically restrict their exercise. Leo Strauss has taught us the difference between the modern and premodern philosophic understanding of rights and "right. Classical natural right was related to the good life and the good commonwealth, which, while difficult of attainment by human beings, could be achieved with the right convergence of conditions and forces. The good life within the good commonwealth was grounded in an appropriate understanding of the ideal public order and the duties of men in their efforts to achieve it. Modern natural rights, on the other hand, adhere exclusively to individuals and are derived from their natural psychology, "scientifically" discovered. Rights adhere to individuals qua individuals, and while their preservation is the highest norm, as rights they are not associated with normative goals but rather with the preservation of individual life and liberty as close to absolutes. Rooted in methodological individualism, they reflect the liberal principle that the individual is the only atom from which to begin the construction or analysis of civil society. For moderns of this school, civil society and government were instituted by individuals solely to protect their rights. Inevitably, in such a system, individual rights take precedence over all else, and every institution, including the commonwealth, ultimately is judged by how well it protects

individual rights as defined. The entire edifice of modern political life, indeed, of modern civil society, is constructed on this modern conception of rights, first embodied constitutionally in the English Bill of Rights of and expanded in the declarations of rights of the American state constitutions beginning in , the U. Its most recent and far-reaching expressions to be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That is where Americans are today. To explore the traditional Jewish conceptions of obligations and rights, we must be prepared to resolutely confront a reality that is often very different from contemporary theories. We must do so without apologetics and most especially without attempting to reconcile or harmonize Jewish views with contemporary views in every case, unless it is clearly appropriate to do so. So problematic is the topic before us for contemporary humans that the Encyclopedia Judaica has no entry at all under rights and under obligations has entries only with regard to the talmudic laws of property. While some of the issues raised here are treated in that work by eminent experts such as Judges Haim Cohn and Menahem Elon, they are subsumed under other categories. Our goal here as scholars is understanding. Whatever personal conclusions we draw from that understanding must be drawn separately. We begin with the fact that Jewish tradition derives rights from the obligation of all humans to God as their creator, sovereign, and covenant partner. Humans have what we call rights and liberties by the authority of our covenant with God. Contrast the situation where humans must appeal to God for mercy because they have no particular rights at stake. Once God has commanded or covenanted and his commandments are based upon His covenants , no human authority or agency has the right to interpose itself without the consent of those commanded or those who are partners to the covenant. As we all know, this, indeed, is the foundation of the modern development of rights, growing out of sixteenth and seventeenth century Reformed Protestantism which took these matters very seriously indeed. Only those with at least a minimum of equality can be partners. It is by virtue of that partnership and the obligations that flow from it that humans have rights that are real rights, not at all diminished by being derived from obligations. In the language of the Puritans, they have a federal foedus is the Latin term for covenant, a translation of brit obligation, fulfillment of which guarantees their federal liberty, of which more below. For Jews, who are further bound by the covenant of Sinai, there is a further obligation of holiness Deuteronomy as the highest form of imitation of God. Whether or not the Jewish people in this respect were to be the pioneers for the rest of humanity or whether their holiness is forever exclusive is a question that has been the subject of some discussion. Many Christians see themselves so bound but with a twist. While it does have a bearing on rights of citizenship, what bearing it has on human rights is an open question. On basic matters of human right to life, sustenance, property within limits , and justice, the Bible explicitly provides that "the stranger within thy gates" has the same rights as Israelites, even in the land of Israel cf. What the outer limits of those basic rights are has been a matter of some discussion over the years. The covenant partners are obligated because they are covenant partners. For Jews the obligation is that they must do justice to the widow and the orphan and the stranger in order to be holy Ex. So it is not that the widows, orphans and strangers have rights in an abstract sense, but that they can call upon their fellow Israelites to live up to their obligations. Is this merely a semantic point? What they can claim on constitutional grounds is that the Israelites must live up to their obligations. In some respects that is an even stronger claim than a rights claim. But however it is perceived, it is a different one. Even more than that, rights themselves are expressed as obligations. Thus humans have an obligation to remain alive and to preserve the lives of others. From this what moderns would refer to as the right to life can be inferred, but in classical Jewish sources it is expressed as the duty to maintain life -- your own and that of others -- a covenantal obligation, as it were. Thus the duty to preserve life is derived from the belief that it is God who bestows human life and therefore only He can prescribe the ways in which it can be taken away. Every human has a duty to preserve his or her life as part of his or her duties to God. The issue is even more clearly joined in the case of property. The right of humans to own and use property can be derived from many scriptural statements of obligations, not the least of which is the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal" Ex. Scripture also clearly states that all land and other property ultimately belongs to God who prescribes the parameters of its use by humans Lev. Thus, for example, people can own land. Over the years these restrictions on property rights were interpreted broadly rather than narrowly to create a set of environmental rights that recognized the special needs of individual humans. These included protections of the right to

sunlight that existed when a property was acquired, even at the expense of preventing another from building on his adjacent property in such a way that would interfere with that sunlight, or a right to ventilation protected in the same way. A different and more extensive set of rights developed in the area of criminal protections. Ex. In that field the relevant biblical passages were built into a comprehensive system of protection of the civil rights of individuals accused of crimes. These protections were so extensive that at points they bordered on the ridiculous as, for example, when certain Sages suggested that only if a person was actually warned at the time against committing the crime for which he was accused could that person be held responsible. This ideal talmudic world of protection of the rights of the accused was seized upon by many contemporary Jews to claim, not improperly, that the Jewish people had pioneered in that field of civil and communal rights protection. In Babylonia, where the Resh Galuta acquired such jurisdiction, it was customary for accused criminals to be turned over to a parallel system of what might be called civil courts under his authority where trial procedures were more in conformity with the standards of the time, thereby preserving the talmudic principles intact while at the same time being able to administer a criminal justice system. The Torah tends to be uncompromising in its expression of the obligations of humans in general and Jews in particular. The other books of the Bible introduce loopholes, the most important of which are associated with the mishpat hamelekh or mishpat hamelukhah the law of the king or of the kingdom, derived particularly from I Samuel 8 where the prophet Samuel warns Israelites against seeking a king because of the powers a king inevitably has. It seems that even in biblical times kings exercised power over and above Torah constraints. Subsequently the idea of the mishpat hamelekh as a loophole, especially against stringent aspects of the criminal law. Thus, many of these protections and limitations become what we would call rights, as protected through the Torah as any constitutional right is today. The result, as already noted, are rights and obligations stemming from the federal relationship between humans and God, what John Winthrop, the great Puritan governor of Massachusetts, was later to define as "federal liberty. Who Can Be Obligated and How? This leads to another question, namely, who can be obligated and how. We have already touched upon this question to some extent in the preceding paragraphs, but it deserves to be sharpened because it has to do with rights that are other than fundamental. No such distinctions prevail, however, with regard to those obligations associated with what we understand to be rights. There all are equally responsible. The talmudic sages raise the question as to whether those obligations extend only to fellow Jews or to all humans. It is a very important covenant concept, dealing with those to whom we are obligated beyond the letter of the law, what in Anglo-American jurisprudence is referred to as comity and in German as *treu*. What is clear is that biblical terminology dealing with these concepts is not our terminology. The biblical term expressing obligation is *hesed*, which is appropriately translated "loving covenant obligation. The contemporary word for obligation, *hovah*, comes into use only in the Middle Ages. *Hesed* is a very powerful word and a very covenantal one. It cannot be understood apart from its covenantal dimension and the moral authority embodied within it is a very heavy one. There are three related biblical terms that relate to the concept of rights: *Tzedek* is concerned with doing justice and *mishpat* with fulfilling the law. All three clearly refer more to the obligated party than to the possessor of the right. The one exception to all this lies in property rights as rights of citizenship. Every Jew has the right of *nahalah* landed inheritance which is a familial right that entitles every household to a permanent portion of the Land of Israel. The obligation of the Jubilee Year is designed to protect this right.

Chapter 6 : Judaism Glossary of Jewish Terminology

When referring to 1 Thessalonians 2, many writers who support tradition seem to leave off vs. Paul also wrote, But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us (2 Thessalonians).

The literature of Judaism General considerations A paradigmatic statement is made in the narrative that begins with Genesis and ends with Joshua. In the early chapters of Genesis, the divine is described as the creator of humankind and the entire natural order. In the stories of Eden , the Flood, and the Tower of Babel , humans are recognized as rebellious and disobedient. In the patriarchal stories about Abraham , Isaac , Jacob , and Joseph , a particular family is called upon to restore the relationship between God and humankind. The prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible these include the historical narratives up to the Babylonian Exileâ€™i. These have been clothed in philosophical, mystical, ethnic, and political vocabularies, among others. The emphases have been various, the disagreements often profound. No single exposition has exhausted the possibilities of the affirmations or of the relationship between them. Philosophers have expounded them on the highest level of abstraction, using the language of the available philosophical systems. Mystics have enveloped them in the extravagant prose of speculative systems and in simple folktales. Attempts have been made to encompass them in theoretical ethical statements and to express them through practical ethical behaviour. The biblical texts, themselves the products of a long period of transmission and embodying more than a single outlook, were subjected to extensive study and interpretation over many centuries and, when required, were translated into other languages. The whole literature remains the basis of further developments, so that any attempt to formulate a statement of the affirmations of Judaism must, however contemporary it seeks to be, give heed to the scope and variety of speculation and formulation in the past. In its written form, Torah was considered to be especially present in the first five books of the Bible the Pentateuch , which themselves came to be called Torah. The oral tradition interpreted the written Torah, adapted its precepts to ever-changing political and social circumstances, and supplemented it with new legislation. Thus, the oral tradition added a dynamic dimension to the written code, making it a perpetual process rather than a closed system. The vitality of this tradition is fully demonstrated in the way the ancient laws were adapted after the destruction of the Temple in 70 ce and by the role played by the Talmud in the survival of the Jewish people in exile. By the 11th century, Diaspora Jews lived in a Talmudic culture that united them and that superseded geographical boundaries and language differences. Jewish communities governed themselves according to Talmudic law, and individuals regulated the smallest details of their lives by it. Scripture, Halakhic and Haggadic Midrash , Mishna , and Gemara were the sources that Jewish leaders used to give their communities stability and flexibility. Jewish communities and individuals of the Diaspora faced novel and unexpected situations that had to be dealt with in ways that would provide continuity while making it possible to exist with the unprecedented. Prophecy and religious experience Torah in the broad sense includes the whole Hebrew Bible, including the books of the Prophets. According to the Prophets, God was revealed in the nexus of historical events and made ethical demands upon the community. In Rabbinic Judaism the role of the prophetâ€™the charismatic personâ€™as a source of Torah ended in the period of Ezra i. This opinion may have been a reaction to the luxuriant growth of apocalyptic speculation, a development that was considered dangerous and unsettling in the period after the Bar Kokhba revolt, or Second Jewish Revolt â€™ ce. Indeed, there seems to have developed a suspicion that reliance on unrestrained individual experience as a source of Torah was inimical to the welfare of the community. Such an attitude was by no means new. Related to this is the reluctance on the part of teachers in the early centuries of the Common Era to point to wonders and miracles in their own time. Thus, even among the speculative mystics of the Middle Ages , where allegorization of Scripture abounds, the structure of the community and the obligations of the individual are not displaced by the deepening of personal religious life through mystical experience. Admittedly, there have been occasions when Torah, even in the wide sense, has been rigidly applied. In certain historical situations the dynamic process of Rabbinic Judaism has been treated as a static structure. What is of greater significance,

however, is the way in which this tendency toward inflexibility has been reversed by the inherent dynamism of the rabbinic tradition. Modern views of Torah Since the end of the 18th century, the traditional position has been challenged both in detail and in principle. The rise of biblical criticism has raised a host of questions about the origins and development of Scripture and thus about the very concept of Torah, in the senses in which it has functioned in Judaism. Naturalistic views of God have required a reinterpretation of Torah in sociological terms. Other positions of many sorts have been and undoubtedly will be forthcoming. What is crucial, however, is the concern of all these positions to retain the concept of Torah as one of the central and continuing affirmations of Judaism. Haim Zalman Dimitrovsky Basic beliefs and doctrines Judaism is more than an abstract intellectual system, though there have been many efforts to view it systematically. It affirms divine sovereignty disclosed in creation nature and in history, without necessarily insisting upon it but at the same time not rejecting metaphysical speculation about the divine. It insists that the community has been confronted by the divine not as an abstraction but as a person with whom the community and its members have entered into a relationship. It is, as the concept of Torah indicates, a program of human action, rooted in this personal confrontation. Further, the response of this particular people to its encounter with God is viewed as significant for all humankind. The community is called upon to express its loyalty to God and the covenant by exhibiting solidarity within its corporate life on every level, including every aspect of human behaviour, from the most public to the most private. Thus, even Jewish worship is a communal celebration of the meetings with God in history and in nature. Yet the particular existence of the covenant people is thought of not as contradicting but rather as enhancing human solidarity. This people, together with all humanity, is called upon to institute political, economic, and social forms that will affirm divine sovereignty. This task is carried out in the belief not that humans will succeed in these endeavours solely by their own efforts but that these sought-after human relationships have their source and their goal in God, who assures their actualization. Within the community, each Jew is called upon to realize the covenant in his or her personal intention and behaviour. In considering the basic affirmations of Judaism from this point of view, it is best to allow indigenous formulations rather than systematic statements borrowed from other traditions to govern the presentation. God An early statement of basic beliefs and doctrines about God emerged in the liturgy of the synagogue some time during the last pre-Christian and first Christian centuries; there is some evidence to suggest that such formulations were not absent from the Temple cult that came to an end in the year 70 ce. A section of the siddur that focuses on the recitation of a series of biblical passages Deuteronomy 6: Unity and uniqueness At the centre of this liturgical formulation of belief is the concept of divine singularity and uniqueness. In its original setting, it may have served as the theological statement of the reform under Josiah, king of Judah, in the 7th century bce, when worship was centred exclusively in Jerusalem and all other cultic centres were rejected, so that the existence of one shrine only was understood as affirming one deity. The idea acquired further meaning, however. It was understood toward the end of the pre-Christian era to proclaim the unity of divine love and divine justice, as expressed in the divine names YHWH and Elohim, respectively. This affirmation was developed in philosophical and mystical terms by both medieval and modern thinkers. This creed also addresses the ever-present problem of theodicy (see also evil, problem of). The change was clearly made to avoid the implication that God is the source of moral evil. Judaism, however, did not ignore the problem of pain and suffering in the world; it affirmed the paradox of suffering and divine sovereignty, of pain and divine providence, refusing to accept the concept of a God that is Lord over only the harmonious and pleasant aspects of reality. Activity in the world The second and the third benedictions deal with divine activity within the realm of history and human life. God is the teacher of all humanity; he has chosen the people of Israel in love to witness to his presence and his desire for a perfected society; he will, as redeemer, enable humanity to experience that perfection. These activities, together with creation itself, are understood to express divine compassion and kindness as well as justice judgment, recognizing the sometimes paradoxical relation between them. The constant renewal of creation nature is itself an act of compassion overriding strict justice and affording humankind further opportunity to fulfill the divinely appointed obligation. The basically moral nature of God is asserted in the second of the biblical passages that form the core of this liturgical statement Deuteronomy Here, in the language of its agricultural setting, the community is promised reward

for obedience and punishment for disobedience. The intention of the passage is clear: The passage of time has made the original language unsatisfactory promising rain, crops, and fat cattle , but the basic principle remains, affirming that, however difficult it is to recognize the fact, there is a divine law and judge. Support for this affirmation is drawn from the third biblical passage Numbers The theme of divine redemption is elaborated in the concluding benediction to point toward a future in which the as-yet-fragmentary rule of God will be brought to completion: The community and the individual, confronted by the creator, teacher, and redeemer, address the divine as a living person, not as a theological abstraction. From it flow the various possibilities of expressing the divine-human relationship in personal, intimate language. Modern views of God The Judaic affirmations about God have not always been given the same emphasis, nor have they been understood in the same way. This was true in the Middle Ages , among both philosophers and mystics, as well as in modern times. In the 19th century, western European Jewish thinkers attempted to express and transform these affirmations in terms of German philosophical idealism. Later thinkers turned to philosophical naturalism , supplemented with the traditional God language, as the suitable expression of Judaism. In the first half of the 20th century the meaningfulness of the whole body of such affirmations was called into question by the philosophical school of logical positivism. The patriarchal narratives, beginning with the 12th chapter of Genesis, presuppose the choice, which is set forth explicitly in Deuteronomy 7: For you are a people consecrated to the Lord your God: It is not because you are the most numerous of peoples that the Lord set His heart on you and chose youâ€”indeed you are the smallest of peoples; but it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He made with your fathers that the Lord freed you with a mighty hand and rescued you from the house of bondage, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. The background of this choice is the recurring disobedience of humankind narrated in Genesis 2â€”11 the stories of Adam and Eve , Cain and Abel , Noah , and the Tower of Babel. In the subsequent chapters of Genesis, Abraham and his descendants are singled out not merely as the object of the divine blessing but also as its channel to all humanity. The choice, however, demands a reciprocal response from Abraham and his lineage. This twofold relationship was formalized in a mutually binding agreement, a covenant between the two parties. The formalization of this relationship was accomplished by certain cultic acts that, according to some contemporary scholars, may have been performed on a regular basis at various sacred sites in the land before being centralized in Jerusalem. The content of the covenantal obligations thus formalized was Torah. Courtesy of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna The choice of Israel is expressed in concrete terms in the requirements of the precepts mitzwoth , singular mitzwa that are part of Torah. Abraham and his descendants, for example, were seen as the means by which the estrangement of disobedient humankind from God was to be overcome. This task is enunciated with particular earnestness in the writings of the Prophets. Religious faith , far from being restricted to or encapsulated in the cult, found expression in the totality of communal and individual life. The obligation of the people was to be the true community, in which the relationship between its members was open, in which social distance was repudiated, and in which response to the divine will expressed in Torah was called for equally from all. Subsequent developments continued this theme, though it appeared in a number of other forms. Tensions are especially visible in the period following the return from the Babylonian Exile at the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century bce. It is, however, doubtful whether the use of such terms as nationalism , particularism , or exclusivism are of any great help in understanding the situation. Emphasis has, for example, been laid upon Ezra 9: Nor does this recognize that foreigners were admitted to the Jewish community; in the following centuries, some groups engaged in extensive missionary activities, appealing to the individuals of the nations surrounding them to join themselves to the God of Israel, the one true God and the creator of heaven and earth. A more balanced view recognizes that, within the Jewish community, religious universalism was affirmed by the same people who understood the nature of Jewish existence in politically particularistic i. To neglect either side is to distort the picture. In no case was the universalism disengaged from the reality of the existing community, even when it was expressed in terms of the ultimate fulfillment of the divine purpose, the restoration of the true covenantal relationship between God and all humankind. Nor was political particularism, even under circumstances of great provocation and resentment, misanthropic.

Chapter 7 : Priestly source - Wikipedia

Tradition or Progress? By Tzvi One paradox that lends itself to disastrous sins of misunderstanding is the tension between tradition and progress in Jewish life.

There are an estimated These documents are a compendium of history, law and ethical teachings. Conscious of their covenantal relationship with God, the Jews retained their religious, cultural and communal identity wherever they went and no matter what circumstances they lived, whether they were persecuted or prospered. The Judaism of today is based mainly on the Talmud and commandments derived from the Torah by early renowned rabbis , several of which cannot presently be fulfilled without the existence of the holy Temple. It was intended to create a secure permanent homeland for the Jews. It is the oldest of the three western monotheistic religions and so is the ancestor of both Islam and Christianity. At the heart of Judaism is the belief that there exists only one eternal God who is the creator and the ruler of the universe and all that is in it. God is transcendent and eternal, knowing and seeing everything. God has revealed His law [Torah] for the Jews, who are to serve as a light and example to the world. Abraham, the biblical Patriarch was the first to give expression to this faith, and it is through him that the blessing and the inheritance from God to the Jewish people comes, particularly the promise of the land that has a central place in Jewish thought and practice. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be upon your heart. In addition to this and other scriptural mandates, Jewish practice incorporates an ever-growing body of rabbinic commentary and interpretation. Traditionally, Jewish life is guided by the Godly commandments derived from Torah. In recent times, some Jewish factions have departed from the traditional role of written and oral Torah as religious law. Within the following major groupings of Judaism there have developed variations with respect to religious belief and practice, ritual observance, lifestyles, and degree of acculturation: This branch emphasizes the historic development of Judaism, thereby allowing it to make adjustments since it views the basic Jewish theological and ritual concepts as objects of continuing and evolving change. This most liberal and non-authoritarian of mainstream branches regards Torah as guidance rather than as literal divine revelation, thus ethical concepts are emphasized over ritual law. Revelation is thought to be a continuing process, so Reform Judaism believes that Judaism is still evolving. This smallest and most recent branch follows an approach to Judaism developed by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan who emphasized human values and the centrality of Jewish peoplehood. In practice, it is very close to Conservative Judaism. In general, however, Judaism remains relatively constant in terms of basic beliefs and practices, and most Jews see themselves as members of the Jewish community rather than only as members of a single branch. Who is a Jew? Traditionally, Jewish religious law defines a Jew as one who is born of a Jewish mother [see note below] or one who has been properly converted to Judaism. Stringency of conversion requirements varies from branch to branch, but all mainstream branches are in agreement that mere self-declaration does not constitute conversion. Although most prison systems allow inmates to simply designate their own religious status, the Jewish community only recognizes those who meet the preceding criteria as being Jewish. Religious law specifies that this be performed when the male is eight days old. In the case of a convert, ritual circumcision is done along with other required rituals following Beis Din approval. Elements of the Reform movement have recently broken with established religious law by affirming patrilineal descent provided that the child is also raised Jewish through confirmation age , seeking converts, allowing women to practice certain liturgical duties and customs previously reserved for men e. A devout Jew is required to pray three times a day “ morning, afternoon, and evening. Although preferably with a quorum [Minyan] of at least ten adult Jewish men in a synagogue setting if one is available , prayers can alternately be recited individually at home or wherever else one may be located. An additional morning worship service is included on the Sabbath and Festivals, along with special prayers for specific holy days. For all male Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist and some Reform Jews the head is covered during prayer with a skull cap [yarmulke] or ordinary hat. During morning prayers, a prayer shawl [Tallit] which as fringes at the four corners in obedience to a command found in the Torah , is worn by adult males. The boxes contain

four passages of Hebrew scripture written on parchment, Exodus. Although these items may be visually inspected if handled with respect and care, only a qualified rabbi or scribe may open the sinew closed portions of the boxes. In the homes of more observant Jews, Mezuzahs are also placed on the doorposts of every other living room except bathrooms. Although a Minyan is required to conduct a complete Jewish worship service, a lesser number of Jewish males and females can conduct corporate prayer with certain proscribed sections of the service being omitted. Those who are not properly Jewish cannot serve in a Minyan. Likewise, non-Jews should not utter some particular Jewish blessings or participate in certain Jewish liturgical functions. The Pentateuch is divided into weekly portions which are publicly read throughout the Jewish calendar year in synagogues each Sabbath from a Hebrew hand-scribed parchment scroll. Parts of these are further publicly read each Monday and Thursday morning. Related sections of the writings of the Prophets are also publicly read on the Sabbath. Specified other holy writings are publicly read on various holy days. A specially trained person is required to accomplish these readings which can only be done from proper scrolls and certain difficult conditions would have to be met in order for such readings to be done in a prison setting. Biblically mandated festivals generally follow the same rules as the Sabbath, with the addition of particular observances and customs. Post biblical holy days are generally not as restrictive and have their own observances and customs. The celebration of these events should be part of a shared religious experience by as many Jewish inmates as possible, so corporate worship and other joint activities are encouraged. See the diet section [below] for special dietary requirements. The beginning of the Sabbath just prior to sundown each Friday is marked by the lighting of candles, a minimum of two per household which must be capable of burning for at least one half hour and which must be allowed to burn out by themselves. A special prayer must be recited over the candle lighting by somebody who is properly Jewish. Similarly, following Friday evening and Saturday morning worship services, a special prayer [Kiddush] is recited over wine by somebody who is properly Jewish. It is also traditional to say a prayer over and eat special bread [Challah] before meals on the Sabbath. Kosher unleavened bread [Matzah] may be substituted for Challah. The end of the Sabbath at approximately one hour past sundown each Saturday is marked with a special service [Havdallah], during which candles, wine or grape juice and spices are used. The following Festivals, specific dates of which are delineated in Torah, and other rabbinic mandated holidays are in sequential order as they occur through the Jewish calendar year that begins in early autumn: It is customary at the meal on the eves of Rosh Hashanah to eat apple dipped in honey and to wish others a good and sweet year. A new fruit, usually pomegranate, a sweet carrot dish [tzimmes], honey cake, round Challah bread and other foods are also traditional. It is a day spent praying and fasting during which white garments are worn, a special fifth worship services is added, and it concludes with the Shofar being blown. Prior to the beginning of the approximately hour fast, it is traditional to eat a hearty meal that includes boiled pieces of dough filled with meat [Kreplach]. Observant Jews eat all their meals and may sleep within these small huts. Four species of plants, the citron [Esrog], palm branch [Lulav], myrtles [Hadassim] and willow [Aravos] as enumerated in the Torah are bound together and used individually by Jews during services in synagogue and the booths. These items may be obtained for Jewish inmates from Jewish chaplaincy organizations. Chanukah This post-biblical eight day celebration commemorates the recapture of the Holy Temple in B. E from Assyrian- Greek oppressors. In preparation for rededication of the temple, which had been spoiled by the enemy, only one small jar of acceptable oil was found with which to rekindle the temple's candelabra [Menorah]. In honor of this miracle, Jews light candles on each of the evening of Chanukah, beginning with one candle on the first evening, two in the second evening, etc. Each evening an additional candle is used to light the others, requiring a total of 44 candles for the entire holiday. Children are often given gifts of coins and they play a traditional game with a spinning top [Dreidel]. Purim This day commemorates the saving from massacre of the Jewish community under Persian rule in B. This is a particularly joyous holiday during which gifts of food and charity are given. A festival meal is required and it is traditional to eat pastries [Hamantash] shaped in the triangular form of the hat of the villain in the Purim story. Pesach The Passover [Pesach] Festival recalls the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt during biblical times. Certain ceremonial items are consumed, including unleavened bread [Matzah], bitter herbs and four cups of wine or grape juice. No products containing any leavening can be

consumed during this period, and many Jews also refrain from eating other foods such as legumes and rice. The Seders are required to be particularly festive and they are often the highlight of the year for Jewish inmates. Even Jewish inmates who do not maintain a religious i. It is also very important that Jewish dietary authorities be consulted regarding currently certified Passover foods. It is customary for adult males i. Consuming a dairy meal is also traditional. Though it is not a biblically mandated Festival, work is discouraged during this hour fast day. As is previously noted, prayer books containing liturgies for the Sabbath, various Festivals and Holy Days are necessary for worship. Jewish Calendar Dates for Festivals and Holy Days The Jewish calendar is a lunar one, as opposed to the solar or Gregorian calendar used by most of the world. Published calendars that list both Gregorian and Jewish dates with designated Jewish religious observance dates noted are readily available from Jewish chaplaincies, most synagogues and other Jewish community organizations. Charts of dates for several years ahead are also available for planning purposes from Jewish chaplaincies. Like the Sabbath, all Jewish Festivals and Holy Days begin at or just prior to sundown and they end at or shortly following sundown, precise times for which are usually listed on Jewish calendars. As these dates are occasionally rescheduled primarily due to conflicts with the Sabbath , consult a Jewish calendar for precise dates and times. Jewish fasts prohibit both food and water, but not prescription medications. Also, person with physical ailments that would be aggravated by fasting, males under age 13, females under age 12, and pregnant or nursing women are all excused from fasting. Fasting Jewish inmates must be provided with extra nourishment via two fast bags for each fast, one to consume prior to the fast and the other to consume following the fast. Jewish Dietary Restrictions Jewish dietary law [Kashruth] is an important aspect of religious observance for all Orthodox, many Conservative, and some Reform and Reconstructionist Jews. Foods that are fit [kosher] for consumption by Jews and the manners in which they are handled are specified in the Torah and further defined through rabbinic law. These dietary laws are extremely complex, so only qualified kosher supervisory personnel should be allowed to make decisions regarding kosher diets. Meat and milk products cannot be cooked, served, or eaten together. They not only require separate cooking, serving and storage utensils from non-kosher foods, but also from each other kosher category. Milk products may not be eaten with or immediately after meat products. An interval of time, usually a minimum of three hours depending on the custom of the community must elapse between consuming meat and then milk. Meat of only kosher animals and fowl is permitted. Kosher animals, as specified in Torah scripture, are those that both chew their cud and have split hooves e.

Chapter 8 : The Irish-Jewish Parallels | HuffPost

A Jewish custom " known in Hebrew as a minhag " is a religious practice that, though sometimes very widely practiced, does not carry the force of Jewish law and is thus not considered mandatory by traditional Jews. Customs cover an extremely wide range of Jewish rituals, from variations in the.

Jewish political movements and List of Jews in politics A range of moral and political views is evident early in the history of Judaism, that serves to partially explain the diversity that is apparent among secular Jews who are often influenced by moral beliefs that can be found in Jewish scripture, and traditions. While Diaspora Jews have also been represented in the conservative side of the political spectrum, even politically conservative Jews have tended to support pluralism more consistently than many other elements of the political right. Some scholars [19] attribute this to the fact that Jews are not expected to proselytize , derived from Halakha. This lack of a universalizing religion is combined with the fact that most Jews live as minorities in diaspora countries, and that no central Jewish religious authority has existed since CE. He was one of the most influential of the classical economists [20] [21] In the Middle Ages , European laws prevented Jews from owning land and gave them powerful incentive to go into other professions that the indigenous Europeans were not willing to follow. In most of Europe until the late 18th century, and in some places to an even later date, Jews were prohibited by Roman Catholic governments and others from owning land. On the other hand, the Church, because of a number of Bible verses e. As the Canon law did not apply to Jews, they were not liable to the ecclesiastical punishments which were placed upon usurers by the popes. Christian rulers gradually saw the advantage of having a class of men like the Jews who could supply capital for their use without being liable to excommunication , and so the money trade of western Europe by this means fell into the hands of the Jews. However, in almost every instance where large amounts were acquired by Jews through banking transactions the property thus acquired fell either during their life or upon their death into the hands of the king. It was often for this reason that kings supported the Jews, and even objected to them becoming Christians because in that case they could not be forced to give up money won by usury. Thus, both in England and in France the kings demanded to be compensated for every Jew converted. As a modern system of capital began to develop, loans became necessary for commerce and industry. Jews were able to gain a foothold in the new field of finance by providing these services: Science and technology in Israel , Jewish medicine , and Hebrew astronomy The strong Jewish tradition of religious scholarship often left Jews well prepared for secular scholarship. In some times and places, this was countered by banning Jews from studying at universities , or admitted them only in limited numbers see Jewish quota. Over the centuries, Jews have been poorly represented among land-holding classes, but far better represented in academia, professions, finance, commerce and many scientific fields. The structure of DNA. Biblical cosmology provides sporadic glimpses that may be stitched together to form a Biblical impression of the physical universe. There have been comparisons between the Bible, with passages such as from the Genesis creation narrative , and the astronomy of classical antiquity more generally. One suggested ritual, for example, deals with the proper procedure for cleansing a leper Leviticus It is a fairly elaborate process, which is to be performed after a leper was already healed of leprosy Leviticus The Torah proscribes Intercropping Lev. During Medieval era astronomy was a primary field among Jewish scholars and was widely studied and practiced. Bar Hiyya proved by geometro-mechanical method of indivisibles the following equation for any circle: He was the first European to describe Asiatic tropical diseases, notably cholera; he performed an autopsy on a cholera victim, the first recorded autopsy in India. Bonet de Lattes known chiefly as the inventor of an astronomical ring-dial by means of which solar and stellar altitudes can be measured and the time determined with great precision by night as well as by day. Albert Einstein was a German-born theoretical physicist and is considered as one of the most prominent scientists in history, often regarded as the "father of modern physics". His revolutionary work on the relativity theory transformed theoretical physics and astronomy during the 20th century. When first published, relativity superseded a year-old theory of mechanics created primarily by Isaac Newton. With relativity, cosmology and astrophysics predicted extraordinary astronomical phenomena such as neutron stars ,

black holes , and gravitational waves. Castle Romeo nuclear test , a large number of Jewish scientists were involved in Project Manhattan The mathematician and physicist Alexander Friedmann pioneered the theory that universe was expanding governed by a set of equations he developed now known as the Friedmann equations. Arno Allan Penzias , the physicist and radio astronomer co-discoverer of the cosmic microwave background radiation, which helped establish the Big Bang theory, the scientists Robert Herman and Ralph Alpher had also worked on that field. In quantum mechanics Jewish role was significant as well and many of most influential figures and pioneers of the theory were Jewish: Sigmund Freud , known as the father of psychoanalysis , is one of the most influential scientists of the 20th century. In creating psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst, [44] Freud developed therapeutic techniques such as the use of free association and discovered transference , establishing its central role in the analytic process. His analysis of dreams as wish-fulfillments provided him with models for the clinical analysis of symptom formation and the mechanisms of repression as well as for elaboration of his theory of the unconscious as an agency disruptive of conscious states of mind. Emmy Noether was an influential mathematician known for her groundbreaking contributions to abstract algebra and theoretical physics. Described by many prominent scientists as the most important woman in the history of mathematics, [51] [52] [incomplete short citation] she revolutionized the theories of rings , fields , and algebras.

Chapter 9 : Difference between Christmas and Hanukkah | Christmas vs Hanukkah

Jewish vs. Christian Practices Traditionally, Jews recite prayers three times daily, with a fourth prayer added on Shabbat and holidays. Most of the prayers in a traditional Jewish service can be said in solitary prayer, although communal prayer is preferred.

Only the Yahwist text, in other words, affirms and acknowledgesâ€”in contradiction to the claims of the later Priestly source 11 â€”that the name Yahweh was known to and frequently invoked by the patriarchs prior to its revelation. Indeed, it is for this reason that the Yahwist tradition does not narrate a revelation of the divine name. According to this tradition, it was known right from the first generation of mortals Gen 4: This is merely one of dozens of Yahwistic features that will be opposed and negated by later writers, and in so doing leave behind numerous contradictions in the Bible as it now stands. The Yahwist text opens, in what is now Genesis 2: In other words, the majority of the stories told by the Yahwist focus on Judah, its geography, its political relationships with its ethnic neighbors, its important cultic centers, and its ancestral heroes. It is for this reason that scholars accredit the composition of the Yahwist text to southern Judean scribes. As we will see, many of these stories were written down by the Yahwist to serve a specific purpose: Stories about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which were also heavily commented on by insertions made into the narrative by a later Priestly tradition are also found in the Yahwist source. A few of these stories are now also combined with duplicate stories from the Elohist tradition, which makes its first appearance at Genesis 20, thus providing yet another voice in this now polyphonic redacted text we call the Bible. The Yahwist textual tradition continues into the book of Exodus but quickly disappears and gives way to the much stronger presence of the Elohist and Priestly sources. Finally, the book of Numbers preserves a few stories from the Yahwist tradition that center on the spying of the land of Judah and the conquest of Transjordanâ€”again heavily amended and commented on by later Priestly inserts and variant traditions from the Elohist source. The Yahwist text itself is most likely a compilation of stories, traditions, and archival material that was shaped into a continuous narrative by a southern Judean scribe or scribes. It is difficult to say when these traditions and stories were shaped into the larger narrative we call the Yahwist, but it could not have been earlier than the 8th century BC. We must bear in mind that ancient texts are products of their historical circumstances. As such it was literature that was never produced for dissemination to the public. In fact there was no such thing as a public readership; it did not exist! Rather, religious and political texts were written to support or legitimate the beliefs or worldviews of its author and its community to other elites and powerful political figures, or to condemn and illegitimate the position of others, as we will see. In the majority of cases, scribes wrote for a scribal guild or a monarch. The Yahwist is no exception to these literary aims. Many of the stories and traditions that were shaped by the Yahwist were used to serve his political agenda. This type of political legitimation was done through narratives about ancestors who eponymously stood for ethnic peoples and tribes, such as Ishmael for the Ishmaelites of the Negeb, or Esau for the people of Edom, or then again Judah for the southern kingdom by the same name. In fact, many of the patriarchal narratives in the Yahwist tradition were crafted to legitimate either the possession of a border town, supremacy over an ethnic neighbor, or the reign of the tribe Judah in the south over and against other tribal claimants. Reuben, Simeon, and Levi Gen What could possibly be the political agenda of such narratives? How do you legitimate and support a new king who has usurped his older brother s in gaining the throne? Baruch Halpern has written extensively about this common scribal technique found throughout the ancient Near East. But more than that, the Yahwist narrative was written to legitimate through archaized stories the inheritance of Judah as the political and religious ruler of the southern kingdom, and to endorse her policies and points of view. This practice, which is misleading as well as misrepresentative of the Hebrew text, follows a late Judaic oral practice of substituting the Hebrew adonai lord for yhwh in the reading of the Torah, since later Judaismâ€”centuries after these texts were actually composedâ€”conceived the name as sacred and unspeakable. Modern translation practices have regrettably chosen to follow this later oral tradition rather than the actual Hebrew text! Here, we will be as honest to the Hebrew texts as possible. Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King Eerdmans