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Guide to Practical Halacha and Home Ritual For Conservative Jews

By Yehuda Wiesen

Last Revised August 11, 2004

I am looking for a publisher for this Guide.
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Preface

Many Conservative Jews have a strong desire to learn some practical and ritual halacha (Jewish law) but have no ready source of succinct information. Often the only readily available books or web sites present an Orthodox viewpoint. This Guide is meant to provide an introduction to selected practical halachic topics from the viewpoint of Conservative Judaism. In addition, it gives some instruction on how to conduct various home rituals, and gives basic guidance for some major life events and other situations when a Rabbi may not be immediately available.

Halacha is a guide to living a religious, ethical and moral life of the type expected and required of a Jew. Halacha covers all aspects of life, including, for example, food, business law and ethics, marriage, raising children, birth, death, mourning, holidays, and prayer. Much of halacha relates to interpersonal and ethical situations. Halacha focuses us on our duties and actions rather than on religious feelings or thoughts. This book focuses mainly on ritual aspects of halacha, and on the *how* rather than the *why* of observance. Traditionally, much religious observance took place in the home. This book concentrates on home observance on the assumption that in the synagogue assistance is readily available from fellow congregants or the rabbi.

Halacha derives originally from the Torah, the written law, and from the Talmud, the "oral" law. The halacha has been codified in the Shulchan Aruch and other very detailed texts, some of which are available in translation. Conservative Judaism is firmly based on halacha, and considers halacha to be binding on all Jews.

It is informative to compare the views of the three main branches of Judaism concerning halacha. The Conservative and Orthodox consider halacha to be binding. The Reform viewpoint is very different. Reform Judaism gives each individual member the right and obligation to decide which traditional practices he or she will or will not follow, and whether to do so consistently. The smaller Reconstructionist Movement also does not view halacha as binding, but encourages observance because the legal traditions are part of our culture.

It will be clear below that there is no unitary Conservative halacha, but rather a range of views on various topics, as has been true of halacha through the ages. I attempt in this Guide to present some of the range of accepted views. Sometimes I present my personal thoughts when I did not find authoritative sources. The system used in the Conservative Movement to make Halachic decisions is described at the end of Chapter One.

A voluminous and clearly written guide to halacha from a Conservative standpoint is available in a 1979 text by Rabbi Isaac Klein (see bibliography), but even that 600 page guide is incomplete. For

example, there have been many Halachic decisions since its publication. Also, a small number of texts compile some decisions of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly (the body empowered to define halacha for the Conservative movement). All these references are somewhat formidable in size, some presume considerable knowledge on the part of the reader, and yet they are incomplete in some basic areas. Therefore I have compiled this Guide with information on practical halacha in areas where questions of observance often arise.

I decided to write this Guide because, as a layperson, I found it very difficult to locate the information presented here - information which I needed as I became more observant. It began as an exercise in self-education and evolved into an attempt to address the lack of a simple summary of Conservative halacha. It is intended for those Conservative Jews who are at a point on the learning curve where they may find such a summary helpful. Even though this book is meant to be a useful guide, there are exceptions to some rules in certain situations, and some rules are applied in different ways in special situations. This Guide does not cover all usual situations, and does not even attempt to cover the many possible unusual situations which can occur. This Guide with its brief summaries should be only a starting point in studying halacha. When questions concerning halacha and observance arise, a Rabbi should be consulted.

Lack of knowledge of halacha leads to lack of observance. For example, several times I have found that recently bereaved Jews are completely unaware of the existence of Yizkor services, and they are very thankful for the information. Another example involves the laws of Shabbat, the details of which are very fuzzy to most Conservative Jews. However, much of the essence and substance of Judaism is in the details of our daily behavior. Throughout history, the legal codes were a major force in maintaining the Jewish people. Today, ignorance of the codes threatens our continuity. I hope that in its small way this Guide helps address this lack of knowledge, and so fosters observance.

For many topics, I was torn between describing current observance levels of the majority of Conservative Jews and describing recommended or Jewishly obligatory observance levels. In general, I came down on the side of describing what should be done rather than what is most often done. In this way people can use this Guide as a reference for proper practice. The risk is that this Guide will set unrealistically high standards for people just beginning to climb the ladder of halachic observance. However, we are all climbing that ladder, and although it may be tall each rung is a meaningful, valuable step. So, to those just starting out I say, start where you are and do a little at a time. A few more recommendations for people just starting out are given in the conclusion at end of this Guide.

This Guide assumes some familiarity with Jewish practices and terminology. In some places it reflects practices outside the land of Israel. (Practices unique to people living in Israel are not discussed.)

This Guide also presumes that the reader owns a siddur, a prayer book, such as the *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals* published jointly by the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. (See the bibliography for publication details for this siddur.) The shortest blessings are given in full in this Guide, but many other blessing and prayers are only identified

by their first few words, and all in transliteration. A new daily Sim Shalom siddur has recently been published, and it contains blessings for many occasions, a short guide to observance of mourning, as well as the daily liturgy, and so is a good companion to the Shabbat and festival siddur. The siddur contains prayers that capture our ideals, aspirations, joys, sorrows, and fears; it gives us some guidance as we observe and live through holidays, births and deaths, and everyday life. If a Jewish family could own only one Jewish book, I would recommend it be a siddur.

For several years this manuscript has been labeled "DRAFT" and during that time it has been circulated electronically and in hard copy. Many people commented on it for which I am deeply grateful. They contributed to the clarity and breadth of coverage of the Guide. I welcome further comments on both content or the method of presentation. (My e-mail and postal addresses are on page two.) You may download the latest version of this Guide at www.mahadash.com/docs/wiesen/halacha.htm or view it at www.mahadash.com/docs/wiesen/halacha.pdf.

Acknowledgments and Dedication

Thanks are due to the many lay people and clergy from a wide range of religious backgrounds and observance who provided comments on earlier versions of this Guide. Since some of the most prominent reviewers were promised anonymity, I will not list names, but state only my deep appreciation of their invaluable assistance. The accuracy of this Guide reflects their careful reading, but any errors and shortcomings that remain are mine (and may well be due to recent unreviewed additions or modifications).

Particularly heartfelt thanks are due my wife, Laura, whose loving, frank, and insightful comments and suggestions were invaluable.

This Guide is dedicated to the memory of my father Eliezar ben ha'rov Yehuda, z"l, to his parents, ha'rov Yehuda ben Eliezar and his Eishet Chayil Elsa bat Reuven, and to the three generations of my family who were killed during the horrific tragedy of the 20th century inflicted on the world and particularly on the Jews of Europe by the Nazis and other aggressors during WWII. This Guide is also dedicated to my children Baruch Yakov and Melach Shmuel Tzandal.

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Chapter One. Some Practical Halacha For Conservative Jews

In this Guide I try to present the viewpoints of Conservative Judaism. What follows is a summary of selected halacha based on secondary sources, most importantly the 1979 text by Rabbi Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*. In many places, a page reference is given to the 1979 text by Rabbi Klein, the *Proceedings of the Committee of Jewish Law and Standards* of the Rabbinical Assembly (RA1988 or RA1997), or to another source. A brief bibliography appears at the end. Although I have tried to refer to these and other authoritative sources, some of the views presented here reflect my inferences based on what I have seen of the personal behavior of observant Conservative Jews.

Emphasis here is on positive and negative mitzvot and on rituals that people do on their own, rather than on rituals that are done communally (such as synagogue services and the variations in the synagogue liturgy for various holidays).

Practical guidance for some home-based observances are given in Chapter Two, for two very different types of situations. First, step-by-step procedures are described for conducting some common home rituals, especially those surrounding Shabbat and the holidays. Then Jewish responses are suggested for some pressing, delicate, or trying end-of-life situations which can arise when there is no Rabbi available.

Since some Conservative Jews use Orthodox practice as a yardstick, in some places I give a very brief comparison with Orthodox views and practice.[1] The Conservative approach, in its ideal, is a fully halachic approach to Jewish law. The similarities to Orthodox views are great, and the differences are relatively minor. However, in practice, Orthodox generally place more emphasis on consistently observing the various laws.

Jews of Ashkenazic (European) and Sefardic (Spanish or middle eastern) background have somewhat different traditions. This Guide is written from the Ashkenazic viewpoint.

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[1] Often there is no unitary Orthodox view, as there is no unitary Conservative view. Additionally, the views of the Orthodox have changed over the last 20 years or so. For example, there is a growing reliance in Orthodox circles on glatt kosher meats, and chalav yisrael dairy products.

This is a work in progress, I am particularly interested in your comments on:
- other topics you would like covered
- topics you would like covered in more detail
- topics or sections which you found confusing
- other suggestions for additions or improvements.

Please address your suggestions to: Yehuda Wiesen; 27 Judith Rd.; Newton, MA 02459, or send them by e-mail to Ywiesen.halacha@mahadash.com.

Caveat on Diverse, Legitimate Positions

It is not possible to do justice to the vast and nuanced Conservative halacha in a short publication. On any topic, there may well be two or more legitimate but divergent positions, each halachically sound and each supported by decisions by the Law Committee (that is the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly). Simply put, there is official halachic pluralism in the Conservative movement. On a given topic there may be views which are more or less liberal, or divergent views reflecting the positions of any of various authorities, older and newer. Since the earliest times there have been multiple and often conflicting views of our foremost rabbis on many topics. The Talmud comments on the diverse opinions of the rabbinic scholars of the followers of Hillel and of Shammai, saying "these and these are the words of the living God" (see BT Eruvin 14a). So the diversity of positions sometimes seen amongst Conservative rabbis is consistent with the halachic history of our people. I try to reflect the divergent thinking in some places, but do not try to be exhaustive. So there are fully legitimate Conservative positions which are not discussed here. In addition, the reader should know that I am not a posek (a halachic authority who makes halachic rulings or renders decisions in halachic matters). Rather, I am simply a layman trying to convey my understanding of some of the more basic halacha of the Conservative movement. Even this is difficult, since the subject is often complex and not clear even to experts. For those who want to learn more, I have provided a short bibliography at the end of this Guide.

The main reason why I may be in a good position to prepare this summary is that I have wrestled with this material from the viewpoint of a layman and someone who was not raised in a particularly observant household, and so I may be more likely to think of very basic questions. In fact, one major impetus for this Guide was the questions and comments I heard from people who were trying to become more observant but who lacked the information to do so. For example, one person said, "I would like to be more observant, but I cannot do without electricity." Another person said, "You mean chicken has to be kosher too? I thought it was just meat." A third person said, "You mean you have to change your pots and pans for Passover? I thought you just have to change your dishes." Many more informed questions have been asked, such as, "What is the earliest time that I may begin the second seder on Pesach?" So this Guide is for people who want answers to specific questions, and for those who do not know what questions to ask.

In the pages below I have tried to give the big picture, but there is much information which I left out so the sections of this Guide would be short and readable. You should use this Guide for background information and consult with your Rabbi when questions arise.

A. Why Strive to be a Halachic Jew?

The decision to accept Jewish law as binding is highly personal. We often do not make decisions based on perfect knowledge or understanding. There are no universally accepted reasons for following halacha. Some follow halacha because it is Divine law, or Divinely inspired. Others follow halacha because it has been our people's tradition for so long. Others do so for the sake of Jewish unity. Others accept the law because it provides guidance on how to live a moral life. Others do so because it is a path to holiness, enhancing their spiritual existence and bringing them closer to God. Others see the law as a source of personal discipline and/or joy in their lives. Others see it as a source of order in a chaotic world. Some observe Jewish law because it enhances their lives in ways that are not easily described. Others do so because it helps them feel a closer connection to the Jewish people. Some find that practice leads to faith, and for others faith comes first. Shabbat has its own special observances. Some people observe Shabbat because they cherish the respite from the overfull, hectic weekdays. Some do it to build family ties through the atmosphere of peace it provides. Others observe Shabbat to try to ensure the continuity of our people and its traditions. Often a person's reasons for accepting halacha are diverse and change over time. Belief in God sometimes comes before observance, but often it comes after, and sometimes belief waxes and wanes while observance goes on. This Guide emphasizes observance to the virtual exclusion of the reasons for observance. Two succinct discussions of this topic may be found in *Halakhah for Our Time* (by Rabbi David Golinkin, pages 9-16) and in *Responsa in a Moment* (also by Rabbi Golinkin, pages 11-21). A very readable longer work which discusses "Why perform mitzvot?" is *Mitzvah Means Commandment* by Rabbi Elliot Dorff.

B. Positive and Negative Mitzvot

The mitzvot (commandments) may be divided into positive and negative. The positive include such things as saying the Shema twice daily, and giving charity to the poor. The negative include such things as not stealing, and not eating non-kosher food. Some mitzvot seem logical and compelling, but others seem to have no apparent reason or purpose. A commandment that defies human reasoning is called a hok (decree). Whether or not a mitzvah has apparent purpose or logic, it is still a commandment. The tradition particularly values performance of a mitzva out of a sense of being commanded, a sense of fulfilling a divine will. The word mitzva has also come to be used to refer to any act of kindness.

C. On Arising and Retiring

One should strive to arise and retire in a Jewish fashion. Rituals on arising include, for example, reciting Modeh Ani (a short prayer expressing thanks for being allowed to awaken), and washing ones

hands in a ritual fashion to begin the day ritually clean (saying the bracha on washing after you leave the bathroom since we do not pray in a bathroom). (Klein, page 3, and *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*, page 63.) Saying the Shema at the proper time of day during Shacharit and Maariv fulfills the Biblical obligation. Some say the Shema before retiring.

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Similar.

D. Shabbat

Shabbat is a precious gift from God to Israel. We are supposed to enjoy Shabbat as we observe it. Shabbat is a day of individual and communal rest; of physical and spiritual renewal; a sanctuary in time. We plan and prepare for Shabbat and enjoy its special form of rest. We try to have especially good food on Shabbat and wear nice and even special clothing, while staying within our means. Many people shower in the afternoon before Shabbat. Many families try to have fresh flowers on the table for Shabbat. We bring in Shabbat at home with the Friday night kiddush, and there are various home and synagogue observances which help make Shabbat a special day. Shabbat is both a day of rest and of recognizing our creator. Shabbat is also made special by avoiding various types of activities (melachot) commonly referred to as work, such as carrying, lighting a fire, writing and cooking (see the numbered section below on the 39 categories of prohibited work). These categories are similar to but not identical with what the secular world considers work. For example, lighting a candle is not difficult, but it is forbidden as a form of work. The work that is forbidden generally is constructive work which creates or improves something. In addition to forbidden work, the Rabbis protect Shabbat by limiting activities which are inconsistent with Shabbat or which may lead to work (see the numbered section below on Muktzeh, Shevut, and Travel). All the actions that are avoided, and the activities that take their place, make Shabbat a special, precious, holy day of rest, different from workdays. What follows is a brief statement of some of the many laws of Shabbat. (Klein, pages 82-83.)

1. Lighting Candles and Reciting Kiddush on Friday Night
   We light candles before nightfall. (The bracha is Baruch ata ... asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.) By so doing we help create an atmosphere of Shabbat in our homes. The obligation is on the household, not on a particular gender, but almost universally only women light in a family setting. Usually two candles are lit, but some have a tradition of lighting more. Many women add a personal prayer at the time of candle lighting. Usually you can find candle lighting times for your city in a Hebrew calendar (luach). The sunset times found in the weather section of many newspapers are generally valid for determining when to light candles. Candle lighting is usually done 18 minutes before sunset, but may be done somewhat earlier (about 1 hour before sunset in winter, and 1½ hours before sunset in the summer). Candle lighting is never done after nightfall. (Klein, page 56.) The obligation to say kiddush also falls on both men and women, but generally it is the husband who recites kiddush in a family setting. So, no matter if a household consists of only men or

only women, or only one person, both candle-lighting and kiddush are done for every Shabbat. In some Conservative families these duties are at least sometimes carried out by either the wife or the husband or another family member, perhaps depending on personal preference on a particular evening.
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Similar.

2. Driving to Shul on Shabbat
Generally, driving is not allowed on Shabbat. However, responding to the great geographic dispersion of Jews in America and to address the problem of Jews being cut off from the community, a majority of the Law Committee in 1950 made an exception to the prohibition of driving on Shabbat, saying, in part, "...participation in public service on the Sabbath is in the light of modern conditions to be regarded as a great mitswah (*sic*), since it is indispensable to the preservation of the religious life of American Jewry. Therefore it is our considered opinion that the positive value involved in the participation in public worship on the Sabbath outweighs the .. value of refraining from riding in an automobile..." This was an attempt on the part of the Conservative movement to maximize observance and compliance with halacha, but it is not clear how well it has worked. I think it has kept many people within the folds of Conservative synagogues, but at a price: it works against cohesive neighborhoods of Conservative Jews, and has created some misunderstanding about the permissibility of driving on Shabbat. In any case, the only driving allowed is directly to and from your local synagogue to avoid being completely cut off from Sabbath worship. As the decision says, "It does not include travel for purely social purpose, nor does it include travel to a synagogue away from one's community in order to attend a Bar Mitzvah ceremony or a reception, for the motivation here is primarily social rather than religious." If you wish to be in compliance with this ruling of the Law Committee, the clear implication is that you should fill your car with sufficient gasoline and make sure it is in good working order prior to Shabbat (to avoid breakdowns and the likely resulting work), and not carry money on Shabbat. When issued, the decision on driving was the most controversial decision made by the Law Committee. Many Conservative Rabbis and Conservative laymen do not abide by the leniency it allows. (It is interesting to note that the Masorti/conservative movement in Israel does not follow this driving teshuva, and prohibits driving on Shabbat. They base this, in large part, on their view that the driving leniency has not been successful in achieving its goal here in the USA, and also on the prevalence of synagogues in Israel.) Of course, in certain situations driving is permitted on Shabbat; such as to the hospital in a medical emergency. (Klein, pages 85-86.)
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Orthodox prohibit driving and riding on Shabbat other than for the sake of saving a life, broadly interpreted, as in transport to a hospital in an emergency.

3. Driving to Friday Night Dinner
   As far as I know, the Law Committee has not specifically addressed this topic. One could take the position that this is in the spirit of driving to Synagogue on Shabbat, since there is a positive obligation to make kiddush on Friday night, and many Jews would not and do not undertake this unless they visit a more observant household. However, some would consider this a weak argument. One creative approach I have heard described seems to work for visiting homes within walking distance of the synagogue: go to the synagogue for services (in accord with the driving teshuva), then walk to the friends and have dinner.

4. Living Within Walking Distance of the Synagogue
   This should be strongly encouraged to promote development of a close community, but unfortunately often it is not done, and sometimes it is just not possible. Some people choose to relocate to be near a certain synagogue or synagogues (or Jewish community) as they grow in observance. Relocating can be a very meaningful decision.
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Living near a synagogue is strongly encouraged and often done by Orthodox, especially in larger cities.

5. Use of Money or Credit Cards on Shabbat: Prohibited.
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same.

6. Attending Non-Religious Classes: Not encouraged but allowed, but do not take notes.

7. The 39 Categories of Prohibited Activities ("Work")
   Abstaining from work sets Shabbat apart from the workweek, and helps make it a day of tranquility and holiness. In describing work that is forbidden on Shabbat, the Talmud, in a Mishna, identifies 39 categories of primary labors[2] such as lighting a fire, writing, cooking, and carrying. These ancient categories have been interpreted to forbid most things we think of as work. They also rule out many things that we may think of as recreation, such as: cooking, carpentry, writing, painting, and gardening. (See Permitted Recreational Activities, below.) They may be grouped into labors related to: preparing food, producing clothing, writing and preparing writing materials, and building. A list of the 39 categories is given in an attachment at the end of this Guide.

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[2] These 39 categories are derived from the labors that were needed to build the Mishkan (the Tabernacle that was the predecessor of the Temple in Jerusalem). A list of the fundamental 39 areas is given in Attachment 4 at the end of this Guide. Each primary labor has associated secondary labors that are also prohibited. (Any of these are permitted to save a life, as in a medical emergency.)

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same categories, but interpretation of breadth and detail of the categories of work may differ considerably.

8. Use of Electricity

It appears to me that the most prevalent Conservative view is that electricity is not fire. There is a majority opinion of the Law Committee to this effect (Klein, page 87). Although there is a wide range of Conservative thought and practice concerning use of electricity, one prevalent view is that the use of electricity is allowed for any permitted activity (such as turning on lights for reading) and forbidden for any prohibited activity (such as cooking; see the 39 categories of prohibited activities below and in an attachment at the end of this Guide). This position holds that: using the telephone is acceptable (if done without money), turning on a radio, CD player or television is acceptable, turning on lights is acceptable, heating already prepared (i.e., cooked) solid food in a microwave is acceptable since it is not cooking (nor does it involve heating metal until it is red hot), broiling a raw chicken in an electric rotisserie is not acceptable, and using an electric lawnmower is not acceptable. In addition, the uses of electricity should be in the spirit of Shabbat so, for example, not all (and perhaps few) television programs would be appropriate on Shabbat. Some people who use electricity draw the line at the use of electric motors, or at heating metal until it is red hot. Others do not turn on electric or electronic devices on Shabbat for the sake of the spirit of the day, or for other reasons (and they typically rely on timers to turn lights on and off). (Klein, pages 87 and 92.)
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: In early years, many Orthodox considered electricity to be fire and so its use was considered to be Biblically forbidden. Today the Orthodox view is more varied and complex, but the end result is that manually turning electric appliances on and off is usually seen as forbidden, and using automatic timers to do the same thing is seen as allowed.

9. An Eruv and Carrying on Shabbat

Carrying is allowed outside your house or another private domain only where there is an eruv around the community. (An eruv is a formal enclosure that is used to transform streets, courtyards, and homes into a communal area in which carrying is permitted.) Smaller Jewish communities generally lack an eruv, but many larger communities have one or several. For example, in the Boston area, there is an eruv which includes much of Newton and Brookline north of Route 9, including Harvard Street (for a map of the eruv see the web site at: http://home1.gte.net/hefter/eruv/bound.htm). Where carrying is not permitted, the restriction extends to all objects, including backpacks, purses, and things in ones pockets, but clothing and ornaments may be worn. Some people fashion a house key into a piece of jewelry and then wear it to synagogue. (Klein, pages 81-83.)
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: As far as I know, initiating construction of a

community eruv has only been undertaken by the Orthodox community in this country, although the Conservative community appreciates and benefits from such effort, and sometimes supports it. Often a main motivation for constructing a citywide eruv is to allow women to leave the house with baby strollers. Not all Orthodox in all cities rely on a citywide eruv.

10. Muktzeh, Shevut, and Travel
    In addition to forbidden work, the Rabbis added two types of prohibitions to protect Shabbat. One type of prohibition, called shevut, protects us from things that too closely resemble work, or which are inconsistent with the spirit of Shabbat, or that might lead to doing work. A second type of prohibition relates to objects of work or commerce (such as matches, pens, money). These are considered muktzeh (set aside), and are not used or even touched on Shabbat unless they have a legitimate use consistent with Shabbat. Travel is also limited on Shabbat. Basically, we are to stay within our metropolitan area or within three-quarters of a mile of our home, whichever is greater. (Klein, pages 83-86, 91-92.)

11. Various "Minor" Restrictions
    There are many and various so called minor restrictions, some of which the Conservative movement seems to follow and others that it does not. For example, Orthodox typically avoid use of an umbrella on Shabbat due to the prohibitions against erecting a tent (in miniature), and carrying (where there is no eruv). Although opening an umbrella does not seem to have been formally addressed by the Law Committee, it appears to me that most (but not all) Conservative Jews use umbrellas, sometimes reflecting lack of knowledge or concern but sometimes reflecting the view that it is not really erecting a tent. The point here is that there are many Shabbat restrictions and other laws that have not been addressed by the Law Committee, and my observation of prevalent practice among some observant Conservative Jews indicates an implied lenient halachic view concerning many practices. In this category I would include tearing toilet paper and bathing, both forbidden by some but commonly done by some observant Conservative Jews.
    Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Orthodox Jews generally observe many more restrictions.

12. Use of a Computer on Shabbat
    This is an important topic since so many of us use computers for recreation, including for listening to music and communicating through e-mail. Use of computers involves electricity (see Use of Electricity, above). Use of computers also raises questions concerning such things as writing and erasing. Technology is fast changing, so what I write today about computers may soon be dated. See your Rabbi for guidance in this area.

13. Permitted Recreational Pursuits on Shabbat

Shabbat is a spiritual day, a day of joy and rest, so recreational activities should be consistent with these, as well as consistent with the Shabbat restrictions as outlined above. (Some people who are becoming more observant find themselves bored on Shabbat afternoons, but this is not inevitable.) Many physical activities are allowed on Shabbat, but some only within an enclosed area (called a private domain, see Eruv above) since they may involve carrying. For example, although not universally accepted, many consider it permissible to enjoy the following on Shabbat while observing the halacha: playing ball, gymnastics, swimming, and walking in a park. Many less-physical activities are allowed, such as: having longer meals with family and/or friends perhaps singing zemirot (songs, usually traditional ones), talking, entertaining guests, visiting friends, learning, playing mental games (e.g., Trivial Pursuit), playing chess or checkers, singing, whistling, marital intimacy, thinking and reflecting, and reading. Some people even play board games such as Scrabble that require keeping score, and keep score by putting a bookmark at the appropriate page in a long book, or with chips of different colors, or a peg board set (and so avoid writing). Exertion to the point of fatigue would be out of the spirit of Shabbat, especially for adults. For children, games such as hide-and-seek, jump rope, running and jumping are acceptable. (Klein, pages 89-90.) Once you become used to observing Shabbat, the restrictions become clear and easy to follow, and the focus is on permitted activities consistent with the spirit of Shabbat. Ideally, your Shabbat will be a social, communal experience because it is difficult to have a full Shabbat experience alone.

14. Ending Shabbat

We observe the conclusion of Shabbat with the brief (2 minute) Havdala ceremony performed after nightfall. Nightfall was originally defined as the time when 3 medium size stars may be seen in the sky, and is now often defined as one hour (some hold 72 minutes) after candle lighting time. (Candle lighting time is 18 minutes before sunset.) The minimum time for ending Shabbat (in the temperate zone) is 43 minutes after the standard candle lighting time (which is 25 minutes after sunset). As we light candles before sundown and do havdala after sundown, Shabbat is observed for about 25 hours. We add some time because we are uncertain what to consider the twilight period. Since we can go up in holiness, we consider the twilight period to be part of Shabbat. It is best to consult a luach (Hebrew calendar) for the exact times for candle lighting and Havdala, since these depend on both geographic location and time of year. (Klein, pages 57-58.)

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Basically the same, but may typically wait longer to end Shabbat.

E. Laws of Kashrut (Dietary Laws)

There is a Jewish way of eating. It is described in the Torah and the Talmud and has always been a major part of our peoplehood. We define ourselves, in part, by what and how we eat. We strive to lift our daily eating and drinking to the holy through the observance of kashrut. Each time we eat we are reminded that we are part of a holy people, and we are to control our passions to some extent and only express them in certain ways. In addition, kashrut fosters cohesion in the Jewish community. Some people observe a higher level of kashrut just so others will be comfortable eating in their home. Observance of kashrut is a complex area and even a basic treatment would require many pages. Guidance is available in many books (such as Dresner, Siegel, and Pollack's short book on dietary laws, listed in the bibliography) and from your Rabbi. The following is an extremely simplistic description of some of the major aspects of kashrut.

1. Kosher Meat

   To be kosher, meat (including poultry) must be from a kosher animal that has been slaughtered in a ritual manner (a manner which is designed to both be particularly humane and to facilitate the draining of blood, which is prohibited as food). The shochet (the person who slaughters the animal) must be a person of religious observance and learning. In addition, the meat must be soaked and salted prior to cooking, or it must be broiled, and in some cases only broiling is allowed. The salting and soaking or broiling are done to comply with the Biblical injunction against eating blood. In short, meat may not be cooked or eaten until its blood is removed. This removal of the blood is called kashering the meat. Some kosher butchers salt and soak meat as a service to their customers, and others do not, and sometimes one has to ask the butcher to do this. Typically certain cuts of meat (from the hindquarters, such as T-bone and sirloin) are not used, due to the difficulty of properly preparing them (specifically, removing the sciatic nerve, which may not be eaten). Many types of animals are inherently non-kosher including, for example, pig, rabbit, and horse. None of the meat or milk from such animals is kosher. Cow, sheep, and goats are the most common kosher animals and are defined as such because they have split hooves and chew their cud. Poultry is considered meat, but fish is not. (See the section below on permitted birds and fish.)

2. Kosher Milk

   Only milk from a kosher animal is kosher.

3. Mixing Milk and Meat Forbidden

   In three places the Torah says you shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk. We take this to mean that meat and dairy products, in any form, may not be or eaten together or cooked together. We do not even feed such food to animals. We do not even bring milk based food to a table where our family is eating meat. We wait a certain amount of time between eating

meat and dairy. The time to wait between eating meat and milk products varies with the situation (e.g., especially which is eaten first, and what type of food; for example some people wait longer after eating hard cheese than after drinking milk, and the wait after eating meat is usually much longer than after eating dairy), but the most usual waiting period for eating dairy after meat is 6 hours, but some traditions allow for shorter waiting times (such as 3 hours), and for eating meat after dairy it is ½ hour or even less (some just rinse the mouth). (Dresner & Siegel, page 60.) Although pareve food cooked in a meat pot is not considered meat, we do not eat it directly with dairy or on the same plate as dairy. Similarly pareve food cooked in a dairy pot is not considered dairy, but we do not eat it directly with meat or on the same plate as meat. (Klein, pages 361-362, 365.)

4. Permitted Birds and Fish

There is a general rule to use to tell which fish are kosher, but there is no such rule in the Torah for birds. The Torah lists 24 prohibited birds and mentions some birds that are allowed. Some birds not mentioned in the Torah are accepted as kosher by tradition. Some of the birds accepted as kosher include: pigeon, chicken, Cornish hen, turkey, and goose. Certain birds and fish are allowed and others prohibited. Only fish with both fins and scales are allowed (for example, anchovies, bass, carp, cod, grouper, haddock, halibut, herring, mackerel, perch, pike, salmon, sardine, sole, sunfish, tilapia, trout, tuna, and whitefish are allowed, but eel, squid and catfish, which lack scales, are prohibited). Some fish, like shark and marlin, may have rough skin or even something that looks like scales, but are not considered true scales, so all of these are not kosher, including sharks, rays and marlin. All shellfish are prohibited, so clams, oysters, scallops, lobsters, crabs, shrimp, prawns, and crawfish are all forbidden as food. Snails and frogs are also prohibited, whether they grow in the water or on land. Sea mammals, such as whales, are prohibited. Whales and dolphin are mammals and are not kosher. Only eggs/caviar from a kosher fish are kosher. Species of birds are individually allowed or disallowed. Generally, birds of prey are not allowed. Chicken and turkey are kosher birds. A fish is considered slaughtered when it is taken from the water. Since there is no rule to tell which birds are kosher, we rely on a list of birds that are kosher species. Some of the birds accepted as kosher include: chicken, turkey, and goose. Only eggs from kosher birds are kosher. Birds but not fish must be ritually slaughtered to be kosher to eat. Birds but not fish require salting/soaking or broiling to remove blood. Even a kosher fish may be cooked or processed in ways that make it non-kosher (see the section below on hechshers).

5. Pareve Foods
   Pareve foods are not considered milk or meat. Pareve foods may be cooked with or eaten with either milk or meat. Pareve foods include fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, eggs, and fish. Note that a prepared food may have a printed label saying "non-dairy" and still contain ingredients derived from milk. (See the paragraph below on hechshers.)

6. Cooking Liver
   Liver, a common food, may only be cooked in certain ways. Since liver contains extra blood, our tradition tells us to sprinkle liver with salt and broil it on a grill that allows the blood to drip freely (such as a barbeque), and then to turn it and repeat the salting and broiling on the other side. This process is called kashering by broiling. (Similarly, a heart should be cut open and washed out and then broiled. Unlike other cuts of meat, and liver and heart may not be kashered by salting and soaking.) The blood that drips off is considered nonkosher and so may not be eaten. After broiling, we rinse the salt from the meat and may cook the meat in any other way or eat the meat as is. (The package of giblets that comes with poultry often contains both the liver and the heart.)

7. Kitchenware
   Separate dishes, utensils, silverware, pots and pans should be maintained for milk and meat. So a kosher home has two sets of (distinguishable) dishes for everyday use, one for meat foods and one for dairy foods. Sometimes the dishes are different colors, and sometimes different designs. If your meat and dairy pots are from the same manufacturer, it is sometimes useful to drill a hole in the handle of one set, to distinguish meat from milk.

8. Dishwashers
   Milk and meat dishes should not be washed together in a dishwasher. It is possible to use one dishwasher for both milk and meat dishes (at separate times). In between washing meat and dairy dishes, run the washer through a cycle while empty (without any dishes in it, but with detergent). It is not necessary to have separate dishwasher trays for milk and meat. (Klein, pages 369-370.)

9. Medications, Vitamins and Intravenous Feeding
   What should be done when we cannot find kosher medications and vitamins? Our tradition suggests more leniency for medications and therapeutic vitamins, than for other vitamins or nutritional supplements. Beyond the question of medical need, the question is whether we are eating food: swallowing without chewing may not be considered eating, and a foul-tasting substance may not be considered food. Usually medications are foul-tasting and the foul taste is masked by forming the medication into pills. Pills that are swallowed whole rather than

chewed need not be kosher (since they are not being eaten in the usual way), but pills that are chewed should be kosher. Liquids with a very unpleasant taste need not be kosher, but pleasant tasting liquids should be kosher. Of course, in a case of a medical necessity the life and well-being of the patient overrides considerations of kashrut. Injected medications need not be kosher, since they are not "eaten." (The prohibition concerning eating non-kosher animals does not prohibit deriving any or all benefit from such animals.) There are sources of kosher vitamin pills, and these are preferable to non-kosher. For example, the Star-K certifies some Shaklee vitamins, and the O-U certifies some Freeda vitamins (look for a hechsher on the package, also see www.freedavitamins.com). We do not say a bracha on food ingested unnaturally, such as by intravenous or intragastric feeding.

10. What Foods Require a Hechsher

The food industry has become quite complex, so over the years more foods have come to require a hechsher (a kashrut certification indicating supervision of preparation of the food). Looking at the list of ingredients on a food package does not assure a food is kosher. For example, a bottle of orange-strawberry juice, or a jar of maraschino cherries may contain a widely used red color that comes from a South American insect; maple syrup may be made with lard (as a defoaming agent); European chocolate may contain up to five percent animal fat and still be labeled pure chocolate; and some “natural flavors" in foods are not kosher, such as civet, which comes from an Ethiopian cat.

Some foods may be eaten with no special hechsher. This includes all fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen (uncooked) vegetables, raw rice, flour, sugar, honey, and a few other foods.

The reasons why some products need a hechsher and others do not are as varied as the products themselves, but all relate to the details of the product and its processing. Many canned, boxed, fresh, or frozen foods require a hechsher, such as all meat (including chicken) and meat products, commercially available prepared food (such as frozen or canned soups and soup mixes), baked goods (breads, cakes, cookies, etc.), ice cream, and flavored foods (such as flavored coffee).

A prevalent Conservative view allows cheeses made in America and subject to the Pure Food and Drug Act (except those with actual pieces of meat or meat flavoring added), commercially processed milk (except those with non-kosher ingredients added, as is sometimes done in protein-enriched milks), and commercially produced wines (made in an automated fashion), although wines used for ritual purposes should have a hechsher (Klein, pages 306-307). A more recent position of the Law Committee encourages the use of supervised wines in general.

Conservative Jews assume that the existing American laws concerning the production of milk are sufficient to avoid the mixing or adulteration of cow's milk with milk from a non-kosher animal such as a pig. Some people hold that gelatin is kosher despite being derived from non-kosher sources since it is greatly changed by the process of its production (Dresner and Siegel page 97), while others hold that it is still a meat product, and must meet all the requirements of any other meat product to be kosher. This description is very bare bones. When in doubt, ask a rabbi.

11. Hechsher Symbols

There are many packaged foods, including poultry and meat, available with a hechsher. Many of these may be found in large and small supermarkets nationwide. The hechsher (or symbol) is printed on the label or packaging and indicates that the food is kosher, specifically that the food was prepared under Rabbinic supervision (but not necessarily that it is kosher for Passover). The most common such symbol in the USA is the ▼u (read as O-U) indicating supervision by the Union of Orthodox Congregations of America. Finding the kashrut symbol on food packaging takes some practice. Sometimes it is on the front and very conspicuous (even though small), but sometimes it is on the top, back, or some other part of the wrapper. Many organizations and individual rabbis offer supervision to the food industry (for a fee), so there are many different symbols to look for. The most common and widely accepted hechshers include:


the O-U (the letter U inside a circle)


the Star-K (the letter K inside a small star)


the Chof-K (the letter K inside the Hebrew letter Chof)


the O-K (the letter K inside a small circle)


the KHV (the letters KHV printed in a distinctive combination)

There are many other reliable hechshers, some nationwide and many local. (Note that it is possible to find two identical packages of food in a store, one with a hechsher and one without. Even if the food is produced by the same manufacturer and has the identical name, only the package with the hechsher is to be trusted. It could be that the two seemingly identical products were made, packaged or bottled in completely different plants.) The word "kosher" in the label is not sufficient. If a hechsher symbol is not known to you, it is important to determine whether it may be trusted. The plain letter K is found printed on many food packages, but since it is just a single letter it cannot be the proprietary symbol of any particular organization, and so anyone can put a K on a food package. Unless you happen to know

which Rabbi or organization supervised a product, the plain letter K alone is not a reliable indicator of kashrut. Some Kellogg and Post cereals bear the letter K, and most people trust their kashrut. The list of ingredients printed on a packaged food is an inexact way of determining whether the food is kosher. Ingredients in small amounts need not be listed, and the specific nature of the ingredients often cannot be determined by reading the ingredients list. Packaged foods which are labeled "vegetarian" should have a hechsher since they may contain dyes made from insects, "natural flavors" from non-kosher animals, or other non-kosher ingredients. There is a greater need for supervised foods today than in the past, due to growing complexity and industrialization of the food industry. Foods that are pareve often have the word "pareve" printed next to the hechsher symbol, especially when there may be confusion (e.g., in "cheese" made from tofu.). If a single letter "P" appears next to the hechsher symbol, it means the food is certified as kosher for Pesach. (The letter P does not indicate pareve.) If a single letter "D" appears next to the hechsher symbol, it means the product is dairy. Likewise, a single letter "M" next to the hechsher symbol means meat. The letters DE means the food was prepared on dairy equipment but with no dairy ingredients, and so it may be eaten after a meat meal.

Almost all packaged foods carry the symbol for registered trademark, which is the letter R inside a circle and looks like this: ® . This is never a kashrut symbol.

12. How to Make a Kitchen Kosher

Transforming a non-kosher kitchen into a kosher one can be complex and a Rabbi should be consulted. If you know what you need to do, it may only take a day or so to do it. A kitchen is kosher if there is no non-kosher food in it and the stoves, ovens, appliances, etc. are kosher, and all the kitchenware are kosher, and it is used in a kosher fashion. Turning a treif (non-kosher) kitchen into a kosher kitchen (kashering) requires planning as well as effort. Before kashering the kitchen, discard all non-kosher food and all food prepared in non-kosher dishes. (If you have a dog or cat, ask your rabbi about how to deal with pet food. An animal is allowed to eat non-kosher food, but you do not want it to make your kitchen treif.) There are two main ways to make kitchenware kosher which has been used with non-kosher food: by boiling and by exposing it to flame, and the method required depends on the object in question and the uses to which it has been put. Not all kitchenware can be kashered (made kosher); consult your Rabbi for guidance. After it is kosher, you may use the stove top and oven for all cooking needs, but you should not cook milk and meat in the oven simultaneously, nor milk in an oven soiled with meat residue, nor meat in an oven soiled with milk residue. The refrigerator may be used for both milk and meat, but care should be taken to be sure milk foods do not pick up the taste of meat foods, and the other way around. Keeping foods in sealed containers will take care of this.

13. Washing Dishes in a Kosher Kitchen

We do not wash meat and milk dishes together, and do not wash meat and milk kitchenware with the same sponge or other cleaning instrument. We wash dairy and meat dishes separately using different washing implements, one for dairy and the other for meat. Often colors are used to facilitate identification of cleaning supplies, such as a red sponge or towel for meat kitchenware, and blue for dairy. If you do not have two sinks, and your sink is make of stainless steel, you can clean it between milk and meat. If you have a porcelain sink, you can use two sink ranks, one for meat and one for dairy. With respect to using a dishwasher for both dairy and meat dishes, Klein allows use of a dishwasher for both types of dishes if dairy and meat dishes are washed separately and if, between use for milk and meat, the dishwashing machine is run through a full cycle empty, using some detergent. (Klein pages 369-371). Nowadays most liquid dish soap is marked with a hechsher, but not all cleaning agents are kosher so it is important to look for a hechsher on all cleaning agents. For example, Brillo steel wool pads are not kosher, but some other brands are.

14. Mistakes/Accidents in the Kitchen

Sooner or later accidents or mistakes will happen in the kitchen. There are many possible accidents and various possible ways to deal with them. This topic is too complex to be treated in a few short paragraphs. Klein provides detailed guidance and should be consulted. (Klein pages 366-378). It is best to check with a rabbi when you are not sure what to do.

When accidents or mistakes happen in the kitchen, before contacting your rabbi you should note some things about the situation, especially: was the food hot or cold, when the utensil was last used, what the utensil is made of, and how much food was involved, what type of food, and for how long. Generally accidents involving cold, dry food and glass and metal kitchenware are less serious than those involving hot foods or ceramic kitchenware.

If you are not cooking meat and dairy foods at the same time (which is rarely necessary), it is unlikely to have an accident involving mixing hot foods. Perhaps the most frequent accidental mixing of milk and meat happens when one is feeding a baby while cooking a meat meal and a little milk falls into a meat dish. If it is mother's milk, there is no concern, since mother's milk is not in the same category as milk from a kosher animal. If it is cow's or goat's milk (or formula), and if the milk fell directly on the meat, or fell directly into the pot of meat food, or even just splashed on a meat pot while it was cooking, the halacha depends on the specifics of the situation and you should consult a rabbi.

Accidents involving using the wrong eating or cooking utensils are more likely than those

concerning mixing meat and dairy foods. The halacha depends on the temperature and other aspects of the food. You should consult a rabbi.

Although we wash meat and dairy dishes separately, sometimes by accident a dairy dish is washed with meat dishes, or the other way around. If this is done in cold water, the dishes are still kosher. If washed in hot water the rules are more complex and a rabbi should be consulted.

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Basically the same, but there are many more restrictions and stringencies in Orthodox observance. For example, a widely followed Conservative position allows swordfish and sturgeon, whereas these are forbidden for Orthodox. The greatest differences may involve cheese and wine (Klein, pages 306-307). It is my observation that the Orthodox wait longer between meat and milk food (6 hours is typical). Orthodox typically take specific steps to observe the prohibition concerning eating insects. There are various and differing types of stringencies found in various Orthodox communities, depending on the local Rabbi. Certain hechshers are not accepted as valid by some Conservative communities, and more are not accepted by certain Orthodox communities. To my knowledge, there are no Conservative Rabbinical groups overseeing the kashrut of nationally marketed foods. In the past 10 to 20 years, many Orthodox have restricted themselves to glatt kosher meat and chalav yisrael dairy products. This is widely seen in Conservative circles as unnecessary stringency.

F. Special Laws of Kashrut on Pesach

Pesach kashrut (dietary laws for Passover) are more exacting than kashrut for other times of the year because of the absolute prohibition against eating any chametz (leavened grain product) at all, no matter how little. This holds for the full 8 days of the holiday, not just the seder nights. Even a basic discussion of the dietary laws for Pesach would take many pages. A few highlights are given here. (Also see the Pesach references listed in the section on resources on the web.)

1. Prohibited Grains

   Five grains are prohibited: wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye. We may not eat, own, possess or benefit from these grains unless we are sure they have not leavened. If these grains have leavened, they are referred to as chametz. The prohibition includes grain alcohol (such as, beer, rye, scotch, and bourbon). Ashkenazic custom also prohibits millet, corn, legumes (e.g., peanuts, peas), and rice (but these kitniot are allowed for Sefardim, and the definition of a legume, the word often used to translate kitniot, is not completely consistent with that of scientific botany). Although kitniot are forbidden, they are not chametz. Matzah is permitted only if it is supervised at all stages of preparation to assure no leavening has had a chance to occur at any point in its manufacture. Tofu is forbidden since it is made from soybeans. Beer

and grain alcohol are forbidden.

2. Food Not Needing a Hechsher for Pesach
   Certain foods do not need a special hechsher to be used for Pesach, including: plain tea (not herbal), sugar, salt (without iodine), honey, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables (including string beans; but not including other legumes, millet, corn or rice), eggs, and coffee (regular, but not instant, flavored, or decaffeinated), so long as nothing has been added to them (e.g., sometimes coffee has cereal additives). Some people do not use garlic on Pesach, but there is no reason for this; garlic is allowed. (Klein, page 116.)

3. Food Needing a Hechsher for Pesach
   Keeping kosher for Pesach requires especially careful shopping for food. Most packaged foods that are not obviously chametz still require a hechsher indicating that they are kosher for Pesach. Looking at the listed ingredients is not sufficient since some ingredients are not listed, and some listed ingredients may have been made with flour or alcohol (which is derived from grain). The prohibition against chametz is absolute and even a small amount of chametz makes a food not suitable to eat on Pesach. Labels that say "Kosher for Passover" may not be trusted unless they bear the name of a Rabbi or reliable kashrut organization.

4. Food Needing a Hechsher for Pesach if Bought on Pesach
   Food bought on Pesach is subject to a somewhat different rule than food bought prior to Pesach for use on Pesach. If food bought before Pesach contains an unintentional small amount of chametz, the chametz is nullified and the food is considered pure (i.e., without chametz). But this nullification is not followed on Pesach, so even the smallest amount of chametz makes a food forbidden. The following foods may be bought before Pesach without a special hechsher for Pesach, but require such a hechsher if bought on Pesach: frozen (uncooked) vegetables and fruits, milk, butter, cottage cheese, sour cream, and spices.

5. How to Kasher a Kitchen for Pesach
   Making a (kosher) kitchen kosher for Pesach is a complex topic in itself requiring consultation with competent authorities; this paragraph gives only a brief glimpse of what is needed. All chametz food is removed. The kitchen and the whole house are cleaned, and especially all areas and places where food was stored, prepared or eaten (such as stove, oven, refrigerator, freezer, grocery cabinets). A metal sink may be kashered by cleaning and boiling water. A porcelain sink should be cleaned and used with a dish rack. There are various rules for cleaning (not presented here, but see Siegel, Dresner, and Pollock, pages 74-78 and 93-96). Dishes used during the year cannot be used on Pesach and are put in storage or their cabinets sealed. Generally, pots and pans and their covers, and all-metal utensils may be made kosher

for Pesach if thoroughly cleaned, not used for a day, and then immersed in boiling water or subjected to broiling temperatures, commensurate with their usual method of use during the year. Earthenware (including china and pottery) containers cannot be kashered for Pesach because they are too porous. Pyrex may fall in the category of earthenware. Bakeware (metal or glass) may not be kashered for Pesach. (Klein, pages 112-114; and RA1988, page 215-216.) A relatively recent decision of the Law Committee makes it easier to use dishwashers on Pesach. An acceptable process to make a dishwasher kosher for Pesach involves leaving the dishwasher unused for 24 hours, then running the dishwasher through without dishes but with detergent. A ruling of the Law Committee describes the method for kashering a microwave oven for Pesach by washing it and then boiling a cup of water in it. This method is possible only if the microwave does not contain a browning element.

6. Dentures and Toothbrushes
   Dentures may be cleaned thoroughly. Some do not use their dentures for chametz for 24 hours before cleaning them. It is reasonable to buy new toothbrushes for Pesach and discard the old ones.

7. Searching for and Burning Chametz
   The hagadda describes the ritual for searching for and burning the chametz found, and nullifying any remaining chametz. Basically, the search is done at night and the burning is done the next morning, which is the morning before the first seder. (If the first day of Pesach is on Sunday, the search is done Thursday night and burning on Friday morning, one day earlier than usual.)

8. Selling Chametz
   On Pesach, in addition to not being allowed to eat or benefit from chametz, we are not allowed to own or possess chametz. Since it is usually impossible or impractical to rid our home of all chametz, a system was developed to allow us to divest ourselves of chametz in a practical fashion: we sell any chametz in our possession to a non-Jew. The sale is done to formally and technically remove the chametz from our possession. The chametz is ideally isolated in one place. The sale is done by a Rabbi, so the details of the sale are legally correct. We arrange for the sale a few days before the holiday. The Rabbi takes appropriate steps so that we regain legal ownership of our chametz after the holiday ends. (Siegel, Dresner, and Pollack, page 75.)

9. Medications On Pesach
   You should <u>never</u> stop taking a prescribed medication without first consulting with your physician, and this is all the more important on Pesach because it lasts eight days. Your rabbi

can give you guidance on various forms of prescription and non-prescription medications. One issue is that pills often are made with binders that are hametz. Concerning pills on Pesach, the Law Committee has said, "If the medicine is required for life sustaining therapy, it may be used on Pesah. If it is not for life sustaining therapy, some authorities permit, while others prohibit. Consult your rabbi. In all cases, capsules are preferable to pills."

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Basically the same, but there are many more restrictions and stringencies in Orthodox observance.

G. Yom Tov (Yontif, Major Holiday)

1. List of Yamim Tovim

   The major holidays are as listed below. The dates shown are for the Jewish calendar. Approximate times of years are shown. All holidays begin at sunset the night before the date shown. For secular dates for the current year, consult a luach (Hebrew calendar). Note that in Israel, the dates for the holidays differ somewhat. Rosh HaShana is observed for two days everywhere, but in Israel the other festivals are celebrated for one day. For example, in Israel the first day of Pesach is considered a full holiday, and the second day is not, while outside Israel we observe the first two days of Pesach as full yamim tovim. (Some Conservative Jews outside of Israel follow the minhag (custom) of Eretz Israel, but in my experience relatively few people do this.) This Guide was written for people <u>outside</u> of Israel, and no effort was made to describe the minhag of Eretz Israel.

Rosh HaShana	1st and 2nd of Tishri (September/October)
Yom Kippur	10th of Tishri (September/October)
Sukkot	15th and 16th of Tishri (September/October)
Shemini Atzeret	22nd of Tishri (September/October)
Simchat Torah	23rd of Tishri (September/October)
Passover	15th and 16th and 21st and 22nd of Nisan (March/April/May)
Shavuot	6th and 7th of Sivan (May/June)

2. The Rules Concerning Work on Major Holidays

   The rules for the major holidays are basically the same as Shabbat, except that cooking for the holiday, transferring (but not starting) a fire, and carrying are allowed (unless the holiday falls on Shabbat). (Klein, pages 97-99.)

   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Generally the same.

3. Lighting Candles and Reciting Kiddush for a Major Holiday

   Candle lighting for major holidays (including Rosh HaShana) is similar to that for Shabbat. (The bracha is Baruch ata ... asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov.)

If the holiday falls on Shabbat we light one set of candles on Friday night for both the holiday and for Shabbat, and we add two words to the bracha saying Baruch ata ... asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat vshel Yom Tov.) On Yom Kippur the bracha for lighting candles is Baruch ata ... asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom HaKippurim. If Yom Kippur begins on a Friday night the bracha is Baruch ata ... asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat vshel Yom HaKippurim. On all major holidays, including Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur but not the last two days of Pesach, the person lighting the candles also says a second bracha: Baruch ata ... sheheheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh.) Candle lighting on the first night of a holiday is usually done 18 minutes before sunset, and not after nightfall. Candle lighting on the second night is done after nightfall and from a pre-existing flame. (We do not start a new fire on a Yom Tov.) Sometimes one of the intermediate days of a festival falls on Shabbat and so begins Friday night, and in that case the kiddush we say is identical to the usual Friday night kiddush. No matter if a household consists of only men or only women, or only one person, both candle-lighting and kiddush are done for every major holiday. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 303-305).
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Similar.

4. Selichot Before Rosh HaShanna
   In America it has become custom to recite selichot (penitential) prayers in the synagogue late at night on the Saturday before Rosh HaShanna. (If Rosh HaShanna falls on Tuesday or earlier in the week, then Selichot is said the preceding Saturday night.) (Klein, pages 178-179.)
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Often also recite selichot prayers daily, either in the morning or at night, in the days leading up to Rosh HaShanna.

5. Fasting on Yom Kippur
   We fast from before sundown on erev Yom Kippur until after nightfall the next evening (so the fast lasts 25 rather than 24 hours). As during all our fasts, we neither eat nor drink. The fast should serve as a catalyst for repentance. It is traditional to avoid marital relations and wearing leather shoes as part of the abstinence of the day. (Klein, pages 209-211.)
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Generally the same.

6. Chol ha-Moed

The intermediate days of Sukkot and Pesach are observed as half-holidays. The last intermediate day of Sukkot is called Hoshana Rabba, and it is the last official day of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are considered festivals in their own right). There are variations in the daily prayer services. Today most Jews conduct their work as on regular weekdays. (Klein, page 136.)

Chol ha Moed Sukkot 17th to the 21st of Tishri (September/October)
Chol ha Moed Passover 17th to the 20th of Nisan (March/April/May)

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Generally the same, although some Orthodox avoid most work.

H. Minor Holidays and Fast Days

1. The Minor Holidays and Their Dates

Hanukka 25th Kislev to 2nd of Tevet (November/December/January)
Tu B'Shevat 15th of Shevat (January/February)
Purim 14th of Adar (February/March)
Lag B'Omer 18th of Iyyar (April/May)
Tisha B'Av 9th of Av (July/August)

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same.

2. Minor Fast Days

On both minor and major fast days, we fast to mourn the events of the past and to encourage personal and communal repentance. There are four minor public fast days during the year. They are observed with a daylight fast (beginning at sunrise) rather than a full day fast (beginning at sundown of the preceding afternoon). The minor fast days are:

Fast of Gedalya, the day following Rosh HaShana
Tenth of Tevet (in December or January)
Fast of Esther, the day before Purim (or the Thursday before Purim, when Purim begins on Saturday night)
Seventeenth of Tammuz (in June or July)

These fasts are postponed one day and observed on Sunday if their dates fall on Shabbat. These are lenient fast days. There is no prohibition on leather shoes, marital relations, bathing, or work. Leniencies are allowed, for example for people who are ill, for nursing mothers, and for women who have recently given birth. (Klein, page 246.) Even for those not fasting, these fast days should retain their solemn spirit. We break the fasts after nightfall.

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same.

3. The Rules for Minor Holidays
   Generally work is allowed on these minor holidays. Generally meat and wine are avoided during the nine days prior to Tisha B'Av, but allowed on Shabbat. (See paragraph number 8 on Tisha B'Av, below.) We do not light candles or say kiddush for a minor holiday.
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Generally the same.

4. Hanukka
   Hanukka is known by several names, including the festival of lights and the festival of freedom. It is a festival of liberation and hope. It commemorates the liberation of the Jews and rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the time of the Macabees. We light candles for Hanukka, one on the first night, two on the second, and so on until we light eight candles on the last night. Only one Hanukka menora (or Hanukkia) is required per household, but each person may light their own menora. (If you are traveling, you may light where you are staying, if it is legal and safe. Alternatively, you may rely on someone else lighting a menorah in your home, and not light yourself while you travel.) Many observe this holiday in small ways in addition to lighting candles by eating fried foods on Hanukka, such as latkes (potato pancakes), playing the game of dreidl, and exchanging gifts. (Klein, page 232).

5. Tu B'Shevat
   This minor holiday occurs 7 weeks after Hanukka and marks the beginning of the year for trees (which has some ritual significance in Israel). It is customary to eat fruit from Israel such as carob and almonds. In Israel, people (especially children) plant trees. People outside Israel can arrange to have trees planted there through the Jewish National Fund. Some people have adopted what was originally a kabalistic practice and hold a Tu B'Shevat seder in which foods that are mentioned in the Bible are eaten. The order of the Tu B'Shevat seder varies greatly and depends on family or local custom.

6. Purim
   Purim is a joyous festival. The basic observance is reading the Megilla Esther (scroll of Esther) in the evening and again in the morning. This is a festival which is a favorite of many children. We do things in the synagogue which would usually be thought of as inappropriate. We try to drown out the name of Haman (the villain in the story of Purim) when it is read from the Megilla. This is usually done with groggers (noisemakers). Children and even adults often dress in costumes, especially erev Purim. Many synagogues have Purim carnivals and masquerade contests. Many synagogues have a special collection for the poor at services on Purim because it is traditional to give charity to the poor on this day. The Purim Shpiel (amateur play or monolog) is regaining popularity. We drink alcoholic beverages on Purim, and it is allowed to become intoxicated. It is traditional to deliver or send Mishloah Manot,

little gifts of several ready-to-eat foods (such as nuts, pastry, candy, cheese), to our friends and relatives on the day of Purim. There is a special three cornered pastry eaten on Purim, called hamuntashen, with fruit centers. The festival of Purim falls in the Jewish month of Adar. In leap years, an extra month is added to the year and there are two months of Adar, called Adar I and Adar II. In leap years, Purim falls in the second month of Adar. (Klein, pages 145-146, 236-240.)

7. Lag B'Omer
   Lag B'Omer is the 33rd day of the counting of the omer, and is a break in the semi-mourning period between Pesach and Shavuot. It is sometimes called the scholar's holiday because a plague among the students of Rabbi Akiva ceased on that day. (Klein, pages 145-146.)

8. Tisha B'Av
   Tisha B'Av is observed as a full fast day. The fast begins before sundown the day before and ends after nightfall on Tisha B'Av. As in mourning, the tradition is to abstain from marital relations and not wear leather shoes. When Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbat, the fast is postponed until Sunday. There are only 2 full fast days each year: Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur. If fasting is problematic, a Rabbi should be consulted for guidance in your particular situation. Under Jewish law, one must not fast against medical advice. Elderly in particular should seek medical guidance concerning fasting and medications. Tisha B'Av is the only day when tallit and tefillin are worn in the afternoon for Mincha rather than for Shacharit. There are no home rituals for Tisha B'Av. (Klein, page 249-251.)
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same.

I. New Days of Observance

There are four new days of observance. These are not halachically mandated. (However, in recent years many congregations have come to recite Hallel on Yom Ha-Atzmaut, with the usual blessing.) Many people light a 24-hour yahrzeit candle for Yom Hashoah (the candle is lit at nightfall with no blessing). The observances and customs for these days are still evolving. The new days of observance are generally thought of as minor holidays. They are:

Yom HaShoah	27 Nisan (April/May), Holocaust Remembrance Day
Yom HaZikaron	4th of Iyyar (April/May), Israeli Memorial Day
Yom Ha-Atzmaut	5th of Iyyar (April/May), Israeli Independence Day
Yom Yerushalayim	28th of Iyyar (May), Jerusalem Day (commemorates liberation of the city in 1967)

The dates for some of these holidays may vary a little from year to year, due to lack of correspondence of the calendar date and the day of the week, and the resulting conflict with Shabbat.

J. Rosh Hodesh

There are 12 months in the Jewish calendar, which is a lunar calendar, and 13 months in a leap year. There are 7 leap years within each 19 year cycle. The beginning of each month is called Rosh Hodesh (new month), which may be one or two days. Rosh Hodesh is often thought of as being of particular interest to women, and in the past it was the custom for women to refrain from work on Rosh Hodesh. (I know of some husbands who make it a point to take their wives out to dinner on Rosh Hodesh.) On Rosh Hodesh, Hallel is recited.[3] (Rosh Hodesh Tishri is celebrated as Rosh HaShana, and is not treated as a usual Rosh Hodesh.)

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: The same calendar is used.

K. Eating

All food eaten should be kosher (see section D above), and a bracha should be said upon eating and drinking (even water).

1. Eating Out

   Whenever possible, when eating out one should eat at a kosher restaurant, or at least at a strictly vegetarian restaurant. Some leniencies are possible in eating out, in the interests of living in today's world and in the interest of interacting with the non-Jewish world. For example, eating cold kosher food from non-kosher dishes is permitted when necessary (that is, when other food is not available). Many people take greater liberties, such as eating kosher fish broiled on and covered with tin foil, or simply eating kosher food prepared in non-kosher dishes. When eating out at non-kosher establishments, one should ask many questions (e.g., is the rice pilaf made with chicken stock, is this made with a meat broth, is bouillon used in making this dish), since many foods are often prepared with meat stock or other treif ingredients without this being mentioned on the menu. (Arzt, 1940.)

2. Brachot Before and After Food

   Brachot (the plural of bracha) are said audibly before eating food. The proper bracha is often clear (as over wine or bread). When the proper bracha is not clear, shehakol will be suitable or at least suffice. (It is best to try to determine the proper bracha. If you are not sure if it is from a tree but are sure it grew from the ground, you could say ha-adamah.) A mixed dish takes the bracha for the predominant food (e.g., for a lettuce salad containing small pieces of

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[3] In order, the months are: Tishri, Heshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, Adar, Nisan, Iyyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Av, Elul. The months are 29 and 30 days long and regular years consist of 354 days. Frequent leap years are needed to keep the lunar Jewish calendar in synch with the solar year. In leap years, a second month of Adar is added to the calendar. Seven out of every 19 years are leap years. There are other complexities to the Jewish calendar, so a current luach should be consulted for exact dates.

egg, use the bracha for lettuce). If our meal has two foods which take the same bracha, we say the bracha only once. If we begin our meal with bread, the hamotzi bracha covers all the other foods in the meal; no additional blessings are needed before other foods. The only exception to this is wine, which always commands its own blessing. The brachot over food all start with the words, *Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam*. We finish the bracha in one of 6 ways, depending on what we are eating:

a. *HaMotzi lechem min ha-aretz* (bring forth bread from the earth):
   - over bread and matzah.
b. *Borei pri ha-gafen* (who creates fruit of the vine):
   - over wine (and grape juice).
c. *Borei minei mezonot* (who creates various types of food):
   - over non-bread, baked goods made from the 5 grains (wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt). This includes cookies and cakes.
d. *Borei pri ha-etz* (who creates fruit of the tree):
   - over fruit of a tree in its usual forms (e.g., a raw apple).
e. *Borei pri ha-adama* (who creates fruit of the ground):
   - over produce which grows in or from the ground, in its usual forms (e.g., fresh strawberries, cooked beans).
f. *Shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro* (through whose word all was created):
   - over all other foods (including water). This includes a wide range of foods, such as: soda, milk, cheese, candy, fish, and meat.

After eating a meal that included bread (more than a little snack), one says birkat ha-mazon, or in Yiddish bentchen. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 336-343). A paragraph for holidays is added near the beginning of the birkat ha-mazon both on full holidays and on chol ha-moed Likewise, a short sentence is added toward the end of the birkat ha-mazon on both full festivals and chol ha-moed (the sentence begins ha-rachaman). Different paragraphs are added near the beginning on Hanukka and Purim. All these additions may be found in almost any siddur or bentcher. (A bentcher is a booklet which contains the birkat ha-mazon, the grace after meals.) After eating food other than bread, one of two brachot of thanks is said depending on the food. A relatively short bracha ahrona (grace) is said after certain grains (wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt), certain fruit (grapes, figs, olives, pomegranates, or dates, as they are mentioned in the Bible), or wine. A one-sentence bracha (borei n'fashot) is said after all other food. Many Conservative Jews do not know about this part of the halacha. (Klein, pages 42-47, and *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 349-350.)

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Basically the same.

3. Washing Hands
   A bracha is said after ritually washing one's hands, such as before eating bread (asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim). (This is one of the few instances of making a bracha after performing the act.)
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same.

4. Bracha Over New Foods
   A sheheheyanu blessing is said before eating a new fruit (sheheheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh). The new fruit is often from a new harvest, as on the first blueberries you eat in the harvest season. We also say this blessing before we eat a fruit for the first time in a year, even if it is not from a new harvest.
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same.

L. Scheduled Prayer

The prayers in the siddur have many themes, including: acknowledging the might of God, praising the powers of God, petition for things that have not yet occurred, thanksgiving for all the good we have experienced, statements of repentance, and statements of ideals and hope for the future. Prayer can make us reflect. For example, early in the morning prayers we ask, "What are we? What is our life?" Yet it may be difficult to pray. The daily services are structured in a way that helps some people. The morning service begins with introductory psalms. Some people find the sheer regularity and consistency of daily prayer helpful, especially as they master the various prayers. There are various approaches people take to the obstacles to prayer. Some say the first and last sentence of each prayer, when reading the whole prayer would take too long. Others sometimes say only the essential prayers of a service. Some concentrate more on some parts of the siddur one day, and on other parts other days. Some add their own personal prayers to those written in the siddur. Sometimes the content of a prayer does not fit our immediate personal needs, but usually the prayers are worded in the plural, so we are praying for the community as well as ourselves. There are themes to the various prayers, and we can and should try to focus on the meaning of each prayer as we get to it. We may supplement the standard prayers with our own spontaneous prayers of confession, repentance, thanksgiving, supplication, or anything else. At the end of the Amida (Shmoneh Esrei) is one traditional place in the service to do that. (Klein, pages 13 and 23.) Many find that prayer gets easier with practice, particularly when first learning the prayers. Prayer is a holy undertaking, and we should pray in a clean setting while appropriately dressed, whether at home or in the synagogue.

1. Shacharit, Minha, and Maariv
   Prayer (davening in Yiddish or tefilla in Hebrew) is an obligation for both men and women. The three daily services are obligatory for men. Most prayers may be said individually or with

a minyan, but a few prayers may only be said with a minyan (such as kaddish). Men wear tallit and tefillin during weekday Shacharit. (Men who do not wear tefillin at Shacharit usually lack knowledge of how to put on tefillin. Help with this is almost always available at a synagogue. In addition, there is a relatively new video that teaches this: *The Ties that Bind* - see the bibliography). Tefillin are not worn on Shabbat or Yom Tov. Some women wear tallit and tefillin. The Conservative view is still developing concerning obligations of women, but one respected position is that women may voluntarily assume time-bound mitzvot such as thrice daily prayer and the wearing of tefillin but, if so undertaken, this must be done on a lifelong basis. Another view that has been suggested more recently is that women have equal obligation for daily prayer. It appears to me that emphasis on synagogue attendance has left some Conservative Jews with the mistaken impression that the synagogue is the only legitimate place for daily prayer. In fact, one should pray three times each day even if one cannot get to a synagogue, and even if we pray in English translation (see the next section and section 12). We should not eat a full meal before praying shacharit.

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Similar for men, however it is more common for Orthodox to pray alone, at home or at work, when they do not go to a synagogue to pray with a minyan. Often unmarried Orthodox men do not wear a tallit, although they do wear tefillin. Orthodox hold that women are not obligated by positive time-bound mitzvot (especially daily mitzvot, such as Shacharit, Minha, and Maariv), and this exemption is broadly interpreted, but also has some exceptions. The topic of women and prayer is getting renewed attention in some Orthodox communities.

2. Praying Outside the Synagogue

If you cannot get to synagogue, we may fulfill our obligations for thrice daily prayer at home, in the office, or wherever we may be (but not in a bathroom, and the place should be clean). Kippa, tallis and tefillin are worn at home as they are in the synagogue (tefillin only for weekday shacharit, and tallis only for shacharit). The prayers we say when davening alone are basically the same as those said in synagogue, except that we do not say the several parts of the service that require a minyan: the Borachu, any form of the Kaddish, the Kedusha and the Birkat Kohanim (the priestly blessing) since we do not repeat the Amida, and the Torah service. (Klein, page 14.) We try to face east, toward the site of the Temple in Jerusalem. Some people put a mizrach (an indicator of the direction of east) on the eastern wall of their house as a reminder. We pray Shacharit wearing tallit and tefillin (on Shabbat only tallit). Mincha and Maariv are very short, and some people carry a fold-out card in their wallet that contains the weekday Mincha and Maariv services. We stand when praying the Amida. It is permissible to pray in English translation if one cannot read the Hebrew. The times of the three daily services vary with the time of sunrise and sunset but may be described and practiced as follows: Shacharit from dawn until one third of the daylight hours have passed,

Mincha from 12:30 p.m. (standard time, not daylight savings time) until sunset, and Maariv from sunset through the night but preferably before midnight. (Klein, pages 12, 13, 35, 37 and 38.) (Also see Praying in English, below.) It is preferable to pray at the same time as your congregation. Although we can satisfy our requirement for daily prayer alone, daily communal prayer (tefilla b'tzibur) is highly valued by our tradition. We should try to pray together with the congregation whenever possible.
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Generally the same. There is some variety of opinion on the times for daily prayer.

3. Women and Aliyot
   Women may have aliyot in most congregations.
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: No aliyot for women

4. Counting Women in a Minyan
   Women are counted in a minyan in many congregations. Much of the Conservative thinking in this area was presented in 1988 in an edited book titled, "The Ordination of Women As Rabbis: Studies and Responsa" (see bibliography). Since then, several additional influential journal articles have been published in this area (e.g., by Professor Judith Hauptman, of the Jewish Theological Seminary). According to the Roth teshuva (reprinted in the 1988 book just referenced) a woman may be counted in a minyan if and only if she explicitly assumes the obligation of daily prayer and thereby becomes as obligated as any man. In my experience, the question of the obligations of women is not often mentioned or discussed in lay Conservative circles. (The topic of the obligations of men also is not often discussed, although obligations are an essential halachic topic.)
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Women are not counted in a minyan. The proper role of women is often discussed in lay circles, especially among Modern Orthodox.

5. Women as Prayer Leaders
   Women may lead services in many congregations.
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Women do not lead services. Some Orthodox women get together for women's prayer groups, such as on Rosh Hodesh.

6. Women and Kippa, Tallit and Tefillin
   Increasingly we find women wearing a kippa, tallit, and/or tefillin. I estimate that the proportion of women wearing any one of these at a typical synagogue service is well under 50%, and some women wear a kippa or a tallit, but not the other two. Some congregations are strongly encouraging their women members to wear one or more of these. Some women consider these male garments and do not wear them for that reason. In my experience, the

decision to wear these objects usually is made based on issues of equality rather than religious significance or obligation. (Of course, no one wears tefillin on Shabbat or any of the major holidays.)
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: It is very rare for a woman to wear a tallit, kippa or tefillin.

7. Children and Minyan
Pre-bar/bat mitzvah children are not counted in a minyan.
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Generally the same.

8. Time to Arrive at Services
One should arrive when services are scheduled to start. At the very least one should arrive before Borchu and stay until the end of services. Those saying kaddish should know that there is a mourners' kaddish very close to the start of the service, even before Borchu.
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same.

9. What if I Arrive Late at Services?
It is best to arrive on time. For the morning service, if you cannot arrive on time it is best to arrive so you can say the Borchu with the congregation. This is shortly after the start of the service. In any case, the goal is to say the Amida with the congregation. If you arrive late, assess where the congregation is (or ask someone), and then decide what prayers to say alone and when to join the congregation. Sometimes you can catch up, other times you may need to omit some prayers. You should say at least these two prayers, even if the congregation has already said them:
   - Shema and its blessings, before and after. (These are found before the Shmoneh Esrei, or Amida. See page 107 in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*.)
   - The Amida. Standing to say the Amida is proper, even if others are sitting. (See page 115 in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*.)

   If you do not arrive in time to say both the Shema (and its blessings) and then join the congregation in the Amida, you should say these on your own. If you arrive late and have enough time, say Baruch She'amar, Ashrei, and Yishtabach, and on Shabbat/holidays say these and Nishmat, and other prayers as time allows. (See pages 83, 96, 104, and 106 in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*.)

   As we find a seat we try not to disturb someone saying the Mourner's Kaddish or praying the Shemona Esrei.
   Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Same.

10. Praying with the Congregation
    Sometimes during a service we find ourselves behind (or sometimes ahead of) the kahal (congregation) in the siddur (prayer book), perhaps because we read more slowly, or perhaps because we were concentrating on a particular prayer. We should make particular effort to pray at least the following with the congregation: the Borachu, the Shema, and the Kedusha (of the Amida).

11. What if I Cannot Keep Up?
    Sometimes the cantor or shaliach tzibur (prayer leader) reads faster than we can. This happens particularly often when we are relatively unfamiliar with the service or our fluency with Hebrew is weaker. One approach to deal with this is to say the first and last sentence of each paragraph, since these usually capture the main idea of the prayer. Another approach is to pray the most central prayers fully (see What If I Arrive Late at Services, above).

12. Praying in English
    It is perfectly legitimate to pray in English, in the synagogue or at home, although Hebrew is preferred. The importance of Hebrew is that it is our sacred form of speech, the language of the Bible. Since Hebrew is phonetic, it is relatively easy to learn to read. The paragraph-by-paragraph translations found in the typical siddur help us understand the prayers, even if we are not fluent in Hebrew. (It is also possible to find a siddur with line-by-line translation, but not published by the Conservative movement.)

13. Who May Touch a Torah
    There is considerable misunderstanding about who may touch a Torah. The basic principle is that a Torah scroll does not become defiled or impure due to being touched by someone who is ritually impure. So a woman may touch or carry a Torah no matter what time of month she is in. A person who has dirty hands should not touch or carry a Torah.
    Comparison with typical Orthodox views: The same.

14. Daily and Other Prayers When Ill
    Sometimes a person who is ill is physically or mentally too weak to pray, in which case the person is excused from prayer. Other times a person who is ill may have the physical and mental strength to pray, but may not be able to stand, or the person or room may be soiled with feces or urine. With respect to prayer, posture is less of an issue than cleanliness. If necessary, one may pray in any position. One should not use the name of God when soiled with feces or urine. What should one do about the thrice daily obligation for prayer when ill? If one is unable to stand, one should pray while sitting, putting on tallit and tefillin as appropriate. If one is unable to sit, but is continent of bladder and bowel, one should pray

lying in bed. If one is incontinent, one may pray when clean. Only if one can be assured of remaining continent and clean for a sufficient time, one may put on tallit and tefillin. It is better to put on tallis and tefillin while lying down than not to do so at all. If a person has a urinary catheter but the person's clothing is clean, the person may pray. A person who passes feces through a colostomy or other artificial opening may pray if the opening is clean and covered. Concerning brachot for various things (such as before eating or drinking), these should be said unless one is soiled with or can smell urine or feces, in that case one eats or drinks without a brocha. In general, one should not pray while soiled or in a room soiled with or smelling of feces or urine. If the excrement is covered or out of sight and cannot be smelled, one may pray. Prayers for health, and deathbed prayers are appropriate at any time but the various names of God should not be used by persons or in rooms soiled with feces or urine. Comparison with typical Orthodox views: The same.

15. What Do We Pray For?

We pray the traditional prayers in the siddur, and we can also pray our own private prayers. Some prayers in the siddur are sincere requests or fervent appeals to our maker, while other prayers are just statements. Some of the prayers in the siddur are in the singular, and some (like the Shmoneh Esrei) are in the plural. Some of the themes and topics I have noted in the siddur are: giving thanks for what we have (family, friends, health, etc.), statements of confession and repentance, petitioning God (e.g, for help in living a moral life, for health for ourselves and others, for success in business, and for keeping us from enemies and from evil and evil people), expressing ideals/hopes (e.g, for a moral, just and peaceful world, for an end to evil and injustice), acknowledging the unity and power of God and the magnificence of his works, praising God and recognizing his miracles, acknowledging the proper way to live (through mitzvot), remembering the origins of and some of the history of our people (such as, and especially, our liberation from slavery in Egypt), recognizing our own limited role in the world, and expressing faith in God. With this range of topic, the siddur may be seen as a very versatile prayer book. In our personal prayers we may pray for little things (e.g., help me get to school on time) or big things (e.g., keep my children healthy). We pray for different things at different times, at different stages in our life, and as world events happen and change. We may pray for most anything except a change of what has already happened. Inserting our own prayers during the traditional prayers, or composing our own prayers at any time, lets us express our specific fears and hopes. This is legitimate and valued, and can help draw us closer to God. If we do not know enough Hebrew, we may pray in English. (Klein, page 12.-39.)

16. Kavana in Prayer

The ideal is to pray with kavana (intention, concentration, feeling). It is not always easy to do so, and often kavana seems to elude us. A few suggestions to promote kavana which I have heard are: to know the words of the prayer and their meaning, to concentrate on the meaning of the words and try not to let the mind drift, and to be aware to whom we pray. Having a regular place where you pray is traditional and can help you concentrate. Learning the layout and content of the siddur you are using helps avoid the confusion or distraction of figuring out what prayers apply on a particular day. Some close their eyes or look upward when they want additional concentration. Of course, we should avoid distractions while we pray; some face a wall when they pray. Some find that they become more engaged when they learn the origin of a prayer, and the laws and customs related to it. Praying slowly can help with concentration and understanding. Kavana is especially important when saying the first line of the Shema and the first bracha of the Shmoneh Esrei.

17. Mi Sheberach - Prayer for Someone Who is Ill

There is a time during the Torah reading of services when it is traditional to say a public prayer for those who are ill. Typically the rabbi says the prayer, and the congregants provide the names of people who are ill. It is traditional to use the ill person's name and the name of his or her mother for this purpose. In addition to praying for the person's well-being, this is a way of telling the community about an illness. It is appropriate to inquire of someone who has said a mi sheberach, and to wish a full healing for the ill person. (Klein, page 272.)

M. Some Family-Related Topics

Only a few family related topics are treated here. Not treated are many laws related to the way we are to interact with other family members.

1. Marriage and Divorce

Marriage is the ideal state for adults, and is governed by halacha. One of the tractates in the Talmud concerning marriage has the title Kiddushin, or holiness. A Jewish wedding is the ceremony creating the marital union of a Jewish man and Jewish woman who are legally permitted to marry. The basic required ceremony is quite simple, but it has been embellished with many beautiful customs. The wedding is usually performed by a Rabbi and/or a cantor. The ceremony takes place under a huppa (wedding canopy). The wedding may take place in a synagogue, outside, or in any of a variety of settings. There are certain days of the year when a wedding may not or should not take place, including: on Shabbat, on a holiday, on chol ha-moed (the intermediate days) of Pesach and Sukkot, on regular fast days, and during a period of national mourning (including the "three weeks" leading up to the 9th of Av, and most of the days of the counting of the omer, which is between Pesach and Shavuot). Some of these date constraints can

be waived in cases of urgent need. Consult with your rabbi before setting the wedding date. The Jewish wedding document is known as a ketuba and contains a summary of the marital obligations of the husband. Often it is prepared in a very artistic fashion. The ketuba is a Jewish legal document and, as so it is signed by two witnesses who are not close relatives to the bride or groom or to each other. In the weeks prior to the wedding, an aufruf takes place, usually in the groom's synagogue. In this little ceremony, the groom or the couple is called to the Torah for an aliya. It is customary for the Rabbi to bless the couple at this time. The topic of marriage is complex and beyond the scope of this Guide. (Klein chapters 27 and 28, and Dorff, 1996.)

Certain marriages are forbidden (e.g., adulterous marriages, or marriage between forbidden relatives, such as brother and sister). An offspring of such a union the offspring would be Jewishly illegitimate, and the Jewish term for such a child is a mamzer. A child born out of wedlock but from the union of two people who could legally marry is Jewishly legitimate and is not called a mamzer. (Klein, page 437.)

Under Jewish law, a marriage is dissolved by action of the husband and wife, and does not require a finding of a transgression. (Although it is possible for either the husband or wife to sue for divorce in a Jewish court for various reasons, such as adultery or cruelty, today Jewish grounds for divorce are academic, since usually the couple has already secured a civil divorce.) To end a Jewish marriage, the husband must give and the wife must consent to receive a "get", either personally or through an appointed agent. (A get is a Jewish divorce document). If and when a marriage ends by civil divorce, it is imperative to also complete the Jewish divorce process by means of a get. This assures that future marriages are Jewishly legal, and that any future children are Jewishly legitimate. The divorce usually is supervised by a beit din (Jewish court of law consisting of three rabbis) and both the husband and wife are treated with sensitivity and respect. It is essential that a rabbi expert in Jewish laws of divorce prepare the get and supervise the divorce because these laws are particularly exacting. Your rabbi can make help make the necessary arrangements. (Klein, pages 467-473.)

2. Intermarriage, Conversion and Adoption and Surrogate Parenthood

Intermarriage is not in accordance with Jewish law. Anyone contemplating an intermarriage should speak with a Rabbi immediately. Anyone already intermarried should also speak with a Rabbi. This is a complex and delicate situation, and requires professional counsel.

The Conservative movement is struggling with the topic of intermarriage: trying to bring intermarried couples closer to Judaism while discouraging intermarriage itself. Conservative clergy are strictly forbidden to perform an intermarriage. A marriage with a convert is not an intermarriage: it is a marriage between two Jews. Conversion can be a powerful transformational process. It is not

surprising that converts often become very committed and active Jews. Anyone considering conversion, for purposes of marriage or not, must seek assistance from a Rabbi. (Klein, pages 440-448.)

A conversion must be voluntary. There is a long period of study prior to the actual conversion. The conversion ceremony must include immersion in a mikva. For men, the ceremony must also include a brit milah (ritual circumcision). (If the man is already circumcised, a symbolic circumcision is performed called hatafat dam brit in which a drop of blood is drawn from the penis.) A non-Jewish baby who is adopted by a Jewish family must go through a conversion process, including mikva, and including a brit milah for a boy. (Klein, Chapter 31.) A convert is always a Israel rather than a Cohen or Levi.

Adoption is permissible. It has religious and ritual complexities and so a Rabbi should be consulted. An adopted child has much the same status as one born into the family, and is obligated to say the mourner's kaddish on the death of an adoptive parent (Klein, page 39, Chapter 30) and a parent may mourn for an adopted child. Status as a Cohen or Levi or israel follows the biological father. If the birth mother was not Jewish then the adopted child is not Jewish and becomes Jewish only by virtue of a proper conversion. Without a proper conversion such a child is not Jewish, even if he or she goes to Hebrew school, takes a Jewish name, keeps kosher, observes Shabbat, etc. Luckily there is a conversion process for a child and it is relatively simple. Consult a Rabbi for details.

If a baby results from *in vitro* fertilization followed by implantation in a woman, Jewish law considers the birth mother to be the mother of the child regardless of the genetics of the baby. Surrogate parenthood is a complex matter under Jewish law and a Rabbi must be consulted.

3. Marital Relations, Birth Control and Abortion

Jewish tradition values marital relations in themselves, not just for procreation, and whether or not contraceptive methods are being used or child bearing years are past. Birth control is allowed for sake of the health of the mother, a nursing child, or the child which may otherwise be born. The pill is generally the preferred mode of contraception. (Klein, page 415.) Other methods of contraception are allowed, depending on the circumstances. Reversible methods are preferred over non-reversible. The male condom is the least acceptable method, since it prevents the depositing of the seed in the wife's reproductive canal. Abortion is allowed in some circumstances to preserve the life or health of the mother, but not for reasons of convenience. A Rabbi should be consulted when an abortion is being considered.

4. Family Purity

Immersion in a (ritual bath) is required for married women monthly or as necessary, for the sake of

ritual (and spiritual) purity in family relations. Marital relations are limited to the time of month when the wife is in a state of ritual purity, and immersion in a mikva after menstruation is needed to reinstate this state of purity. (A mikva is a body of water, a certain quantity of which comes from natural sources, such as springs or rain water. It may be heated. A mikva must be large enough for a person to fully immerse. A naturally occurring body of water may be a valid mikva. There are many laws about what makes for a kosher mikva. Consult a Rabbi for guidance.) The mikva is almost always staffed by a woman who will assist a novice in its use. The laws of mikva are largely unobserved by Conservative Jews although they are traditionally an important part of the halacha. There has been some renewed interest in mikva among Conservative Jews in recent times. (Klein, pages 510 - 522.)
Comparison with typical Orthodox views: The same but much higher observance level.

5. Hebrew Names

Often one's Hebrew name is similar in some way to one's English or secular name. It is a good idea to make a list of the Hebrew names of family members, because they are useful at various times, such as: when naming a baby, when being called to the Torah for an aliyah, when needed for wedding documents, when saying a prayer for the person's health (a mi-sheberach), or when writing the inscription for a tombstone. It is often easier to get the name in advance than to try to get the name at the last moment. A person's Hebrew name is typically one or two words, followed by the word "ben" or 'bat" (meaning son or daughter), and then followed by the name of the person's father, and, with increasing frequency, the person's mother. For example, my Hebrew name is Yehuda ben Eliezar v'Miriam (Yehuda the son of Eliezar and Miriam). If you do not know your Hebrew name, ask a rabbi for assistance.

6. Brit/Bris Milah and Baby Naming

A male child is ritually circumcised on the 8th day of life by a mohel, even if that day is Shabbat or a holiday, unless there is a medical reason to postpone the brit. If a mohel is not available on Shabbat, the brit should take place as soon as possible after that. A non-ritual circumcision done by a physician is not a brit. In such a case, an additional ceremony (hatafat dam brit) is required. A baby boy is named during the brit. A baby girl is named in the synagogue a short time after birth, on a day that the Torah is read. The father or both the parents receive an aliyah at the time of the baby naming. Today a child is often given two names (e.g., Baruch Yaakov), but in the past a single name was more common. Many think that in choosing a name for a child, you influence the child's future (if only by fostering an identify for him or her, as when giving a Biblical name). A prevalent custom is to name children after deceased relatives.

N. Head Coverings, Tallit, Tefillin and Arba Kanfot

There are various ritual objects worn inside and outside the synagogue. Some are mandated by

Jewish law, and others reflect longstanding custom.

1. Wearing of Kippa (Yarmulka, Skullcap, Head Covering)
   There is a longstanding tradition for men to wear a head covering (kippa or hat) when saying a bracha, praying, or performing a ritual, or when in the sanctuary of a synagogue. Some women wear hats, kippot, or other head covering during services. (Klein, pages 51-52.)

   Wearing a kippa during all waking hours is a custom of some, but it is not a mitzvah and is not required. Few Conservative Jews wear a kippa all day. Wearing of a kippa during everyday life is usually taken as an indication of leading a very observant lifestyle, including the observance of all dietary laws. Some consider wearing a kippa a minhag (tradition) that has taken on the force of law and so wear a kippa during all waking hours. Some consider it an obligation not to walk more than four amot (cubits) with an uncovered head, and they wear a kippa routinely.

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Many more Orthodox men wear a kippa during the waking hours. Otherwise similar.

2. Head Covering for Women
   Conservative practice varies widely, with some women (single and married) wearing a head covering whenever in synagogue, usually for the same reason that men wear kippot. At present, it appears that the majority of women do not wear a head covering in synagogue, but the proportion seems to be growing. Some synagogues require women who have an honor (such as opening the Ark) to wear a head covering. Some Conservative women wear a head covering other than a traditional kippa, which they see as a male garment.

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Generally married women wear a head covering either in public at all times or in synagogue, but they do this for reasons of tzniut (modesty).

3. Tallit
   A tallit is a four cornered garment with ritual fringes (tzitzit). It is worn at morning services, and for certain other services. Before putting it on we hold it open with both hands, say the bracha l'hitataf ba-tzitzit, then wrap it around our head and place it on our shoulders (Klein, pages 3-6; *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 62.)

4. Tefillin
   Tefillin come in pairs and are worn during morning daily prayer: one on the arm and the other on the head (but not worn on Shabbat or Yom). They are small, black leather boxes with straps, and the boxes contain small scrolls handwritten with verses from the Torah which mention the mitzva of tefillin. It take many steps to manufacture Tefillin and they are expensive (a few hundred dollars is a typical price). Tefillin are put on and taken off following a precise

procedure and with certain prayers. Although various books explain how to put on tefillin, it is cumbersome to describe in print. Assistance in learning to use tefillin is available at any synagogue. (Klein, pages 6-9; also see Scheduled Prayer above.) Tefillin are not delicate, but they are made of natural materials, not plastic, and so should be handled and stored carefully. If they must be left in a car in the summertime it is better to put them in the trunk than in the passenger compartment where it can get very hot. When flying, it is better to carry them on board, since bags put in the baggage compartment may freeze and thaw quickly.

5. Arba Kanfot (Tallit Katan)
   There is a custom for men to wear a small garment called a tallit katan that is rectangular and has tzitzit in its four corners. It is worn under the shirt during the day to allow the wearer to fulfill the mitzva of tzizit. This custom is rarely observed by Conservative Jews. (Since the mitzva of tzitzit applies only to four cornered garments as they are being worn during daylight hours, there is no mitzvah of tzitzit applicable once one has removed the tallit after prayer, since we are no longer wearing a four cornered garment.)

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Many Orthodox males wear arba kanfot. (I do not have actual statistics; the proportion of men observing this custom probably varies from community to community.) Otherwise the same.

O. How to Dispose of Holy Writings (Shemot) and Various Ritual Objects

Shemot (which means divine names) is the term used to refer to holy writings in Hebrew that are no longer useable or being used. This includes any written material that contains a reference to God, or a portion of the Bible (even down to a single verse of one of the books of the Bible). These have an intrinsic level of kedusha or holiness. Shemot should be disposed of only in a proper, respectful manner (which today is usually by burial in a Jewish cemetery). Prayer books, bibles, mezuzot (scrolls and cases), tefillin and tefillin bags, and bentchers all fall in this category. The cases for these items (such as mezuza cases and tefillin bags) acquire some level of holiness as a result of holding the mezua scroll or tefillin on a regular basis, and are also best considered shemot. The question of whether photocopies count as Shemot is still being debated among the poskim (halachic experts). As of this time, the majority hold that they do. So photocopies such as a Torah portion, a haftorah portion, or any brachot also should be disposed of as Shemot. It is only such documents written in Hebrew which are considered Shemot and are disposed of in this manner. The best way for a person to dispose of any such material is to bring it to a synagogue and leave it with the rabbi for proper disposal. Electronic media (disks, CDs, tapes) are not Shemot, since they do not contain physical writing.

Other ritual objects (such as, tallit, kippa, candlesticks) may be disposed of with respect but in a more usual manner, such as by placing them in a bag before disposal or recycling. Note that

sometimes a bracha is inscribed on a bread plate, or embroidered on the atara of a tallit (an atara is a rectangular piece of cloth attached to the edge of a tallit to serve as a collar) of a tallit, or on other Judaic items, and these objects are shemot because of the inscribed bracha. According to some authorities a tallit should have the tzitzit cut or removed before being discarded.

The laws of Shemot have their complexities, and this summary is not a complete statement of the law. If you are not sure if something needs to be buried in this way, bring it to a synagogue and let the rabbi decide.

P. Death and Mourning

This is a complex topic and the following is only a brief presentation of some of the laws and customs. A Rabbi should be consulted in all matters of death and mourning.

1. In Face of Death
   When it appears that death is imminent, it is traditional to say the first line of the Shema. If possible, before death one should repent one's sins and forgive others of any transgressions against them.

2. Time of Burial and Shiva
   Burial is usually the day after death. The traditional and usual shiva period is 7 days (counting the day of burial as the first day), and the seventh day is not a full day. During shiva one does not leave the house (except to attend minyan if there is none in the house). Under some circumstances the mourning period may be shortened (a Rabbi should be consulted). The time of burial and the observance of shiva are affected by Shabbat and holidays (competent authorities should be consulted). (Klein, pages 286-293.)

3. Preparing the Body for Burial
   The body is washed in a respectful and traditional fashion, a male by men and a female by women in a process known as Tahora. This is sometimes done by the funeral home and sometimes by a group of volunteers known as the Hevra Kadisha (burial society). (Klein, page 276-277.)

4. Burial Clothing
   The body is clothed in plain, white, linen shrouds (tachrichim). A man is also wrapped in a tallit whose fringes are cut (preferably the tallit the person used when alive).

5. Burial is Done in a Plain Wooden Box in a Jewish Cemetery.
   For the sake of equality, it is traditional to use a plain, unfinished wooden box rather than a more elaborate casket. (Klein, page 277.)

6. Cremation and Embalming Are Not Done
   Cremation destroys the body and that is against Jewish law. Embalming involves draining the blood, which is also against Jewish law. Refrigeration is used widely today, so embalming is rarely ever of any value. If civil law requires embalming, it may be done. (Klein, page 275.)

7. Autopsies
   Routine autopsies are not allowed, but an autopsy is allowed if the physician states the knowledge so gained may help cure others, or if required by law. All body parts should be buried. (Klein, pages 274-275.)

8. Organ Donation
   It is permissible to donate organs or tissues of the deceased to be transplanted into and thereby help heal the living, notwithstanding the prohibition on mutilating the body of a deceased person. (Klein, page 275.)

9. Coffin Remains Closed at the Funeral
   The body is not adorned. The coffin is closed, not left open for general viewing.

10. Stillbirth and Miscarriage
    If a developing child is lost after about the fifth month, it is given a burial. If lost before that time, there are different opinions on whether burial is needed. There is no prescribed grave-side ritual or formal mourning period, because the fetus is not a full person. This is a developing area of Jewish law and custom in the Conservative Movement, and several recent teshuvot have dealt with this topic, and two are mentioned here. In the case of a miscarriage, the Rabbi may select appropriate Psalms and readings to help the parents at what may be an extremely difficult time. (Aizenberg, 1987.) In the case of a stillbirth, the Rabbi may recommend a one day Yom Nichum (day of comfort) following the burial (Dickstein, 1996).

11. Death of an Infant Younger than 30 Days Old
    There are varying views. One is that we do not mourn, since the infant may not have been viable from birth. Another is that we undertake all the mourning rites and practices, since the infant was apparently full-term and viable at birth.

12. Organ Donation
    Organ donation is allowed for the sake of helping the living. Some go further and consider it an obligation. (The Rabbinical Assembly has prepared a sample organ donor card.) All unused body parts must be buried. Burial should not be unnecessarily delayed.

13. The Period of Mourning
    The period of mourning is one year for parents and 30 days for other close relatives (son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife).

14. Suicide
    As in all matters of death and burial, a rabbi should be consulted in the case of a suicide. Since a person should not take his own life, there are additional considerations in the burial and mourning of a suicide. However, the Jewish authorities have qualified the definition of suicide. Klein says that today, since we know that most suicides result from temporary insanity (and since mourning rites benefit the survivors) we observe all the rites of mourning. (Klein, pages 282-283.)

15. Some Traditions During Mourning
    There are many traditions and restrictions during mourning. K'ria, making a tear in one's clothing, is mentioned in the Bible. Nowadays this is often done at the funeral home (Klein, page 278). The mourner wears the garment with the k'ria during shiva, except on Shabbat. Traditionally, during Shiva the mourner sits on a low stool or low chair (funeral homes often provide cardboard boxes to sit on), does not wear leather shoes when indoors, and does not shave, and the mirrors in the house are covered. During the 30 days after burial (12 months for a parent), lesser restrictions apply, such as abstaining from dances/parties. A Rabbi should be consulted for guidance with mourning practices since this is an important and complex subject.

16. Mourners' Kaddish
    The mourners' kaddish is said daily by mourners at each service, for 11 months minus a day for a parent, and for 30 days for other close relatives (son, daughter, sibling or half-sibling, wife or husband). The 11 months for a parent are calculated from the day of death. The 30 days for other relatives are calculated from the date of burial. (Klein, pages 39, 293-4.) A minyan is required to say kaddish. (Klein, page 39.) The mourners' kaddish is also said in synagogue for close relatives on the yahrzeit (anniversary of the date of death) as calculated using the Jewish calendar, at each of the services for that day. That is, kaddish is said at the service of the evening before the secular date that corresponds to the anniversary date, and then again at the services the next morning and afternoon. Many computer programs are available (some free) that facilitate conversion between the Jewish and secular calendars and identify anniversary dates.

    If you are not sure when the mourners' kaddish is said, your Rabbi will let you know and will help you with the words. Just ask for help. The words are in Aramaic, which was once

commonly understood, and they can be difficult to pronounce. Usually the prayer book has English transliterations which are easy to read. A transliteration of the mourner's kaddish may be found in almost every siddur, and one is included in an attachment at the end of this *Guide*. Usually there are several people saying kaddish, and everyone says the kaddish in unison, often with the Rabbi leading the group.

The mourner's kaddish is a short prayer which has a long tradition of being recited in honor of the dead, however the prayer does not mention death. This publically said prayer speaks of God as the creator, refers to God's greatness using several different superlatives, and closes with a prayer for abundant peace.

The mourner's kaddish is said while standing, and in the presence of a minyan. Whether others in the congregation stand during the mourner's kaddish is a matter of local custom.

17. Saying Kaddish for a Friend or Non-Blood Relative
    One may recite kaddish for a close friend, or for a parent of one's spouse, or for an adoptive parent.

18. Major Holidays and Death
    Major holidays can affect both burial and mourning in complex ways: sometimes delaying burial, and sometimes delaying or canceling shiva. Shiva and sheloshim can be affected differently. Sometimes personal and communal priorities and values collide, as when an individual has experienced a tragic loss and the community is celebrating a holiday. Sometimes burial is delayed or shiva is terminated early. (Klein, pages 101 and 282.) This can be a personally challenging time. A Rabbi should be consulted.

19. Yahrzeit Observance
    A twenty-four hour yahrzeit candle is lit annually on the eve of the anniversary of the (Jewish) date of death using the Jewish calendar. (Klein, page 39.) So if the yahrzeit one year falls on March 4th, the yahrzeit candle would be lit at the end of the day on March 3rd. (If March 3rd is Shabbat, it is lit after nightfall. If March 3rd is Friday, it is lit before nightfall.) There is no blessing on lighting the candle. It is left to burn itself out. (The bottom can get quite hot, so be careful where you light it. If a real hazard develops in leaving the candle burning, it should be extinguished.) There is no restriction on the use or disposal of the empty candle container. If you forget to light the evening before, you can light in the morning (if it is not Shabbat). Yahrzeit candles may be purchased for under a dollar at most kosher butchers, Judaica stores, Jewish bookstores, synagogue gift shops, and stores which sell kosher packaged foods. Other traditional observances are study of some aspect of religious life and a charitable

donation in memory of the deceased. On the day of yahrzeit the mourner attends the three daily services, beginning the evening of the previous night, and says the mourners' kaddish at the appropriate times in the service. (Klein, pages 294-5.) If you forget to observe the yahrzeit, you may observe the yahrzeit when you remember, or contribute to charity. If you do not know the exact date of death, you should choose a date and then observe that date each year as the yahrzeit. A rabbi can help you make this choice of date. (Klein, page 295.) One may use an electric yahrzeit light when a real candle is impractical or not allowed (such as in a nursing home), but a candle is preferable. Some people also light a yahrzeit candle before lighting the candles for Yom Kippur, and some of them also light a yahrzeit candle before lighting holiday candles for each of the other 3 days when Yizkor (the memorial service) is recited in the synagogue (the eighth day of Pesach, the eighth day of Sukkot, more properly called Shemini Atzeret, and the second day of Shavuot). If so, usually one candle is all that is lit, even for many relatives.

20. Yizkor Services
    Yizkor services for the departed are held in the synagogue in the morning on Yom Kippur, the eighth day of Pesach, the eighth day of Sukkot (more properly called Shemini Atzeret), and the second day of Shavuot.

21. Delayed Notification of Death
    If one received delayed notification of death of a close relative, a rabbi should be consulted for guidance on traditional mourning practices.

22. Disinterment and Reinterment
    Removing and opening a casket after burial, and relocating a casket are strongly discouraged in most circumstances, and allowed in certain limited circumstances. A rabbi should be consulted.

Q. Moving to a New Permanent Living Place

1. Choosing a Place to Live
   When moving to a new location, proximity to a synagogue and a Jewish community is very important. Living in a supportive Jewish community fosters observance and comfort with the traditions. A “critical mass” of people who are serious in their observance is needed for a Conservative Jewish community to flourish. Being within walking distance of a synagogue is an ideal. Even if you ride, others do not; and you may change your practice over time. Choosing where to live is a very important Jewish decision. If you live some distance from the synagogue, a havura might provide a local community. Many Conservative synagogues have programs that encourage havurot (small groups of members that get together outside the

synagogue for various social and religious events, such as holiday celebrations).

2. Putting Up a Mezuza
   Mezuza means "doorpost" but is used to refer to a small rolled scroll and its protective case (typically metal, ceramic, glass, or wood, and usually oblong in shape). When we see a mezuza on a doorpost we are reminded of our tradition. Each entrance to the home or major room (excluding bathrooms) should have a mezuza, and it should be affixed on the right doorpost as the door is usually used; usually that is on the right as you enter the room. The top of the mezuza is tilted toward the inside of the house or room. It is attached in the top third of the doorpost. A mezuza is valid only it if contains a proper handwritten, parchment scroll that contains the first two paragraphs of the Shema. The case itself is not a valid mezuza. The bracha for affixing a mezuza is asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu likboa mezuza and may be found in most siddurim. The obligation to affix a mezuza should be fulfilled within 30 days of establishing a new, permanent residence. This obligation is on you as the tenant, and applies whether you are renting or own your own home. (Klein, pages 49-50.) Judaica stores and synagogue gift shops usually sell kosher mezuza scrolls, together with an assortment of mezuza cases.

R. Tatoos, Body Piercing, and Dying of Hair

Permanent tatoos are prohibited as defacing the body, and this is a Biblical prohibition. Body piercing is generally allowed, as long as no substantive damage is done. (Earrings and nose rings are mentioned in the Bible and the Talmud.) Modesty should always guide our behavior. Dying the hair is allowed.

S. Bar/Bat Mitzva

By Jewish tradition, boys reach the age of Jewish adulthood at age 13 and girls at age 12 (but most often the bat mitzva ceremony is held when a girl reaches the age of 13). At the age of majority the child becomes personally responsible for fulfilling the positive and negative mitzvot. There is a ceremony that often is held to mark this coming of age, but the transition occurs whether or not there is a bar or bat mitzva ceremony; it is age not ceremony that makes one a Jewish adult, with all the responsibilities and privileges of Jewish adulthood. Although traditionally only boys celebrate their bar mitzva with this ceremony, it is now almost universal for girls to celebrate their bat mitzva. The bar/bat mitzva is celebrated various ways, always including the new adult being called to the Torah. Usually he or she reads the Haftorah and often also reads the Torah. In some congregations he or she also leads some or all of the service. In most Conservative congregations, the bat mitzva ceremony is held at age 13, not the more traditional age of 12. Bat mitzva is a major new tradition which has developed over the last half century and now is basically the same as the bar mitzva. The only difference of note is that all boys wear a tallit at the service and thereafter, and

only some girls do. All congregations teach boys about tefillin, but not all girls learn, either because they choose not to or because their synagogue does not teach girls. The bar and bat mitzva ceremonies are often followed by a party. Often the parties are quite elaborate and costly, which is not necessary.

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: Many Orthodox synagogues have developed some form of bat mitzva ceremony in recent years, but it differs from a bar mitzva. The ceremony varies across synagogues but often involves the bat mitzva girl reading the Torah or Haftorah in a gathering of women, or giving a talk to all assembled after the end of services.

T. Definition of a Jew

Just as American citizenship is defined by American law, who is a Jew is defined by Jewish law. Basically, a person's mother determines one's Jewishness. A person's father determines one's tribal affiliation.

1. Who is a Jew

   A person is a Jew who is born of a Jewish mother, or who completes a Halachic conversion which includes immersion in a mikva and, for men, a brit. There is no other way to become Jewish.

2. Who is a Cohen, Levi, or Yisrael

   Through the centuries, Jews kept the designations of Cohen, Levi and yisrael. A Jew is a Cohen if his or her father is a Cohen. A Jew is a Levi if his or her father is a Levi. Any other Jew is a yisrael (and that includes most of us). Cohanim (plural of Cohen) are descendants of the Priests of the Bible, who were a subgroup of the tribe of Levi. A Levi is any other descendant of the tribe of Levi. Traditionally, cohanim and Leviim (plural for Levi) have a few additional responsibilities and rights. For example, traditionally a Cohen is called first to read from the Torah. (Not all Conservative congregations maintain the Cohen-Levi-Yisrael distinction for the sake of reading from the Torah.) A women born to a man who is a Cohen is called a bat-Cohen, and a woman born to a man who is a Levi is called a bat-Levi. In some congregations such women are called to the Torah for the Cohen or Levi aliya, with equal status to a male Cohen or Levi.

U. Ethics, Interpersonal Relationships and Other Actions and Topics

Halacha is a guide that helps us decide how to live all aspects of our lives. There is virtually no area of life that is not treated by halacha. (Klein, page xix.) Ethics and interpersonal relationships are extremely important aspects of halacha. However they do not fit perfectly with the focus of this Guide which is more on practical, ritual halacha from a Conservative viewpoint. Also, it is difficult to give practical guidance in this area since situations differ so widely from person to person and time to time. So I will do little more here than list some of the many important topics and concepts. Although often of a more general nature than the topics discussed earlier, these topics are of central

importance to Judaism and to individual Jews. Although in a sense the mitzvot listed below are a different type than most discussed above, they are also binding. We are to follow them in our everyday life. Many but not all of the mitzvot below are Biblical in origin. This section focuses on mitzvot ben adam l'havero, mitzvot between people and people (such as visiting the sick, marital fidelity), while the earlier parts of this Guide focus on mitzvot ben adam la-Makom, mitzvot between man and God (such as praying, keeping kosher). It is hard to compare the importance of the two types of mitzvot, but perhaps they are approximately equal in importance, and perhaps the mitzvot ben adam l'havero are of slightly greater import. Performing one type of mitzva does not fulfill our responsibility for the other.

1. Halacha in Business
   Halacha specifically prohibits many business practices, such as: lying or cheating in business, and so causing others financial loss, or causing others to lose out on some gain or benefit that was coming to them; excessive profit in making a sale; and raising false expectations in business, as in asking a shop owner the price of an item when you have no intention to buy it. We are to be fair in paying employees, and pay laborers at the end of the workday. In turn, people who are hired are not to be careless. We are to use one set of measures and to buy and sell fairly.

2. Halacha in Family Affairs
   Halacha governs many aspects of family relationships. One of the most important governing principles is the Biblical commandment of kibbud av/em (honor/respect your father and mother). Adultery is forbidden. We go to great lengths to maintain shalom bayit (peace in the home). We are to care for but not spoil our children.

3. Halacha of Visiting the Sick
   There is a religious duty to visit the sick, to cheer them and to offer and give assistance as possible. This is an important mitzvah, and is known as bikkur holim. Even a prominent person should visit a humble person who is ill. In visiting the sick, one should try to be at the level of the sick person, not tower over them. The timing of the visit should be thoughtful and chosen to maximally respect and address the ill person's needs. (Klein, page 271-272.) Sometimes we feel uncomfortable visiting the sick, and are not sure what to talk about. We can talk about the types of things which were usual topics of conversation before the illness, acknowledging the person is still a full human being, even if the person is very ill. We can ask what the doctors said, which allows the patient to say as much or little as he or she likes.

4. Halacha in Dealing With Others

   There are many important social statements in our tradition. For example, *Love your neighbor as yourself*; and *Separate yourself not from the community.* It is not surprising then that Halacha has much to say about how one should interact with others outside of business or family. For example, we should not put a stumbling block before the blind (and this includes psychological blindness); we should correct others when they err, but only if we think they will change for the better as a result; we should not create false impressions of wrongdoing, for by so doing we become a negative role model for others (mar'it ayin); we should not endanger the safety of others in building houses; we should not cause a person public embarrassment (halbanat panim); and we should not speak badly of others (lashon hara) even though what we say is true, unless there is a legitimate reason to do so. (Lashon hara hurts three people: the person who speaks, the person who listens, and the person spoken about.)

   We should offer hospitality to the visitor/stranger (hachnasat orchim); and in general perform acts of kindness (gmilut chasadim) and help to make the world a better place (tikun olam); and deal with others with rachamim (mercy). We should comport ourselves with modesty (tzniut). In our courts, there is to be no preference, neither for the rich nor the poor. We are to give charity (tzedaka) to the poor. We fence off dangerous areas. We are to conduct ourselves in ways that go beyond halachic requirements (lifnim mi-shurat ha-din). At festivities we drink wine to one another's health (with the salutation l'chaim - to life). We strive to make peace between people. We participate in making a wedding. We attend to the dead.

5. Torah Study

   Study of Torah is valued as an end it itself. It is also seen as a path to observance. Study will both incline one towards observance, and will provide information about how and what to observe. We are to study the Torah again and again; both the rich and the poor are to study Torah.

6. Other Areas of Halacha

   Here are just a few additional diverse examples. We should respect the environment and avoid wasting resources, even if we do not need them ourselves. We are to be considerate of animals and not treat them cruelly; we do not muzzle an ox when it is treading grain, and feed our animals before we sit down to eat. Many aspects of medical ethics have been treated in depth by halachic experts, such as: the definition of death, organ transplants, what to consider in making triage decisions, artificial insemination, and such very modern topics as genetic engineering of plants and animals, and cloning of people.

7. Ethical Wills

   Some people have or adopt the practice of preparing an ethical will. Whereas a traditional will transfers worldly possessions to one's heirs, an ethical will is a vehicle to impart non-material things to future generations. It may contain, for example, ethical or religious values and teachings, hopes and blessings, recommendations of things to be done or not done, and lessons learned in one's life. Books of and about ethical wills are available from libraries and bookstores.

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: There is much similarity here, but, as compared with Conservative Jews, the Orthodox generally study more and are much more concerned with (and knowledgeable of) the many specific rules (e.g., of tzniut), and their focus may differ (e.g., their efforts of gmilut chasadim and tikun olam focus much more on their own communities).

V. Halachic Decisions of the Law Committee

The Conservative movement has developed a process for making Halachic decisions. This is necessary because, from time to time, questions arise that require a new Halachic response. These may involve new matters or old. An example of a question that was not addressed by the Rabbis in the Talmud might be whether a microwave oven that is used during the year can be cleaned in a manner that makes it suitable for use on Pesach. An example of a question that was recently revisited but which was considered by the Rabbis of the Talmud is whether a woman is allowed to read from the Torah (during a Torah service). Since 1927 it has been the role of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly (commonly known as the Law Committee) to consider such questions and to rule on them.

All the voting members of the Law Committee are Rabbis. Of the total of 25 voting members, 15 are appointed by the President of the Rabbinical Assembly (RA), 5 by the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and 5 by the President of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. There are also 5 non-voting lay members, and these are appointed by the President of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. Each appointment is for a period of five years, and members may be reappointed. There is also a non-voting representative of the Cantor's Assembly on the Law Committee.

There can be unanimous rulings by the Law Committee, but any position that receives the support of 6 or more members of the Committee, even if it is a minority opinion, becomes an official position of the Conservative Movement, and actions may reasonably be based on any such view. (Before 1985, 3 members constituted such a minority.) In this sense, there is official halachic pluralism in the Conservative movement. (Of course, even though the Law Committee has ruled leniently on a certain topic, some follow the stricter rulings.) The rabbi of the local Conservative

congregation (the “mara d’atra”) who decides the halachic view for the congregation on a given topic, particularly within the synagogue itself, usually drawing on the deliberations and validated positions of the Law Committee.

There are only three (some count them as four) “Standards” that have been set by the Law Committee and the Rabbinical Assembly. These are binding on all Conservative clergy (unlike other decisions of the Law Committee which Conservative Rabbis take as advisory). One prohibits Conservative Rabbis and Cantors from performing or attending intermarriages. Another requires a get (Jewish divorce document) for a previous marriage prior to remarriage (a woman must have received a get and a man must have given a get, if the former spouse is alive, unless the marriage has been annulled, which is called hafka'at Kiddushin). A third (sometimes counted as three and four) mandates matrilineal descent (to the exclusion of patrilineal) in the definition of a Jew, and mandates tevilah (immersion in a mikva), and also brit milah for a man, as a part of a halachic Conservative conversion.

Surprisingly, for many years the Conservative movement made little effort to publicize the decisions and proceedings of the Law Committee. Fortunately, this has started to change. Now summaries of a few of the deliberations of the Law Committee appear in an official publication meant for the laity, the monthly *United Synagogue Review*. In addition, some of the proceedings of the Law Committee are available in four volumes (see bibliography).

Minutes are kept of the meetings of the Law Committee, and its halachic decisions are summarized. Some of the decisions from 1980 to 1985 have been compiled in a book of proceedings published in 1988 by the Rabbinical Assembly (see bibliography). Most of these summaries are in English, but some are only in Hebrew. In addition, all the reports and responsa of the Law Committee from 1927 to 1970 have been republished in a three volume set (Golinkin, 1997).

Of course, there are many topics that have not been considered by the Law Committee. There are many compendia of halacha from an Orthodox perspective, and these often provide helpful practical guidance. In case of halachic questions where the answer is not clear, the opinion of a Rabbi should be sought. "Shopping around" for opinions (asking various authorities until a desired opinion is found) is not halachically acceptable.

One of the principles that guide Conservative Rabbis in making halachic decisions is to preserve the tradition unless change is needed to deal with an urgent, acute problem. Changes in the halacha have traditionally been made for various reasons, including changes in society and new observations related to moral sensitivity. (See the very readable presentation in the small book by Golinkin, 1991.)

Comparison with typical Orthodox views: There is no central Orthodox body comparable to the Rabbinical Assembly's Law Committee. In the Orthodox world, there often is more than one valid halachic position on an issue. (An example is bathing on Yom Tov, which some now take to be allowed even though in the past, when it was less common, it was not allowed.) Responsa (documented decisions of individual Rabbis) are often published or otherwise distributed, but distribution may be limited and they are usually written in Hebrew. Often the Rabbi of the local Orthodox congregation who chooses the halachic view for the congregation on a given topic. In general, Orthodox Rabbis are much less likely to amend a halachic ruling that has been made, and are less likely to be "lenient" (and especially if the leniency in question is one that has been adopted by the Conservative movement). Again, shopping around for opinions is not acceptable.

This chapter has presented a basic description of many mitzvot. The next chapter presents a how-to guide to observing Judaism outside the synagogue.

Chapter Two. How-To Guide for Observing Judaism in the Home

This chapter describes how to perform some home rituals, and discusses some aspects of birth, illness, and death, trying to provide information that might be immediately needed.

The chapter begins with a step-by-step guide for some of the more common home rituals and customs surrounding Shabbat and holidays, and points out their most essential aspects and some of the variants and subtleties. Of course, it is better to be introduced to these in real life by a knowledgeable person, but this is not always possible. The brachot associated with the rituals are identified. There is a concept in Judaism called hiddur mitzva, referring to beautifying the mitzvot. In a few places I describe some traditional ways to beautify the mitzvot.

A suggested list of basic ritual objects and books that a Jewish home should have is presented at the end of this Guide. This list includes the objects mentioned in this chapter.

This chapter ends with some initial guidance in situations of death when a Rabbi is not immediately available for consultation. This guidance is only meant to help until a Rabbi may be consulted.

Shabbat

Shabbat is a precious, sacred sanctuary in time that we create for ourselves by our actions. A few of the more important Shabbat rituals are described here. Candles are lit before sunset. Before eating the Friday night dinner, we: bless our children if they are present, recite kiddush, wash our hands ritually, say the bracha over the Challa, and eat some Challa and then the rest of the meal. Before reciting kiddush, many sing Shalom Aleichem, and some sing Eishet Chayil (especially a husband for his wife). After the dinner, it is traditional to sing zemirot (songs). There are various other customs and some of these are mentioned below. It is important to prepare for the Shabbat, as for any important event, so that all is in order and in place at the start of Shabbat. Some people have the custom of having fresh flowers on the table on Friday nights.

1. Prepare for Shabbat

It is psychologically and physically necessary to prepare for Shabbat: planning the meals and doing all the shopping and cooking in advance, setting the table, and making sure we and our household are ready for Shabbat. By doing so we make Shabbat into an island in time for ourselves and our families.

2. Lighting Candles on Friday Before Shabbat

Each household lights 2 or more candles on Friday. This done before sunset, and usually no later than 18 minutes before sunset. By so doing we mark the transition of time from mundane to holy.

Usually it is the wife who ushers in Shabbat by lighting candles for the household. (Klein, page 55-58.)

What it is: Light candles to usher in the Shabbat.
Materials: Two Shabbat candles (large enough to burn through the meal) and candle holders. The candles should burn through the dinner meal and continue into the night. (In the Summer months, candles are often lit well before sunset. If one lights candles and then goes to synagogue for Friday night services, the candles may need to be large enough to last longer.) The candle holders should be of a type to allow the candles to burn out, and placed in a location where this will be possible (safe, no drafts), since they are not moved or adjusted after being lit.
Procedure:
a. Finish all preparations for Shabbat.
b. Light candles and dispose of match (e.g. leave it to burn out on a plate next to the candles).
c. Say the bracha. (This is one of the few times a bracha comes after the action.)
Bracha: Baruch ... Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 301.)
Various Customs: Most women lighting candles cup their hands and pass them over the candles, as if drawing the light closer, and cover their eyes with the hands when saying the bracha. Most light two candles, but there are other customs. Some light an extra candle for each child. Some have daughters age three and older assist in lighting, others gather all children around for candle lighting. Many women add a personal prayer right after saying the bracha while their eyes are still closed, and find candle lighting to be an intensely personal moment; a time when they can feel the transition from weekday to Shabbat. Usually candles are lit in the room where dinner will be eaten. Sometimes this is not practical, for instance if you are staying at a hotel over Shabbat. Then the candles are lit at the proper time, but in a place that will allow for them to burn out. Many people have a custom to put a little money in a pushke (charity box). This is done before lighting the Shabbat candles because we do not handle money on Shabbat.

Note, instead of candles some families use liquid paraffin lamps in which a wick draws from a reservoir of oil. Special care should be taken because these pose both an increased fire hazard and a poisoning hazard (if the oil is ingested, as by a young child).

3. Friday Night Just Before Kiddush

There is a widespread custom to sing Shalom Aleichem before kiddush. It is customary to bless the children at this time with a beautiful traditional blessing, as follows. The child stands in front of a parent, usually the Father but it could be the Mother, with head bowed down. The parent places both hands on the child's head and says the short blessing. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 311.) Many parents then kiss the child's head. There is a somewhat different blessing for boys and girls. One may bless more than one child at a time, and in that case puts one hand on one child's head

and the other hand on another's. This custom continues even after a child reaches adulthood and even if the child has his or her own household. Some husbands sing Eishet Chayil[4] to their wives before kiddush. (Klein, pages 61-62, and *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 310.) The order of these varies somewhat from siddur to siddur.

4. Friday Night Kiddush

Before the festive Friday night meal, each household sanctifies the Shabbat with the kiddush. (Klein, page 61-62.)

What it is: A ritual of sanctification involving reciting 2 paragraphs and saying a blessing, usually over wine. (We are sanctifying the Shabbat, rather than the wine.) Kiddush is said at the dinner table.
Materials: Siddur

Full cup of kosher wine made from grapes
Two unsliced loaves of Challa (covered).

Procedure:

a. The leader lifts the cup of wine in his right hand and sings or recites the two paragraphs of the kiddush, keeping in mind that he is doing so for all people present. (This is generally done by the husband.) In between the two paragraphs a bracha over the wine is said, but you do not drink until the end of the second paragraph.
b. People other than the leader say amen after the bracha over the wine and after the kiddush.
c. The leader drinks from the cup of wine and then gives some wine to the others at the table.

Bracha: The full kiddush is said. It takes a minute or so to recite the kiddush. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 312.)
Various Customs: There are various customs concerning standing during kiddush. Some families stand during kiddush, other sit, usually based on family tradition, but either way is correct and guests should follow the custom of the household. The wine may be in any type of glass or cup, but usually a special kiddush cup is used, often silver. The Challa is covered while saying kiddush. Sometimes the cover is embroidered or otherwise decorated, but a plain napkin will do. The kiddush may be read aloud, but it is more typical to sing it. It is usual to say kiddush over wine, but some prayer books print the blessing for bread next to the one for wine. This dates to a time when wine was very expensive and not always available. Nowadays, we say the kiddush over wine. For those who do not drink wine for health reasons, kiddush may be said over (kosher) grape juice. If you cannot drink either wine or grape juice, or do not have either, kiddush may be said over bread. (When making kiddush over bread, wash before starting the kiddush, and say the blessing for bread when you would usually say the blessing for wine.) The obligation for kiddush is met by being present, but usually the leader passes the

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[4]I have heard of some families where the wife reads the first Psalm, Ashrei ha-ish, to her husband. Although a lovely custom, it is very rare and not traditional.

kiddush cup around the table at a family gathering, or each person has their own cup of wine. Some have the tradition of the leader pouring some wine from the kiddush cup into a separate cup for each person. In some Conservative families these duties are at least sometimes carried out by either the wife or the husband or another family member, perhaps depending on personal preference on a particular evening. In some families, all present sing the last part or even all of the kiddush together.

5. Washing Hands Before Eating the Challa

After the kiddush is recited, we do a ritual hand washing. The hands should be clean before we begin, so our ritual hand washing is purely a religious act. This ritual washing is best done using a container with water, rather than under a flowing faucet (although that is sufficient). This ritual is described in the Talmud. (Klein, page 49; Shiovitz, page 11-12.)

What it is: A ritual washing of the hands in preparation for a holy act, such as eating bread.
Materials: Cup or other vessel containing water.
Procedure:

a. Remove any jewelry on your fingers.
b. Fill a cup with water.
c. Lift the cup of water with your right hand.
d. Pass the cup to your left hand and then pour water over your right hand.
e. Pass the cup to your right hand and then pour water over your left hand.
f. Repeat this until you have poured water over each hand three times.
g. Say the bracha for washing the hands. (This is one of the few times when you say the bracha after doing the act.) Before drying the hands, try to keep them, so that water does not drip from the upper part of the hands towards the fingertips.

Bracha: Baruch ... asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim. (Klein, pages 2-3, and *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 313.)
Customs: Often a special container, with two handles and no spout, is used for this purpose, but any container with no spout may be used (such as a glass or a cup). The procedure above goes beyond the minimal method of washing. The minimalist method of ritual washing is to pour water from a vessel once over each hand. (Klein, page 49.) Some pour the water two times. Some alternate hands, others pour water over one hand twice and then over the other hand twice. Some use the thrice method only at the beginning of the day and use the twice method before eating bread. It is traditional not to talk between the ritual hand washing and the saying of the bracha over the Challa.

6. Ha-motzi Before Eating the Challa

After saying kiddush, and before eating the Friday night dinner, one says Ha-motzi over Challa. The two loaves of challa remind us of the double portion of manna that the Jews gathered on Fridays in the desert after leaving Egypt. (Klein, page 62.)

What it is: A blessing before eating bread.
Materials: The two unsliced loaves of Challa mentioned above, covered.
Procedure:
a. Everyone washes their hands ritually (see number 4 above) and reassembles at dinner table.
b. Leader uncovers the Challa.
c. Leader holds the Challa in both hands.
d. Leader says the bracha, keeping the others present in mind, and everyone present says amen.
e. Leader cuts or breaks one loaf of Challa.
f. Leader eats a piece of Challa and gives some to each person at table, often using a plate.
Bracha: Baruch ... HaMotzi lechem min ha-aretz. (Klein, pages 42-43.) (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 314.)
Customs: Some people cut the Challa, others tear off pieces. Many dip their piece of Challa in salt or sprinkle it with salt just before eating it. Often the leader dips each piece of Challa in salt, or sprinkles salt on the pieces of Challa before distributing them. Some have the custom to eat the bottom Challa on Friday night, and the top Challa all other times. In some families, everyone says the ha-motzi together.

7. Festive Shabbat Meal

The Friday night meal is special, but can consist of any food that you like. The rest of the Challa is often eaten with the meal. The food is cooked prior to nightfall, but may be kept warm until eaten (even grilled or barbequed food can be kept warm in an oven). There is a custom to cover the dinner table with a tablecloth, usually white.

8. Friday Night Zemirot

It is custom for each household to sing one or more zemirot (songs) after the dinner, or even between courses, particularly in the winter months when the nights are long. These add to the pleasure of Shabbat. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, page 316-329; Shiovitz, pages 17-41; both of which have transliterations.)

What it is: Songs are sung to increase the joy of Shabbat.
Materials: Copies of the songs.
Procedure: There is no particular procedure.
Bracha: None.
Various Customs: For those who want to learn, many audio recordings of zemirot are commercially available. Some are sold with booklets containing the words in Hebrew, English, and transliteration (for example, "Zemirot From My Father's House" by Cantor Gadi Elon, and "Z'mirot Sing Along; Z'mirot From Livnot," both available from Tara Publications; Owing Mills, MD.) There are also zemirot that are traditional for Shabbat day. Some people sing songs other than or in addition to the traditional

ones.

9. Birkat Ha-Mazon

Birkat Ha-Mazon (grace after meals, also known as bentchen) is said after the meal. We give thanks for the meal after we complete it, so we do not eat during birkat ha-mazon. Since it is Shabbat, we start with Shir Ha-Maalot (Psalm 126) which is printed before birkat ha-mazon in almost every siddur. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 337-343.) Some do an abbreviated birkat ha-mazon (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 344-348.) Transliterations of both the regular and an abbreviated birkat ha-mazon are available in Shiovitz (pages 42-67). Some substitute havari rather than raboti to be more inclusive of women. It is traditional to leave the Challa on the table, and to remove the knives from the table before bentchen. (Some clear the table of dirty dishes before birkat ha-mazon.)

10. Saturday Daytime Kiddush

It is custom for each household to say a kiddush before eating the midday meal.

What it is: A sanctification of the meal.
Materials: Siddur
A full cup of wine.
Procedure:
a. Recite the blessing over the wine, and drink the wine.
b. Partake in the meal, beginning with washing and saying ha-motzi over 2 loaves of Challa.
Bracha: The usual bracha over wine is said: Baruch ... Borei pri ha-gafen. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 315.)
Various Customs: This kiddush is less important than the Friday night kiddush. It is sometimes done in the synagogue, after the morning services and before the congregation partakes of the prepared food (the "kiddush"). Even if you have heard the kiddush in synagogue, the midday meal at home should begin with the Shabbat morning (daytime) kiddush. Before the bracha over the wine, some say both the v-shamru paragraph and the zachor paragraph and then the sentence beginning with al kein berach, others say only the v-shamru paragraph and the al kein berach sentence, and others say only the al kein berach sentence. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*, page 315.) These additional short readings are customs and are not done by all. (See also the section above on the Friday night kiddush.)

11. Havdala on Saturday Night

Havdala (separation or division) is a short ritual which marks the conclusion of Shabbat (nominally when we can see 3 medium size stars, today more usually defined as about 60, or some say 72, minutes after candle lighting time - consult a luach for the exact time). We are a little sad as we end the

Shabbat, but we enjoy the smell of the spices and we look forward to the new week. (Klein, pages 74-75.) This is a "hands-on" ceremony involving several senses, and children generally enjoy it.

What it is: A short (about 2 minute) ritual done with wine, spices, and a braided candle.

Materials: A siddur or bentcher
A full cup of wine
Aromatic spices (in a container)
A braided candle with two or more wicks
A plate or candle holder

Procedure:

a. Light candle and have someone hold it over a plate, or place it in a holder.
b. Lift the wine with your right hand and recite the havdala.
c. When you get to the bracha over wine, say the bracha, but do not drink the wine.
d. Say the bracha over spices, and then smell the spices and give them to others to smell. (You will have to put down the wine cup to pick up the spices, or hold it in your left hand.)
e. Say the bracha over the light.
f. With the wine cup in your right hand say the concluding paragraph, ending with the words hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol, and then drink some of the wine. (Some give each person present some of the wine to drink.)
g. Pour some of the wine into a plate and extinguish the candle in the wine.

Bracha: There are several brachot in this ritual. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* pages 299-300, or *B'kol Echad*, pages 13-15.)

Various Customs: We usually sing one or more short songs (hamavdil and Eliyahu hanavi) and then wish others present shavua tov (a good week). (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 300.) It is a custom to make use of the light by bending the fingers and thumb of the right hand and looking at the fingernails and palm, and then turning over the hand and looking at the fingernails alone. Some people do this before or while saying the bracha. (Klein says to look and say the bracha at the same time.) If a twisted candle is not available, any two candles may be used by holding them with their burning wicks together. If one must do work after Shabbat but before reciting havdala, first one should say Baruch ha-mavdil bein kodesh l'chol (who separates between the holy and the ordinary).

Major Holidays

The major holidays or festivals are: the two days of Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah, the first and last two days of Pesach, and the two days of Shavuot (see Chapter 1, section F). A few of the more important holiday rituals and customs are described here. (There are many other home rituals, especially connected with Pesach and Sukkot.)

12. Candle Lighting Erev Yom Tov

Candle lighting for the first day of the major holidays is similar to that for Shabbat, with a slightly different bracha. For the second day of Yom Tov the candles are lit after the end of the first day (one hour later than candle lighting time for the first day). On the second night the candles should be lit from a pre-existing flame, rather than by striking a match. (Many light a yahrzeit candle before the holiday so they can use it as a pre-existing flame.) On all but the last two days of Pesach, the Sheheheyanu blessing is said directly after the blessing for lighting candles. (Klein, page 102).

What it is: Light candles to usher in the holiday.
Materials: Same as for Shabbat.
Procedure:
a. Finish all preparations for the holiday.
b. Light the candles.
c. Say the bracha for the holiday and then the sheheheyanu.

Bracha: Baruch ... Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel yom tov. (There is no special bracha for Rosh HaShana; this one is used.) There is a variant of the bracha if the festival falls on Shabbat, in which case you will be lighting the candles for both Shabbat and the festival: we end the brocha, Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat v'shel yom tov. Even though it is both Shabbat and Yom Tov, we use the same number of candles as for Shabbat (typically two). There is a somewhat different bracha for lighting the candles before Yom Kippur: Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel yom ha-kippurim. If Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, the phrasing is: Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat v'shel yom ha-kippurim. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 303-304.) After lighting candles before festivals (except the last two days of Pesach) also say sheheheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh.
Various Customs: See customs for Shabbat.

13. Kiddush for Holidays

There is a special festival kiddush. The procedure for the festival kiddush is similar to that for the Friday night kiddush (see number 3 above - but omitting the singing of Shalom Aleichem and Eishet Chayil, and omitting the blessing of the children). The festival kiddush may be found in most any siddur. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, page 334.) If the holiday begins on Shabbat, the festival kiddush is preceded by the first paragraph of the Shabbat kiddush, and the other Friday night traditions are followed. The way to do havdala on a festival night is described below. If and when one of the intermediate days of a festival falls on Shabbat and so both the intermediate day and Shabbat begin Friday night, the kiddush we say is identical to the usual Friday night kiddush. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 334-335, and Klein, page 184.)

14. Festival Greetings

Several phrases are often used when greeting other Jews on a major festival. For example:

All festivals: Hag sameach (may it be a happy festival).
Pesach: Hag kasher v'sameach (may it be a kosher and happy Passover).

There are several phrases that are often used when greeting other Jews on the intermediate days of a major festival. For example: moadim l'simcha (it should be a season of joy).

15. Havdala and Major Holidays

A havdala ritual is used to mark the end of holidays and to mark the end of Shabbat even when the next day is Yom Tov. The havdala ritual changes a little depending on the situation.

We do a modified festival havdala at the end of the second day of Rosh HaShana, the second day of Sukkot, Simchat Torah, the second day of Pesach, the last day of Pesach, and the second day of Shavuot. (We usually say havdala after Yom Kippur in the synagogue. If Yom Kippur falls on a weekday, the spices are omitted.) There is no havdala needed or done for other festivals. In the festival havdala, we recite the havdala over a cup of wine, but omit the candles and spices. The first paragraph of the havdala is omitted, and we begin this havdala with the bracha over the wine. However, if this havdala coincides with the end of Shabbat, we do the full Shabbat havdala.

When either day of a Yom Tov begins on a Saturday night, a somewhat different procedure is used for havdala. In these cases, the festival kiddush is recited and the havdala is added after the "second" paragraph of the kiddush. (When the festival kiddush is printed in the siddur, the Friday night kiddush appears as in the first paragraph, but it is only said on Friday night. The second paragraph is the actual festival kiddush. *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, page 335.) The first paragraph of the Shabbat havdala is omitted. The bracha for fire is said. When saying the bracha for fire, we look at the festival candles rather than light a havdala candle. Spices are not used, and we do not say the bracha for spices. We have already said the wine bracha over a cup of wine for the festival Kiddush, so this is not repeated. The HaMavdil paragraph of the havdala is a little different from the Shabbat havdala. This procedure is usually spelled out clearly in the siddur. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, page 334-5.)

The havdala for the end of Yom Kippur omits the first paragraph and omits the spices, and is usually done in the synagogue at the conclusion of services. If the end of Yom Kippur coincides with the end of Shabbat, the full havdala is done as it is for Shabbat.

Some people rely on the havdala that they see done in the synagogue, while others do their own havdala at home. If one's family has not seen the havdala in the synagogue, one does havdala at home

with the family.

16. Shabbat Havdala on Chol ha-Moed

When Shabbat falls on Chol ha-Moed, the regular Shabbat havdala is done, with wine, spice, and candle.

17. Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur Greetings and Customs

Rosh HaShana is widely known as the beginning of the new Jewish year and the beginning of the Ten Days of Repentance (also known as the Days of Awe). In this period we take stock of ourselves, identify our misdeeds, ask those people we have wronged for forgiveness, repent, pray for forgiveness, pray for a good life, and resolve to live our lives more properly in the year to come.

A special kiddush is said in the evening before each of the two days of Rosh HaShana. Many have the custom to use round challahs and to dip some challah into honey instead of salt. Another beautiful custom is dipping a piece of apple in honey after saying motzi, then saying the bracha on the fruit. After eating some of the apple we say a one sentence prayer asking that God renew us for a sweet year (see page 336 in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*, Klein, page 202.). Some do these honey rituals only on the first night. On the second night some eat a fruit that we are eating for the first time this (agricultural) year, giving additional reason for saying the sheheheyanu (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, page 336).

It is traditional to have a festive meal prior to the beginning of the Yom Kippur fast (before candle lighting). It is traditional to say ha-motzi over a round Challa at this meal, but there is no kiddush for Yom Kippur. Some have the custom to light a yahrzeit candle to commemorate relatives who have passed away (one candle no matter how many relatives). We light the yahrzeit candle without a blessing and before we light the candles for Yom Kippur. Candles are lit before nightfall. There is a somewhat different bracha for lighting the candles for Yom Kippur: Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel yom ha-kippurim. After this we say the sheheheyanu.

Here are some common greetings used on Rosh HaShana:

To greet a man: L'shana tova tikatev (May you be inscribed for a good year.)
To greet a woman: L'shana tova tikatevi
To greet a group of men or women: L'shana tova tikatavu
For anyone or any group: Shana tova (a good year)

On Rosh HaShana we may say goodbye to someone with K'tiva v'hatima tova, which is a wish that he/she be inscribed as well as sealed (for a good life). After Rosh HaShana, we drop the K'tiva, since we say, "B'rosh Hashana Yi'Katayvoon..." (On Rosh HaShana it is written...) and say Hatima tova, or just say Shana tova. Some other greetings are used at the time of Yom Kippur (see the next section).

It is traditional to visit the graves of loved ones on the day before Rosh HaShana or during the days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

17. Tashlich

In the afternoon of the first day of Rosh HaShana (or on the second day if the first falls on Shabbat) it is customary to perform the Tashlich ceremony while standing near a natural body of water (such as the sea, or stream or pond). In this ceremony we say a prayer and symbolically throw our sins into the water (bread crumbs are often used). (The Tashlich prayer does not seem to be in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, but may be found in most siddurim.) This can be a very nice family activity.

18. Fasting on Yom Kippur

The Yom Kippur fast is from before sundown on erev Yom Kippur until dark the next evening (so the fast lasts 25 rather than 24 hours). All eating and drinking is prohibited. If you forget and eat or drink something on a fast day (Yom Kippur, Tisha B'Av or a daylight fast day), you should fast the rest of the day. If fasting is problematic, a Rabbi should be consulted for guidance in your particular situation. People of any age who are taking prescription medications should consult their doctors and rabbis before fasting. Stopping some medications for even one day can be dangerous. Certain medications need to be taken even on Yom Kippur, and it may be important to swallow them with enough water to avoid the pills getting stuck on the way to the stomach because some medications can damage the esophagus. The elderly and those on medications must consult with their doctors in order to make certain that fasting is permitted to them. Fasting by women who are pregnant or breast feeding can also be counter-indicated, and such women should consult a doctor prior to fasting. Under Jewish law, one must not fast against medical advice.

19. Yom Kippur Repentance

Yom Kippur is the final day of the ten days of repentance during which we seek pardon from our maker for our many sins. Before seeking pardon from God for sins involving other people, we must seek forgiveness from the specific individual we have hurt. This can feel awkward, but it is important. Often people see advice from their rabbi on how to go about doing this. On this full fast day we are largely removed from worldly concerns, as we focus on the spiritual. Much of the day is spent in the synagogue, starting with the Kol Nidrei service the evening before, and ending with the Ne'ila service at the end of the day.

20. Yom Kippur Customs and Greetings

It is traditional to have a festive meal prior to the beginning of Yom Kippur (before candle lighting). It is traditional to say ha-motzi over a round Challa at this meal, but there is no kiddush for Yom Kippur.

Two phrases often used when greeting other Jews on Yom Kippur are: Gemar ha-timah tova (may you have a good final decree) or just Gemar tov.

It is traditional not to wear shoes with leather on Yom Kippur. There are various customs and laws associated with Yom Kippur, mostly related to abstinence (e.g., food, sex). It is traditional to wear white (e.g., kippa, shirt). Children under nine years of age should not be allowed to fast (for health reasons), but minor children over age 9 may fast for part of the day, even though they are not obligated to. In the evening on erev Yom Kippur men and some women wear a tallit in synagogue for Kol Nidrei, and the brocha for putting it on is said. The tallit is left on through the evening service. (Klein, page 209-210).

It is traditional to begin to build the Sukka at night after coming home from synagogue after the end of Yom Kippur and before breaking the fast. Driving even one nail is sufficient.

21. Sukkot

Sukkot is the first festival, starting just 5 days after Yom Kippur. Two major aspects of this holiday are dwelling in a Sukka, and taking the lulav bundle and etrog. It is wonderful for each family to have its own Sukka, lulav and etrog. The first two days are full holidays. These are followed by four days of chol ha-moed (partial holidays) and Hoshana Rabba. We eat meals in the sukka on these days, except in inclement weather. (Klein, pages 160-162.) There are various printed and web-based resources that give instruction on how to build a sukka (see Some Resources on the Web at the end of this Guide). Also, prefabricated sukkot are available for a relatively modest price from many Jewish bookstores and, in some communities, even from lumberyards. The sukka is built under the open sky. Questions about where to build a sukka should be directed to your Rabbi. Sometimes it is possible to use the synagogue's sukka if it is too difficult to build one's own. (It is wise to clear this with the Rabbi in advance). The mitzva of lulav and etrog also may be fulfilled at the synagogue. It is best to have your own lulav and etrog, but synagogues usually make arrangements for people who do not have their own. There are synagogue rituals for Hoshana Rabba but no home rituals. In addition to the usual festival kiddush for each full holiday, there is a custom of welcoming various virtual guests to the Sukka on each night of the holiday. This is described in most any siddur. Sukkot is one of the three Pilgrimage Festivals. The day after Sukkot is the full holiday of Shemini Atzeret, and the next day is Simchat Torah. (Sometimes Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are referred to as the last two days of Sukkot, but they are more correctly considered separate holidays.) (Klein, pages167-168; *Siddur Sim*

Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals, pages 330-333.)

22. Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

These festive holidays immediately follow Sukkot. The home ritual rituals for each are candle lighting and kiddush. There is a havdala at the conclusion of Simchat Torah. (Klein, pages168-169; *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 334-335.)

23. Pesach

The major events of this holiday are the two Seders, conducted at home on the first two nights. The seder allows us to retell and relive the exodus from Egypt. It is essential to tell the story in response to a question, to drink 4 cups of wine, to eat matzah, and to eat bitter herb. (It is essential to taste the bitter herb, so it may not be swallowed whole.) Most families own a haggada, and haggadot may be borrowed from most synagogue libraries. Instructions for conducting a seder may be found in the haggada. The first two and last two days are full holidays, and the four intermediate days are considered partial holidays. The special dietary restrictions related to Pesach are maintained throughout the holiday, at home and away. The preparations for this holiday are extensive and elaborate, and should start weeks before the first seder. There is a tradition that the first born males fast before the first Seder. (The tenth plague involved death of the first born males, so only males fast.) Some synagogues schedule a festive celebration (siuum) in honor of the completion of a unit of study on that day, so that the first born males who attend the festive occasion have their fast canceled by the celebration. Pesach is one of the three Pilgrimage Festivals. (Klein, pages 109-117.)

The seders should not begin before nightfall. This is because we want to fulfill the Biblical commandment to eat the matzot and drink the four cups of wine at night (and the wine with kiddush is the first cup). In this way Pesach is unlike Shabbat which we may begin a little early. A liberal position allows the candle lighting for the second night of Pesach to take place 43 minutes after candle lighting time for the first night. Consult a luach for candle lighting times.

24. Counting the Omer

The period between Pesach and the next major holiday of Shavuot is the period of the counting of the omer. Each evening we count the 49 days leading up to Shavuot, starting with the evening of the second Seder of Pesach, and each night before we count we say a short bracha. This is a period of semi-mourning, at least through Lag B'Omer (the 33rd day of the counting the omer). It is customary not to get haircuts during this time. Festive events like marriages are not celebrated or performed. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 55-60; and Klein, pages 134-136 and 142-144.)

25. Shavuot

Shavuot is known as the holiday that commemorates and celebrates our receiving the Torah in the desert after leaving Egypt. There are few home rituals associated with Shavuot. It is traditional to eat dairy meals on Shavuot. There is a custom of studying all through the first night, and then praying Shacharit as soon as it gets light. Some do this at home with friends. Shavuot is a yom tov which lasts two days. Since these days are full festivals, we refrain from work. Shavuot is one of the three Pilgrimage Festivals. (Klein, pages 147-153.)

Minor Festivals and Fast Days

A few of the more important holiday rituals and customs are described here. Candles are not lit for the minor holidays (other than Hanukka candles). There is no kiddush for the minor holidays.

26. Celebrating Hanukka

Hanukka is celebrated at home by lighting candles after nightfall at the beginning of each day of Hanukka (except Shabbat). So, if the calendar says Hanukka begins on Friday, the first candle is lit on Thursday night. Each year at least one day of Hanukka falls on Shabbat. The candles for that day are lit before lighting the Shabbat candles (and so are actually lit late Friday afternoon). At the end of Shabbat, Hanukka candles are lit after the havdala ceremony at home.

What it is: The major ritual of the festival of lights, commemorating the rededication of the Temple some 2,200 years ago after the revolt of the Maccabees, a successful struggle for religious freedom. This is a post-Biblical holiday.

Materials: A Hanukka candle holder (known as a Hanukkia or a Hanukka menora)
Hanukka Candles

Procedure:

a. On the first day, one candle is put in the Hanukkia, using only the rightmost candle holder. On the second day, two candles are put in the Hanukkia using the two rightmost candle holders. On the third day, three candles are placed in the Hanukkia using the three rightmost candle holders, and so on for the other days. So only on the last day do we put a candle in the leftmost candle holder. (Right and left here refer to your right and left as you face the Hanukkia, as you stand in the position you will be in when you light the candles.)
b. Another candle, called the Shamesh, is used to light the Hanukka candles. It too is placed in Hanukkia, in a special place somewhat apart from the other candles.
c. Light the Shamesh with a match. At this point you are ready to begin the Hanukka candle lighting ceremony.
d. Sing or say the 2 brachot. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 307-308.)
e. On the first night the sheheheyanu bracha is said after the first two brachot. (*Siddur Sim Shalom*

for Sabbath and Festivals, page 307.)

f. Use the shamesh to light the candles in order, starting with the leftmost candle. (If the shamesh is too firmly attached to the Hanukkia, one may light the Hanukka candles using a match.)
g. Sing or read the paragraph ha-nerot ha-lalu. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 308.)
h. Sing Maoz Zur. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, pages 308.)

Bracha: Two or three. (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 307.)

Various Customs: Ideally, the candles should be lit near a window to publicize the holiday. If a candle goes out, we may relight it using a match, the shamesh, or even another hanukka candle. This is consistent with publicizing the holiday. (This is the only holiday where publicizing the holiday is part of the observance.) The Hanukkia is commonly called a Menora, although technically a menora is a word used to refer to any lamp. Some people use oil rather than candles. (Be very careful if you do this, since the oil containers can overturn.) We allow the candles to burn out, and so before lighting we place the Hanukkia in a location where this will be possible (safe, no drafts). Electric menoras are sometimes the only option possible, as in a hospital, and are best reserved for such situations. Some place an electric menora in the window to publicize the holiday, and position it so the newest candle is on the left when viewed from outside. Often games are played, sweets are eaten, and gifts are exchanged while the candles are burning. It is a common custom to play with a dreidl (called a s'vivon in Hebrew - a little 4-sided top) and eat potato laktes (pancakes) on Hanukka. Some have the tradition that women do not work while the Hanukka candles are burning. Hanukka parties are popular, and often we serve foods fried in oil, especially potato latkes. In Israel, donuts are popular at this time of year. Fried foods are often eaten to remind us of the miracle of the oil lasting 8 days.

27. The Nine Days, Tisha B'Av, and the Three Weeks

Tisha B'Av (the 9th day of Av) is the saddest day of the Jewish year since it commemorates the destruction of both the First and Second Temples, and several other national tragedies. Tisha B'Av is the only day when tallit and tefillin are worn in the afternoon for Mincha rather than for Shacharit. Some read holocaust literature on this day. The three weeks before Tisha B'Av (starting with the 17th of Tammuz) are somber, and weddings and joyous celebrations (and haircuts and shaving) are avoided. On the 17th of Tammuz the Romans breached the walls of Jerusalem. The 17th of Tammuz is a daytime fast (from sunup to sundown), but work and bathing are allowed on this fast day. If the 17th falls on Shabbat, the fast is postponed one day to Sunday. The last 9 days are more somber than the first 12 days. It is traditional not to eat meat or drink wine from the 1st through the 8th day of Av. The 9th of Av is a full fast day, from sundown to sundown. The restriction on eating meat and drinking wine is relaxed on the Shabbat that falls during the 9 days. When Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbat, the fast is postponed one day to Sunday. When Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbat or on Sunday, havdala is handled in an unusual manner. On Saturday night we add the atta honantanu to the amidah just as any Saturday night, and each individual should say the bracha Borei me'orei ha-esh over a candle (or even an electric

light), preferably before reading Megillat Eicha (Lamentations). On Sunday night we say havdala over wine and say ha-Mavdil, but omit fire and spices. We do not eat until saying havdala on Sunday night. (Klein, pages 246-251.) Some people read Holocaust literature on Tisha B'Av.

28. Purim

On this holiday we read the ganza megilla (the whole Scroll of Esther) in synagogue both the evening before and the morning of Purim. In addition to the festive celebrations at synagogue, in religious school, and elsewhere, it is traditional to deliver or send Mishloah Manot, little gifts of ready-to-eat food (such as hamentashen, fruit, nuts, candy), to friends and relatives on the day of Purim, and to make charitable contributions to the poor. At the synagogue, children (and often adults) dress in costumes. Some drink alcoholic beverages on Purim and get tipsy. (Klein, pages 237-240.) On the day of Purim it is customary to have a festive meal.

Other Home Rituals

A few other home rituals are described below.

29. Lighting Yahrzeit candles

It is traditional to light a 24-hour memorial candle to commemorate the anniversary of the death of a relative. There is no blessing for lighting a yahrzeit candle. It is lit on the anniversary of the (Jewish) date of death using the Jewish calendar. It is usually lit the previous evening (so if a yahrzeit one year falls on March 4th, the yahrzeit candle is lit at the end of the day on March 3rd). Often the funeral home or synagogue provides a list of the yahrzeit dates for many years to come. Various books and computer programs (some free) may be used to determine the yahrzeit dates based on the Hebrew or English date of death. Many synagogues send out yearly yahrzeit reminders if you request this. If you do not know the exact date of death of your relative, in consultation with a Rabbi you should select an appropriate Jewish date on which to observe yahrzeit each year. If you forget to light a yahrzeit candle, you should observe the yahrzeit when you remember, or give charity. If the yahrzeit falls on Shabbat, the yahrzeit candle is lit on Friday before the Shabbat candles. If the yahrzeit falls on Sunday, the yahrzeit candles is lit on Saturday night after nightfall (Klein, pages 39, 294-295.)

Materials: 24-hour candle.
Procedure:
a. Find a location where the candle can safely burn for a full day.
b. Light the candle.
Bracha: None.
Customs: If you forget to light the evening before, you can light in the morning. Some other traditional observances include: study of some aspect of religious life, a charitable donation in memory of the

deceased, and leading the daily services on the day of the yahrzeit (if able). On the day of yahrzeit the person observing the yahrzeit attends the three daily services, beginning the evening of the previous night, and says the mourners' kaddish at the appropriate times in the service. (Klein, pages 294-5.) Some also light a yahrzeit candle the evening before Yom Kippur and the other 3 holidays when Yizkor is recited in the synagogue, before lighting the holiday candles. Only one candle is lit before yizkor days, rather than one per person. There is no restriction on the use or disposal of the candle container.

30. Blessing on New Fruits or On a Joyous Occasion

It is proper to say a special blessing of thanksgiving when eating from the new crop of the year, such as when eating the first apple of the season, on a joyous family occasion, or when first wearing new clothing. (Klein, page 48.)

Materials: None.
Procedure:
a. Say the usual bracha over the food (e.g. borei pri ha-etz) if food is involved.
b. Say the sheheheyanu bracha.
Bracha: Baruch ... Sheheheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh

31. Blessing on Surviving a Life Threatening Experience

It is proper to say a prayer of thanksgiving after experiencing a life threatening experience (such as a car accident). This is called bentchen gomel. Since this is done in the synagogue, usually after being called to the Torah, the procedure is not described here. Officiants at the synagogue will guide you. (Klein, page 48.)

32. How to Affix a Mezuza

A person should place a mezuza with a kosher scroll at each entrance to his or her residence and at the entrance to each room (excluding bathrooms). A kosher scroll consists of the first two paragraphs of the Shema handwritten by a scribe on parchment and is generally small, about 3 inches by 3 inches. (Some stores will sell an empty mezuza case, or sell the case with a photocopy of a scroll. Neither of these is a kosher mezuza.) The mezuza should be affixed on the right doorpost as the door as you enter the room. (In unusual cases, such as if the doorway is slanted, or arched, or without a door, or if a door is used only as an exit, consult a rabbi.) The top of the mezuza is tilted toward the inside of the house or room. If the doorpost is narrow, the mezuza may be placed completely vertical. Note that the casing that is seen is valid only it if contains a proper parchment scroll (that contains the first two paragraphs of the Shema). Mezuzot (plural of mezuza) should be affixed immediately in a house you own, and within 30 days of establishing residence as a tenant. If the mezuza will be exposed to the weather, use a case that will give good protection to the mezuza scroll.

What it is: A ritual for placing a mezuza on the doorpost. The mezuza marks a residence as Jewish.
Materials: A mezuza with a proper scroll. Any needed nails, screws, hammer or screwdriver.
Procedure:
a. Assemble the needed materials.
b. Say the bracha.
c. Attach the mezuza.
Bracha: Baruch ... Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu likboa mezuza. If you affix more than one mezuza at one time, you only need to say the bracha once if you affix them without interruption. (Klein, pages 49-50.)
Various Customs: When you sell a house or move out of an apartment, you should remove the mezuzot (plural of mezuza) unless you know the next resident is Jewish, in which case it is customary to leave the mezuzot in place (or only take them with the permission of the new resident). When you take down a mezuza, either reuse it or dispose of it properly. Any synagogue will assist in discarding such scrolls. Some people invite family and friends and have a "mezuza sticking party."

33. Keeping Kosher on the Road

It is important to plan ahead if you travel. Even if a city does not have a kosher restaurant, there may be other kosher facilities (e.g., college dinning halls, Jewish hospitals). Some people who travel routinely carry an eating kit including plastic cutlery, hot cups, paper/plastic bowl, paper plates, small water heater, can opener, napkins, sugar, instant soup, and tea bags. Fresh produce is available at local stores. Usually the local supermarket has many foods with a hechsher (such as cold cereals, tuna, cream cheese, cottage cheese, frozen bagels, yogurt, canned nuts, peanut butter, jams, cakes, cookies, and potato chips). It is also possible to pack some food, such as bread, challa, wine, which you may not be able to find at your destination.

There are some guidebooks that provide information about kosher food facilities in various cities in this country and abroad, and there are resources on the web. (See Attachment 1 on web resources at the end of this Guide.)

Until recently, every major airline offered kosher meals, and some offered kosher snacks. This is becoming less common, due to cost-cutting measures by some airlines. Some airlines honor requests for kosher vegetarian meals. (Just ask the airline what types of kosher meals are available.) The request for kosher food is best made at the time of reservation, and should be made (or reconfirmed) at least three full days in advance of travel. Some airlines will accommodate the requests for kosher meals with only 24 or 48 hours notice. When making reservations, it is necessary to be very specific that you want kosher meals on all flights, or you might end up with a kosher meal on only one flight. Sometimes, even when you make your request properly, the airline does not stock enough (or any) kosher meals on a flight. Also, if your airline makes last minute equipment changes (that is, changes airplanes), your

kosher meal will not be available on the new airplane. Special care is needed when traveling during Pesach, since airlines often confuse kosher and kosher-for-Passover. At all times, it is a good idea to take some food along, in case the airline cannot or does not provide the requested meal(s).

Sometimes the packaged kosher meals on airlines come with a little card printed with a prayer in Hebrew. This is the tefila ha-derech, or traveler's prayer. It is appropriate to say this prayer whenever undertaking major travel.

Hospitals offer kosher meals, but some advance notice may be required.

Staying away from home over Shabbat requires additional planning. Basic food requirements are: wine, challot (plural for challa), salt (for the challa), Shabbos candles, pre-cooked food for the meals of the day, and aromatic spices and candle for havdala. Some Conservative synagogues will assist guests of congregants to find lodging within walking distance of the synagogue.

34. Finding a Synagogue When Traveling

If you will want to find a synagogue while you are traveling, it is best to locate one before you leave home, and to contact it. Some synagogues do not have daily or even weekly services. United Synagogue has a website which lists Conservative synagogues by state (See Attachment 1 on web resources at the end of this Guide.) When traveling we need to recognize that Conservative Judaism embodies various pluralistic approaches. We may encounter rituals and customs which are not consistent with the practice in our congregations. This may be difficult at times. For example, a woman committed to equal obligation and participation, may find gender-based limitations interfere with her kavana. As in eating, advance knowledge can be highly useful. Visitors should respect the local customs.

35. Daily Planning

To live a weekday as an adult Conservative Jew requires planning. Planning will allow us: have kosher food, have a siddur (an tallit and tefilling, if needed) if one will daven away from home and synagogue, know anything about the coming day(s) such as whether it is rosh hodesh, which would affect daily rituals, and know the times for daily prayer, and especially the time of candle lighting on Friday so that one can be sure to be ready for Shabbat by candle-lighting time.

36. Planning for the Holidays in the World of Work

Those of us who are employed may need to plan far in advance so that we can take off for work on the major Jewish holidays. We may need to build up and save vacation days to use for the holidays. We may even need to talk with prospective employers before accepting a job to be sure that it will be possible to take off when needed. Sometimes it is possible to swap work shifts with non-Jewish

coworkers, and in that way avoid working on the holidays while acting in a way which respects the legitimate business needs of our employer.

Some Major Life and Death Events

This section considers some major life events, some joyous and others not. These may be unscheduled, and when they occur a Rabbi may not be immediately available. I try to present information here to provide some guidance until a Rabbi may be consulted.

37. Brit/Bris and Baby Naming for Boys

On the 8th day of life, every boy baby has a ritual circumcision, called a brit milah. The baby is named as part of the ceremony. A brit is even done on Shabbat or a festival, if that is the eighth day of life. A brit is postponed only for reasons related to the health of the baby. (If postponed, the brit is not done on Shabbat.) The brit is always done with the assistance of a professional mohel, who conducts the ritual and performs the circumcision. (A medical circumcision such as may be done in a hospital is not a ritual circumcision.) The mohel may be a Rabbi, a medical doctor, or other suitably trained person. The brit ceremony involves several blessings, takes about 10 minutes, and is done during the daytime. There are three honorary roles that may be filled by relatives or close friends: sandik (who holds the baby during the circumcision), godmother, and godfather. The baby is named during the ceremony. The brit is followed by a festive meal. (Klein, pages 420 to 432.) Immediately after the birth of a baby boy, arrangements should be made with a mohel. If you do not know a mohel, you can usually get a referral from your synagogue. It is not necessary to have a Rabbi present for a brit, but some people ask their Rabbi to officiate.

38. Simchat Bat

A new tradition is developing for newborn girls, to provide some further celebration as counterpart to the brit for newborn boys. This is referred to variously as a Simchat Bat, Brit Banot, Brita, or Zeved haBat. There is no set ritual for this, and the content and timing is left to the participants. This is only occasionally practiced, and the observance ranges from a simple party to a self-designed religious event with or without participation of clergy. Your Rabbi will be able to provide guidance and assistance with this newly developing ritual.

39. Baby Naming for Girls

A girl baby is named at the synagogue soon after birth. The parents are called up to the Torah for an aliyah during a regular Torah service (or just the father in more traditional synagogues). Most often, Jewish children are named after a deceased relative, but any name may be used.

40. Pidyon ha-Ben

As commanded in the Torah (e.g., Numbers 18:15-16), the first-born male of a mother is redeemed from service to the priesthood. The ceremony for this involves giving 5 silver coins (e.g., silver dollars), reminiscent of the 5 shekels mentioned in the Bible, to a Cohen, who can perform this function by virtue of being a member of the priesthood. Your Rabbi will have the full service. The pidyon ha-ben ceremony is done on the 31st day after birth, counting the day of birth as the first day. (If the 31st day is Shabbat or a Yom Tov, the pidyon ha-ben is held on the next day.) The ceremony is not done if the father is a Cohen or a Levi or the mother is the daughter of a Cohen or a Levi. There are various special situations such as the case of a Caesarean birth, or the case of a miscarriage prior to a first-born. Your Rabbi will guide you in these situations. (Klein, pages 430-432.)

41. Bar/Bat Mitzva

Both boys and girls celebrate their reaching the age of religious adulthood with participation in a religious service at the synagogue, and typically with a party (this may be often quite elaborate but may be a small and intimate gathering). The actual bar/bat mitzva observances vary widely from synagogue to synagogue, and in some synagogues there are differences between the ceremony for boys and girls. The bar/bat mitzvah observances usually include being called to the Torah for an aliya and reciting a haftorah (a section from the prophetic books of the Bible). They may include actually reading from the Torah, leading parts or all of the Saturday morning or Friday night services, and giving a talk related to the reading of the week.

Guests of the bar/bat mitzva family should ask when they should arrive at services. Usually this is a gift giving occasion. Out of respect for the Sabbath, gifts should not be brought to the synagogue on Shabbat. Rather they should be mailed or delivered to the family on another day.

42. Weddings

Marriage is the preferred state, both for the sake of procreation and companionship. The tractate of the Talmud that deals with betrothal is called Kiddushin (holiness). There is no Jewish tradition of celibacy. (Klein, pages 380-381.) A comprehensive discussion of the Jewish wedding is beyond the scope of this Guide, but here are a few highlights.

The Jewish wedding can be small or large. Its most prominent features are the signing of a ketuba (wedding document), and a ceremony under the huppa (bridal canopy). There must be two witnesses to the ketuba, and they may not be close relatives to the bride or groom or each other, since the ketuba is a legal document. Neither the bride nor the groom sign the ketuba. If the ring is lost before the wedding, you do not need to panic. The ring is not a required part of a wedding ceremony; the groom may give the bride another object of inherent value. (Klein, chapters 27 and 28.)

Sometimes there is a social gathering before and after the wedding ceremony, and other times only

after the wedding ceremony. So if you arrive late you may miss the ceremony. The wedding ceremony takes about 15 - 30 minutes. The wedding is performed in the presence of a minyan, since a wedding is a public event. Weddings are not held on Shabbat or Yom Tov. There are certain other periods during the year when weddings are not held (consult your Rabbi).

It is traditional for the bride to immerse in a mikva a day or so prior to the wedding. In earlier times, necessary instruction was provided by a female relative, but nowadays it is more usual for the bride to call the mikva and make arrangements with the attendant, who can provide guidance in all details of the process.

The aufruf ceremony takes place during a regularly scheduled service in the synagogue, usually in the week prior to the wedding. In this ceremony, the groom or the couple is called to the Torah for an aliya. Typically this is done in the morning on the Shabbat prior to the wedding. Typically only close family are invited to attend the aufruf. Often the aufruf takes place at the synagogue of the groom's family, but there are many times when this is inconvenient, and it may be done elsewhere, such as at the synagogue of the bride's family.

43. End of Life Decisions

Sometimes we are called on to make important decisions relating to end of life, medical and health care for ourselves or others. This topic has been considered in depth by the Conservative movement, particularly in light of recent advances in medical care. This most sensitive topic is largely beyond the scope of an introductory Guide such as this. Anyone in need of advice in these areas should consult with their Rabbi (or any available Rabbi) for specific and thorough guidance.

It is best to plan ahead for end of life decisions. For general information and advance planning, the Rabbinical Assembly has authored a set of materials that clarifies the issues, and provides an eight page form to help you while you are mentally competent to give instructions to family members and medical personnel about your care should there come a time when you are no longer mentally competent. The official title of this set of materials is the, "Jewish Medical Directives" and it is available from the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (see reference section and web resource section). It addresses topics such as: amputation if terminally ill, mechanical life support if terminally ill, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if terminally ill, and organ donation.

If you or your loved one is being cared for by paid staff, as in a hospital or nursing home, it is a good idea to talk with the institution and staff about what will be done should death occur when a family member is not present.

One guiding principle in making end of life decisions for yourself or others is that Jewish law does

not allow anything to be done to hasten death. Another principle, that can override this, is that it is not necessary to forego palliative or curative treatments that bring relief just because there is some risk that they may hasten death. So, strong pain killers such as morphine are allowed when needed to relieve pain, even if their use entails a risk that they may hasten death. Also, treatments that are not tolerable to the terminally ill patient are not required just because they may prolong life. It is within the halacha to refuse a feeding tube for fear of the risks involved. Although mechanical life support (such as a ventilator) can prolong life, it is not necessary to submit to this support. However, once on mechanical life support, ceasing its operation is very problematic under Jewish law.

When a dying person has stopped breathing or has no heartbeat, Jewish law allows but does not require heroic efforts to resuscitate the person. At times it may be appropriate to request the attending medical staff to implement a "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) status for yourself or another person. If this is done, there will be no efforts at resuscitation for a person whose heart has stopped beating or who has stopped breathing.

Hospice care may be a fully Jewish option for some people, specifically for a terminally ill person whose death is imminent. The definition of imminent is important. The more stringent of the two main Conservative statements on this topic seems to implicitly acknowledge six months, since this is the usual time period for hospice care. (Reisner, 1991.)

The Conservative movement has grappled with the issues of life and death that have arisen due to modern medicine. This Guide just touches on some of these. You should consult a Rabbi for competent guidance.

44. At the Time of Death

Death is a stark reality of life. The Jewish way in death and mourning provides structure, support, and comfort. The end of life rituals recognize the sanctity of the body after death, and the existence of a soul that continues after death, and at the same time they give deference to the feelings of the mourners in this most trying and vulnerable time.

This section briefly describes some things to do at the time of death of a loved one. The situation differs somewhat if a person dies in a hospital or at home. In any case, we should strive to provide k'vod ha-met, respect/honor and dignity for the dead.

We should make every effort to stay with an imminently dying person, to provide whatever comfort we can and just to be with them when they pass from this world to the next. If a dying person is cognitively able, our tradition suggests repentance and prayer. Ideally, a seriously ill person repents his or her sins and forgives anyone who may have wronged him or her, and we can encourage this. This

can be done verbally, or mentally if the sick person is no longer capable of speech. There is a traditional confessional prayer called the vidui which your rabbi can provide[5]. It is traditional to tell the ill person that many who have said the confessional have recovered. The first line of the Shema traditionally is the last prayer said by a person who is dying. The paragraphs below give some very brief guidance for the time immediately after death. (Klein, pages 18, 273 - 274.)

If the person died in a hospital

Here are some suggestions of things to do if you are present when a loved one dies in a hospital. First, you should call for help from the medical personnel, particularly if resuscitation may be possible and is desired. Some steps to follow after death has been confirmed are described below.

Note: hospitals usually allow a few hours for the body to be removed. If it will take longer for the body to be removed, the hospital will put the body in their morgue. You may sit outside the morgue while waiting for a representative from the funeral home to arrive.

If the person died at home

Here are some suggestions of things to do if you find a loved one dead at home or elsewhere outside a hospital. First you should call for emergency medical care if there is any chance of resuscitation, and if this is desired. If there may have been a crime committed, it is necessary to call the police.

Next Steps

When you are certain that death has occurred, close the eyes of the person and cover the entire body, including the head, with a sheet. It is traditional to say the three words, baruch dayan emet, at this time, and the more complete form of this blessing at the funeral. This means "Blessed be the True Judge" and recognizes the sovereignty of our God. Saying this is perhaps the ultimate acceptance of God, as it is said under the most trying circumstances. If it is a close relative who died, it is traditional to make a (modest) tear in one's clothing (k'ria) at this time or at the time of the funeral. Nowadays it is usually done at the time of the funeral, and the funeral home staff provide guidance in making the k'ria. (The garment with the k'ria is worn during shiva, except on Shabbat.)

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[5] The vidui is not found in every siddur and the exact wording varies. Here is a translation based on the vidui as it appears in several siddurim:

I acknowledge before you God, my God and God of my forefathers, that my healing and my death are in your hands. May it be your will that my healing be a complete healing. If I die, may my death be an atonement for all my sins and transgressions. Grant me a portion in the world to come as is granted to the righteous. Into your hands I entrust my soul. Amen and amen.

The body may be adjusted or moved if it is in an awkward position or location. This may be particularly important if the person died outside the home. (Rigor mortis, stiffening of the body, typically begins 2 to 4 hours after death, affects the whole body within 6 to 12 hours, and disappears after 24 to 36 hours.)

There is an ancient tradition to have a Jewish person stay with the body from death until burial to protect it. This person, called a shomer (or guardian), is excused from all other positive mitzvot, such as daily prayer, even on Shabbat. It is his or her duty to stay by the body and, traditionally, the person recites Psalms. Nowadays the body is well protected once it is placed in a refrigerated morgue. Today we try to have someone stay with the body to show respect (perhaps sitting outside the morgue). Most Jewish funeral homes can arrange to have someone serve as a shomer.

You should immediately call the rabbi and the funeral home and begin to make preparations for the funeral. Your rabbi can help you decide what instructions to give to the funeral home (e.g., concerning type of casket, and various other services). If you do not have a rabbi, most funeral homes can secure the services of one for you. If you use a non-Jewish funeral home you should immediately specify that you do not want embalming (since this is contrary to Jewish law) and since many funeral homes immediately begin draining blood to allow for embalming. The funeral home and the Rabbi will provide further guidance.

If it is soiled, the body may be washed. This does not take the place of the ritual washing described below.

Organ donation is allowed to heal another person. A person may will his eyes or other body parts for this purpose. A relatively recent vote of the Law Committee suggests that organ donation which will save the life of another person should be given the highest priority. (Klein, page 275, and Prouser, 1995.)

Routine autopsy is not allowed, since it would dishonor the dead. Autopsy is allowed if required by law, or if it would help to cure others with the same medical condition. All body parts, including blood, must be buried in accordance with Jewish law. (Klein pages 274-275.)

Cremation is never allowed under Jewish law.

It is traditional to have the burial within one day of death. Funerals are not done on Shabbat, Yom Kippur, Rosh HaShana, Sukkot, Pesach, or Shavuot, but are allowed on chol ha-moed. (On page 101, Klein says burial is allowed on the second day of the festivals, but this is not done for practical reasons.) So, for example, a person who died on Friday is usually buried on Sunday.

If death occurs on Shabbat or Yom Tov practice varies. If it is your practice to use a telephone, call the funeral home. If it is a Jewish funeral home, usually there will be non-Jewish employees who will answer the call. At your request, the funeral home will arrange for prompt pick-up of the body that very day (by non-Jewish workers, if it is a Jewish funeral home). (The dead person is not subject to the prohibition against riding on Shabbat, but some families do not want this.) You should also contact your Rabbi. If it is not your practice to use a telephone, call immediately after nightfall.

Positive mitzvot (daily, Shabbat and Yom Tov) are not obligatory for an onen. (An onen is a close relative of a person who has just died and is not yet buried.) Until burial, the onen's obligation for daily prayer is preempted by the obligations related to burial. Negative mitzvot still apply.

If it is not your practice to use the telephone on Shabbat and the deceased is in a hospital, the staff may call the funeral home. If it is your wish to delay transit until after nightfall, you will need to inform the hospital staff.

Usually the funeral home arranges for the medical certification of death, especially if the person died outside a hospital.

Out of reverence for the dead, a Jewish body undergoes a ritual washing (tahora) prior to burial (unless the body is mutilated). This washing follows a set procedure and should be done by trained Jews. Most Jewish funeral homes and some non-Jewish funeral homes can arrange for this, but it must be requested - usually it will not be done without a request. Even if the person is not washed, a full burial is allowed. (Klein, pages 276-277.)

Traditionally, extravagance in the purchase of a casket (or coffin) is avoided, and a plain pine box is used. Some funeral homes pressure families to purchase extravagant coffins, but traditionally the casket is maximally simple.

Out of respect for the dead, the Jewish tradition is to have a closed casket, and not to allow "viewing".

Funeral homes will follow your directions, but if not instructed may do things you would not want. If it is a non-Jewish funeral home, much more instruction is needed. For example, often a non-Jewish funeral home will drain blood almost immediately and begin preparations for embalming, without any instruction from relatives. Both of these are contrary to Jewish law. Even a Jewish funeral home requires very explicit instruction. Most particularly, it is necessary to instruct the burial home: (a) to conduct a ritual washing of the body, (b) to dress the person in tachrichin (shrouds), (c) to provide a shomer, (d) to provide a plain wooden box for the casket, and (e) to have the casket closed (no

"viewing").

If you do not have a rabbi in the neighborhood where the burial is taking place, the funeral home can provide a rabbi (and you will be billed for this). Whether you know the rabbi or not, it is typical to meet with the rabbi before the funeral service to provide information to help the rabbi prepare a eulogy. You can prepare for this by jotting down some poignant memories or important facts, including the names of close relatives. You will also be asked for the Hebrew name of the deceased and his or her parents.

The funeral home will ask for information for the death certificate, including such things as: social security number, dates of birth and death, place of birth and death, and maiden name if female. The funeral home may also place a death notice in the newspaper, and will ask for information for that, such as occupation. The funeral home will also ask for the specific location of the burial plot. If the family does not own a burial plot, one may be purchased at this time.

It is traditional to bury a man with the tallit he used during prayer, so the family should bring that to the funeral home. Otherwise, a Jewish funeral home will provide one.

The rituals surrounding death and burial are complex and a Rabbi must be consulted. The above are just intended to address the most immediate needs, before a Rabbi can be reached.

Mourners

Those obligated to mourn are the close relatives of the deceased: son, daughter, mother, father, sister (or half-sister), brother (or half-brother), wife or husband. Upon death, a close relative becomes an onen (a word for a mourner prior to burial of the deceased). The onen is responsible for attending to the burial arrangements and protecting the body. An onen is exempt on weekdays from all positive mitzvot, including daily prayer and even brachot over food, and should not voluntarily undertake these. On Shabbat the onen is obligated for the positive as well as the negative mitzvot. Children below the age of bar/bat mitzvah are not considered onenim (plural of onen), and are not required to observe mourning rites. However, older minors should restrict their usual activities to some extent. After the funeral a close relative of the deceased is called an avel (a word for mourner after the burial of the deceased). (Klein, page 274.)

45. Funeral

At the funeral, the Rabbi and the funeral director will assist the mourners. The brief comments here are intended mostly for non-mourners. (Klein, pages 279-283.)

Often there is a funeral service in a chapel and then a shorter service grave side. Sometimes the

whole service is done grave side. In either case, it is not traditional to visit with the family before the funeral. If there is a chapel service, at its conclusion the family and closer friends immediately proceed to the cemetery, usually in an organized processional. The casket should be closed (no communal "viewing"). It is traditional to have a plain, inexpensive wooden coffin. Men should wear a kippa at the funeral.

There is a tradition to make a (modest) tear or cut in one's clothing if the deceased is a close relative. If you plan to make a tear in your actual clothing, you should wear clothing that you are willing to tear, such as a: tie, scarf (worn around the neck with ends over the heart), vest, shirt, or sports jacket). Funeral homes also offer pieces of cloth that are pinned to the mourner and then cut, and many mourners use this approach, although tearing through an actual garment is far preferable. Usually, the tear is done at the time of the funeral and while standing. The Rabbi or funeral home staff assist the mourners to do this. The torn clothing is worn for the week of shiva.

It is traditional to have 6 to 8 people serve as pallbearers to carry or accompany the coffin from the hearse to the grave site. It sometimes is necessary to remind the funeral home that you have pallbearers available to do this.

Only the mourners say the mourners' kaddish at the cemetery. Even if another person present is in mourning, he or she does not say the mourner's kaddish at the cemetery. If you think there might not be enough people to make a minyan at the cemetery (which is required to say kaddish), you might think of ways to find people to help form a minyan. Aside from asking people you know, sometimes the synagogue or a nearby yeshiva will provide a few people if asked. As a last resort, you might try asking people who may be visiting the cemetery at the same time as the burial. (Of course, they must be Jews.) If you cannot say kaddish at the cemetery, you can still do so at all the other appropriate times, such as at daily services during the shiva week.

Our tradition considers it an act of love for relatives and then friends to add at least one shovelful of earth to help cover the casket after it has been lowered into the ground. (However, if you would have trouble doing this or would rather not, that is acceptable.) When doing this, the shovel is not passed from hand to hand; each person picks up the shovel. Often the first shovelfuls are done with the back of the shovel (to indicate a use of a shovel which is not usual).

Non-mourners

Non-mourners should arrive promptly at the funeral home (or cemetery if it will be a grave side service). Funerals start on time. Although at some burials people greet the mourners before the funeral, some families prefer to be alone at that time, and their wishes should be respected. If the family is not present in the room to which you are directed by the funeral director, probably the family wishes

to be alone before the funeral. Comforting mourners really takes place after the burial, and especially through the shiva week. The burial immediately follows the funeral service.

At the end of the burial, the non-mourners form a double line and the mourners walk between them as they leave the grave site. The non-mourners greet the mourners with the phrase: haMakom yenahem et-hem betoch sh-ar avelei Zion v'Yerushalaim (May the Almighty comfort you with the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem). (See the next section for variants for different groupings of people.)

On leaving the cemetery, it is customary to wash one's hands, pouring water from a container alternatively over each hand 3 times. Usually facilities for this are provided. No bracha is said for this washing. If you are returning to the shiva house from the cemetery, sometimes the washing is done outside the shiva home.

It is a custom for non-mourners (such as neighbors) to provide the first meal for the mourners when they return home from the funeral.

46. If You are a Cohen

A Cohen is a member of the Priestly class. Other than for immediate relatives, Kohanim are not allowed to come in contact with the dead. A Cohen has restrictions on being in a building with or coming within 4 amot (cubits) of a dead Jew (other than a close relative). A Cohen should consult with a Rabbi about this type of contact with the dead as may be needed. (Klein, pages 281-282.)

47. Sitting Shiva

The shiva period provides a structured setting for mourning and healing. It helps the mourner to get through the most painful period right after burial. One is obligated to sit shiva for close relatives (a son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, wife or husband).

The word shiva means seven and is the name used for the seven day period of mourning that begins immediately after burial. Shiva is sometimes shortened, for reasons such as burial just before a holiday, but generally it is 7 days, counting the day of burial as the first day and ending the morning of the seventh day.

It is traditional for mourners to sit on low stools or chairs, if that is possible. Mirrors in the home are covered. Mourners do not shave. A seven day candle is lit and kept burning through the shiva period, or 7 yarzheit candles are lit, one after another, to last the seven days. (There is no bracha on this candle lighting.) Usually the funeral home will provide the candle. It is traditional to have a minyan at the shiva home each day, in the morning and evening. If that is not possible, the mourners may leave the home to say kaddish at the synagogue at the daily services. On Shabbat, most outward mourning

practices are not followed, and the mourners attend Shabbat services at the synagogue.

There is no single way to grieve. Even as we grieve there may be times we smile or laugh, perhaps when we recall something about the deceased, or about another relative. There are many laws and traditions concerning shiva. Just a few are presented in this Guide. (Klein, pages 286-290.)

48. A Shiva Visit

It is a mitzva to comfort a mourner. Described here are a few aspects of mourning that are particularly relevant to the friend or relative who will be making a shiva visit. (Klein, pages 289-290.)

Shiva begins after burial. Usually one sits shiva in the home of the deceased, or of a close relative of the deceased. Visits of consolation are made during the shiva period. The tradition does not indicate the hours for shiva visits. However, if the family does indicate when they wish to receive visitors, their wishes should be followed. The funeral home or the synagogue usually will have this information.

The shiva visit is not a typical social visit. It is a visit to offer comfort and sympathy. Usually one does not ring the doorbell when making a shiva visit. Traditional mourners will refrain from social greetings and trivial conversations during shiva. The mourner traditionally does not rise to greet guests, even prominent guests. This is not the usual way of social interaction, so the visitor should be prepared. It is appropriate to bring fruit or other (kosher) food to the shiva house, or to make a contribution to a charity at a later time. Often the family has a designated charity, and a donation to the deceased's synagogue is also fitting. It is not traditional to bring or send flowers to a house of mourning. Often conversation focuses on the life of the deceased (e.g., share recollections, look at a photograph). Sometimes visitors do not know how to discuss the deceased, especially if they never met. Some approaches that others have found useful include asking open ended questions, such as, “What type of person was your mother?” or “What are your earliest memories of your mother?” or “When did you first meet your husband?” This type of question allows the mourner to say as much or little as he likes, and also helps the mourner to think about the whole life of the deceased, not just the most recent parts. In most cases, the visitor should not try to steer the conversation away from the deceased.

Often a mourner has a minyan for services where he or she is sitting shiva. It is a mitzva to help make a shiva minyan, and this is usually greatly appreciated by the mourning family.

There is a traditional sentence that is often said by visitors to mourners as they end their shiva visit. The exact wording depends on the gender and number of mourner.

To one male mourner: haMakom yenahem o-tacha betoch sh-ar avlei Zion v'Jerushalaim.

To one female mourner: haMakom yenahem o-tch betoch sh-ar avlei Zion v'Jerushalaim.

To two or more male mourners, or to male and female mourners: haMakom yenahem et-hem betoch sh-ar avlei Zion v'Jerushalaim.
To two or more female mourners: haMakom yenahem et-hen betoch sh-ar avlei Zion v'Jerushalaim.

This sentence means: May you be comforted among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem. It may be said in English. The mourner does not have to reply to this sentence.

49. Mourning after Shiva

There is period of less intense mourning that extends for 30 days from the burial. This period is known as sheloshim (thirty). It is traditional to refrain from cutting one's hair or shaving during this period, unless the person becomes so unkempt that it would interfere with earning a livelihood. Traditionally ashkenazim refrain from visiting the cemetery during sheloshim. One remains a mourner for 12 (Hebrew) months from the date of death for parents (even in a leap year), and for 30 days from the date of burial for other relatives. Even though mourning lasts for 12 months for a parent, the mourners' kaddish is recited at daily services only for the first 11 months (minus one day). Although regular work is resumed after shiva, it is traditional for mourners to refrain from attending joyous social gatherings, such as weddings, and especially gatherings with music and dancing. If there is such an event that a mourner wishes to attend, perhaps because of business necessity, a Rabbi should be consulted. Similarly, it is traditional to avoid listening to music, especially live but also recorded. (Klein, pages 290-291.)

A person in mourning for someone other than a parent says the mourners' kaddish at all daily, Shabbat and festival services for 30 days from the day of burial. When counting days, a partial day is counted as a full day (so if the burial took place at 3 O'Clock in the afternoon, the day of burial counts as the first day), and sheloshim ends after shacharit of the 30th day. A minyan is required to say kaddish.

A person mourning for a parent says kaddish at all daily, Shabbat and festival services for 11 months from the day of death. So if the death occurred at 9 O'Clock in the morning on the 5th of Shevat, the last mourners' kaddish would be recited at mincha of the 4th of Tevet (or of Kislev if it is a leap year). (The Hebrew and secular calenders are different, so a Hebrew calendar (a Luach) must be consulted.) The mourning period continues for one more month, with mourning observed as it was for the first 11 months, other than ceasing saying the mourners' kaddish. The first day after the mourning period for a parent is the first yahrzeit, when a person again says the mourners' kaddish at services.

It should be remembered that the evening begins a new Hebrew day. So if the Luach (Jewish calendar) says that February 10th corresponds to the 18th of Shevat, a person who died at 11 p.m. on

February 10th would have died on the 19th of Shevat.

An immediate relative says the mourners' kaddish every year on the anniversary of death (calculated based on the Jewish calendar) at the Maariv service the evening before the yahrzeit date, and at Shacharit and Minha services of the yahrzeit day itself. It is almost always possible to plan to be near a synagogue on the yahrzeit date to be able to do this. Also, a yahrzeit candle is lit at home so that it burns during the entire 24 hours. These long-burning yahrzeit candles are available at most synagogues, and many food stores and Jewish gift shops for less than $1. Similarly, one attends the Yizkor (memorial) services when they are held during the year (on the mornings of Yom Kippur, the eighth day of Sukkot and Pesach, and on the second day of Shavuot).

50. Gravestone

The gravestone marks the place of burial. It may be horizontal or vertical. The gravestone often is inscribed with the Hebrew and English names of the person, and dates of birth and death in Hebrew and English. Sometimes there is also a short inscription describing some aspect of the person. The content of the inscriptions are a matter of custom. Your rabbi can help you with the wording on the gravestone. The monument can take several forms. Sometimes there is a family plot with one headstone with the family name, and a footstone for each individual buried. Sometimes the gravestone is placed over the grave.

It often takes several months to order a gravestone and have it erected. In winter months, it may be impossible to a gravestone erected, if the ground is frozen, or even engraved. It is important to deal with a reliable firm when ordering a gravestone, and to carefully check the wording and spelling before the stone is engraved. Before the unveiling, a family member or friend should check the stone after it is erected, to be sure it is as ordered.

51. Unveiling

It has become customary in this country to have an unveiling of the tombstone about one year after burial. The unveiling ceremony is short, generally including recitation of Psalms, a eulogy, removing the veil from the stone, reciting El Malei Rachamim, and reciting kaddish (if you have a minyan at the graveside). (Klein, pages 296-297.) Your rabbi can conduct the unveiling ceremony. Sometimes a family member will conduct the unveiling ceremony. We do not eat or drink in the cemetery, even at an unveiling. Since people sometimes travel some distance to the cemetery, it is sometimes practical to arrange a meal for the family somewhere not too far from the cemetery.

52. Visiting the Cemetery

It is commendable to visit the graves of your loved ones. People often say Psalms in Hebrew or English. The cemetery office often has a booklet of prayers and reflections for use by visitors. It is

customary to place a small number of stones on the matseva (tombstone or gravestone) on leaving. This is seen as an act of caring, and shows that there have been visitors to the grave site.

It is traditional for men to wear a kippa at a cemetery.

One should keep the grave site neat, planting low growing plants, and trimming the plants as needed.

One should avoid sitting on or walking over a grave, if at all possible. Eating is not done in a cemetery.

It is traditional to visit the cemetery before Rosh HaShana, in the month of Elul. We do not visit a cemetery on Shabbat or a festival.

On leaving the cemetery, it is customary to wash one's hands, and usually facilities for this are provided. No bracha is said for this washing.

There are restrictions on a Cohen visiting the cemetery. A Cohen should consult with a Rabbi as needed. (Klein, pages 281-282.)

Conclusion

Once again, this is a work in progress and is written by a layman. Comments on this document are welcome. Please address them to: Yehuda Wiesen; P.O. Box 306; Newton, MA 02459, or by e-mail to YWiesen.halacha@personnselselection.com.

In closing, let me suggest that if you would like to become more observant, begin a little at a time, but start. It is better to do something than nothing. Don't try to undertake everything at once. Choose one mitzvah and follow it. Perhaps decide to say one bracha each day, such as on arising or on eating, or undertake to do a mitzvah a day that you find meaningful, and say the bracha over that mitzvah. Or say the Shema on arising and retiring each day. Or begin by lighting Shabbat candles each Friday night before nightfall. Or stop eating milk and meat together. Or begin eating only kosher meat. Or decide not to eat milk and meat together. Or start saying the first sentence of the Shema on arising and retiring. Or begin attending Shabbat (or daily) services. Or start avoiding certain labors on Shabbat, or for two hours every Shabbat, perhaps the first two hours after you arise. Or not carrying money on Shabbat. Or not driving on Friday evenings. Or choose one ritual and try it for 6 weeks. Almost all of us (and definitely me) have a long way to go to be fully observant. We may not be fully observant but we can always be growing in observance. We can all start where we are and try to improve a little bit at a

time. Perhaps, instead of saying, “I don’t do that”, say, “I don’t do that yet.” We sometimes hesitate to undertake a mitzva for worry about hypocrisy and being inconsistent. A traditional Jewish view is to think of the scales of good and evil as being equally balanced. We can tip the scales to the good with even one mitzva. You may find helpful information and guidance about halacha and observance in libraries and bookstores. But the best ways to find help and support are to cultivate observant friends, and, especially, to talk with a nearby Conservative Rabbi. While becoming more observant, we should strive to develop strong bonds with a community of Jews. A solitary Jew is not the Jewish custom, and being an ideal Jew in isolation is almost impossible. Synagogue membership is very important for a Jew. As Hillel said in Pirke Avot, Do not separate yourself from the community.

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Glossary

Aliyah: The honor of being called to the Torah during a service. (Making aliyah refers to people who are moving to live permanently in Israel.)
Aliyot: The plural of aliyah.
Amida: The central prayer of each of the three daily services. (Also **Shmoneh Esrei**.)
Ark: See Aron Kodesh.
Arba Kanfot/Tallit Katan: A small garment with four tzitzit made to be worn under the shirt during the whole day.
Ashkenazic: Descended from the Jews of Germany, Poland, France, Russia and the nearby areas. (See Sefardic.)
Assur: Forbidden.
Aron Kodesh: The container (Ark) at the front of the sanctuary that holds the Torah scrolls in a synagogue when they are not in use.
Aufruf: Yiddish for calling up. A custom in which the groom, or the bride and groom, are called to the Torah for an aliyah on a Shabbat shortly prior to the wedding.
Avel: A mourner who is sitting shiva or is in sheloshim (or in the year of mourning for parents). (See onen.)
Beit Din: A Jewish court of law. Conversion and divorce are two matters brought before a beit din nowadays.
Bentch: To say grace after meals.
Bentcher: A booklet which contains the grace after meals.
Birkat ha-mazon: Grace after meals (based on Deuteronomy 8:10).
Bikkur cholim: visit the sick
Brit/Bris: Ritual circumcision. (Technically the phrase is **brit mila**.)
Bracha: Blessing.
Brachot/Brachas: Plural of bracha.
Borchu: The call to prayer by the shaliach tzibur which begins the prayers introducing the Shema at the beginning of the morning and evening services.
Cantor: A person trained in music of the synagogue who is hired to lead services. Hazzan is the Hebrew for cantor. (See shaliach tzibur.)
Chol ha-Moed: The intermediate days of Sukkot and Pesach, that are observed as half-holidays. (Chol means profane and Moed means holiday, so chol ha-moed can be translated as profane days of the holiday.)
Chalav Yisrael: Milk watched to be sure that it is not adulterated with milk from a non-kosher animal.
Chametz: Any food containing leavened grain products. (These are prohibited on Pesach.)
Chumrah: A stringency, not necessarily mandatory.
Counting the Omer: The counting of the 49 day period between Pesach and Shavuot. (The omer is a

measure of grain formerly used as an offering.)
Daven: Yiddish for pray.
Eretz Israel: The land of Israel.
Erev: The evening before, as in erev Shabbos.
Eruv: A legal "wall" around an area that transforms the area into one in which all have the right to carry on Shabbat. (Eruv as used here is a shortened form of eruv hatzerot. There are other types of eruv, each with its own definition: eruv tavshilin, and eruv techumin.)
Etrog/Esrog: A citrus fruit used with a lulav during Sukkot.
Family Purity: Immersion in a mikva is required for married women monthly or as necessary, for the sake of spiritual purity in family relations.
Fleishig: Meat itself, or food utensils used for meat.
Gemara: One of the two parts of the Talmud; includes discussion and amplification of the Mishna.
Get: A Jewish legal document given by a husband to his wife to terminate the marriage.
Gmilut chasadim: perform acts of kindness
Gezera: An additional prohibition instituted by the Rabbis of old to further guard against breaking of Biblical laws.
Glatt: A Yiddish word meaning "smooth." It is used to refer to unblemished meat (i.e., with no internal adhesions in the lungs). It is also used generically to refer to food that meets very high standards of kashrut. There is little control over the use of the term Glatt, and it is not a substitute for a reliable hechsher.
Hachnasat orchim: offer hospitality to the visitor/stranger
Haftorah: A section from the prophetic books of the Bible which is read after the completion of the Torah reading of the Torah service.
Halacha: The corpus of Jewish law, all of which is binding on all Jews.
Hallel: A set of Psalms said on some holidays. The tradition of saying Hallel is very ancient; it was said on certain occasions in the Temple in Jerusalem.
Hanukka: An 8 day festival commemorating the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the time of the Macabees
Havdala: A ceremony done at the end of each Shabbat and major holiday, marking the end of the day.
Hechsher: A symbol found on food packaging indicating that a supervising individual or group certifies the product as being kosher.
Huppa: Wedding canopy with four supports. Symbolically it is a marriage chamber.
Kaddish: A prayer said at several points in the liturgy during public prayer (i.e., in the presence of a minyan). (Also see Mourners' Kaddish.)
Kahal: Congregation
Kasher: To make a utensil or a whole Kitchen fit (kosher) for use.
Kashering: The process used to make utensils fit for use in a kosher kitchen.

Kashering meat: A procedure for further removing blood from ritually slaughtered meat and poultry by a process of salting and soaking, or broiling.

Kashrut: Jewish dietary laws, including permitted and forbidden foods, slaughter and inspection of meat, and preparing and cooking food.
Kavana: Concentration, as in praying or doing a mitzva.
Kiddush: A prayer said over wine at the beginning of every Shabbat and all major holidays except Yom Kippur. A shorter kiddush is recited before the meal eaten after services in the morning on those days. (Kiddush should not be confused with Kaddish.)
Kippa/Yarmulka/Skullcap: A cloth or knitted head covering. A kippa may be any color and any material, but black is most traditional. Knit kippot have become popular. (Plural: kippot)
Kitniyot: Commonly translated as "Legumes", but more exactly certain foods that are not chametz, but are prohibited on Pesach. (Does not fully agree with the botanical or scientific definition of a legume.)
Kosher Animal: One of a number of species of animals specifically mentioned in the Torah as being permitted, or that fit the definition of a permitted animal (e.g., cow, sheep, chicken).
Kosher Fish: Fish with fins and scales. (Ritual slaughter is not needed for fish.)
Kosher Meat: Meat from a kosher animal that was ritually slaughtered and properly prepared (through salting and soaking or broiling). Typically does not include the hind quarters.
Law Committee: The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative Movement.
Luach: The Hebrew calendar (lunar). Typically available in yearly editions containing the Hebrew months, with indication of the various holidays. May have Shabbat Torah readings. May have candle lighting times for one city, or a tabulation of times for many cities.
Maariv: One of the three mandatory daily prayer services (the evening service).
Mamzer: A person born of a forbidden (e.g., adulterous or incestuous) relationship.
Mashgiach: A person who oversees the kashrut of a (commercial) kitchen.
Matseva: Tombstone or monument.
Meat: What is generally thought of as meat; beef, lamb, chicken, duck, etc. (but not fish).
Melacha/melachot: work (more precisely the 39 classes of constructive activities that are forbidden on Shabbat)
Menora: Candelabrum. The 8 branched menora used on hanukka is also called a hanukkiya.
Mezuza: A parchment with first two paragraphs of the Shema that is affixed in a case to a doorpost of rooms in a Jewish dwelling.
Milichig: Dairy.
Mikva: A ritual bath, used by both men and women, but mainly by women. (See family purity.)
Minha: One of the three mandatory daily prayer services (the afternoon service).
Minhag: Custom.
Minyan: A group of at least 10 people obligated for prayer and gathered for the sake of public

prayer. (Traditionally, this is 10 men over the age of 13, but see the section on counting women in a minyan.) Certain prayers may only be said with a minyan.
Mishna: The older of the two parts of the Talmud.
Mitzvah: A commandment. Also used to refer to any meritorious deed.
Mohel: A person (traditionally a man, but may be a woman), trained to do ritual circumcision. May or may not be a physician. May or may not be a Rabbi.
Mourners' Kaddish: A form of the Kaddish said by mourners and those observing Yahrzeit. Only said in the presence of a minyan.
Muktzeh: Set aside; a category of work-related objects forbidden on Shabbat by Rabbinic decree because handling them may lead one to violate a Torah prohibition (e.g., we do not touch matches since it is forbidden to make a fire on Shabbat).
Musaf: An additional prayer service inserted shortly after the Torah Service in the morning on Shabbat, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, the three pilgrimage festivals, and Rosh Hodesh.
Onen: A close relative of a person who has just died and is not yet buried. (See avel.)
Pareve: Neutral, neither meat nor dairy. (For example, fruit, vegetables, honey, eggs, and fish, or the utensils used only for such foods.)
Pesach: The holiday of Passover, a Spring holiday; one of the shelosh regalim.
Passul: Not or no longer fit for use.
Pilgrimage Festivals: The Biblical festivals of Sukkot, Pesach, and Shavuot when Jews in ancient time would travel to Jerusalem to fulfill the Biblical commandment (Deut. 16:16-17).
Sefardic: Of Spanish origin. Broadly used to refer to Jews who follow Sephardic as opposed to Ashkenazic custom, including Spanish-Portugese Jews, and Jews from Persia, Syria, Turkey, Morocco, Iraq, Yemen, etc. (Plural Sefardim).
Shabbat: Shabbos, the Sabbath (Saturday).
Shacharit: One of the three mandatory daily prayer services (the morning service).
Shaliach Tzibur: The person leading the prayers; often a cantor.
Shechita: The Kosher method of slaughter.
Shema: The first word of a short statement declaring God's unity, recited morning and evening.
Shevut: A category of everyday activities that are prohibited on Shabbat and festivals as being inconsistent with the spirit of the laws of rest, either because they resemble work or because they may lead to a prohibited activity.
Shochet: A learned person, trained in the halacha concerning slaughter, who actually slaughters animals for food.
Shavuot/Shavuos: The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, a Spring festival; one of the shelosh regalim
Shelosh Regalim: The three main "pilgrimage" holidays: Sukkot, Pesach, Shavuot.
Sheloshim: The 30 day period of mourning. (Counting the day of burial as the first day.)
Shema: A major prayer.
Shmoneh Esrei: See Amida.

Shiva: The seven-day period of mourning immediately after burial.
Shul: Yiddish for synagogue.
Shulchan Aruch: A major codification of Jewish law, written in the 16th century by Rabbi Joseph Karo (Sefardic), with glosses by Rabbi Moshe Isserles (Ashkenazic).
Siddur: Prayer book (Plural: siddurim.)
Skullcap: Head covering. (See kippa.)
Sukkot/Sukkos: One of the shelosh regalim; the Feast of Booths involving the mitzvah of dwelling in booths, and taking the Lulav and Etrog; a Fall festival.
Tallit/tallis: Garment with 4 ritual fringes, worn on many occasions, usually at daily Shacharit services. Often translated as Prayer Shawl. A tallit may be various colors, most usually white with several black or blue stripes. (Plural: tallitot. Sometimes the Yiddish plural is used: talleisim.)
Talmud: A voluminous work made up of the Mishna and Gemora, it discusses Jewish law (ritual, civil and criminal), ethics and lore. Originally it was transmitted verbally, and it is still called the "Oral Law".
Taharat Mishpaha: Laws of menstrual purity. (See mikva.)
Tahora: Ritual washing of a corpse prior to burial.
Tefilla: Prayer.
Tefillin: Phylacteries. A pair of small, black boxes, one for the arm and one for the head, containing small parchments inscribed with four passages from the Torah, worn for the weekday Shacharit service.
Teshuva: A written decision to a practical question of Jewish law, often involving a detailed summary and evaluation of Jewish sources (also known as a responsum; plural: teshuvot, responsa).
Teshuva: Repentance (literally returning) from sin, as before Yom Kippur.
Tevilah: Ritual immersion in a mikva.
Tikun olam: make the world a better place.
Tisha B'Av: A day of mourning for the destruction of the Temples. Observed on the ninth day of the month of Av, it is one of the two full fast days in the Jewish calendar.
Torah: The written law; the five books of Moses. Sefer Torah refers to a large scroll containing all five books, handwritten on parchment.
Treif: A word used to refer to non-kosher food of any type, especially meat (literally means "torn").
Tzitzit: Ritual fringes placed on each corner of a tallit. These are knotted and wound repeatedly in a special, traditional way.
Tzedaka: Charity for the poor.
Tzniut: Modesty and chastity.
Work: Activities not to be done on Shabbat. There are 39 general categories of such prohibited activities.
Yahrzeit: The annual anniversary of the death of a person (based on the Hebrew calendar).
Yarmulka: Head covering. (See kippa.)
Yom Tov: One of the major holidays: Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Pesach, Shavuot.
Yontif: Yiddish for yom tov.

Yamim Tovim: Plural of yom tov.

Attachments

Attachment 1. Some Resources on the Web

(Checked as of 11/99)

This is a compilation of some web sites that have information on halacha and observance which may be of interest, particularly to Conservative Jews. Where the site presents a clearly Orthodox view, this is indicated.

Summaries of many topics in Rabbi Klein's book have been put on the web and more will be added by JTS: http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/jrpguide/index.shtml

Summaries of some Conservative responsa have been put on the web and more will be added by JTS: http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/responsa/

The Rabbinical Assembly Jewish Medical Directives for Health Care
http://www.rabassembly.org/info/meddir/

The Rabbinical Assembly Pesah Guide http://www.rabassembly.org/info/pesahguide/

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism position paper on Organ Donation
http://www.uscj.org/scripts/uscj/paper/Article.asp?ArticleID=415&SOURCE=5

Subscribe to JTS listservs. (They often discuss matters of halacha.) http://www.jtsa.edu/lists/

Chancellor Rabbi Ismar Schorsch's statement on halacha in his "The Sacred Cluster: The Core Values of Conservative Judaism" is at: http://www.jtsa.edu/pubs/schorsch/core.html#halakha

Web site of a conservative synagogue with practical guides on weddings, bereavement, Pesach, and more: http://www.shaareyzedek.org/guides.htm

Web site with responsa of the Masorti (Conservative) movement in Israel:
http://www.masorti.org/responsa/index.html

Web site of a conservative synagogue with practical guides on Shabbat services, Death and Mourning, Jewish vocabulary, and more: http://www.bethel-omaha.org/

A web site in the spirit of Conservative Judaism exploring ways to live meaningful religious lives, with information on halakhah, theology, politics and spirituality:

http://www.jtsa.edu/lists/tor-ch/index.html

Multimedia explanation of Birchot HaNehinin (blessings for every day events) geared toward parents who will teach their children: http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/kids/lessons/brachot.shtml

A short, layman's description of some practical halacha for Conservative Jews: http://www.mahadash.com/docs/wiesen/halacha.htm

Eight behavioral expectations for the Ideal Conservative Jew: http://www.uscj.org/publicaffairs/review/eight.htm

A sampling of the responsa of Rabbi Louis Ginzberg, one of the early giants of Conservative halacha: http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/lgresponsa/

A listserv dedicated to the systematic, daily study of Mishnah by lay people, moderated by a Conservative Rabbi: http://www.jtsa.edu/lists/rmsg/

Information about various aspects of Shavuot: http://learn.jtsa.edu/shavuot/

Information about various aspects of Passover: http://learn.jtsa.edu/passover/

A Passover guide and Seder supplement: http://uscj.org/perekyomi/passover_guide.htm

Cleaning for Pesach (an Orthodox view): http://www.aish.edu/calendar/pesach/cleaning.htm

How to put on tefillin: http://www.jtsa.edu/lists/tor-ch/tefillin.html#how

A primer on halacha: http://www.jewfaq.org/halakhah.htm

A list of the 613 mitzvot: http://www.jewfaq.org/613.htm

A glossary: http://www.jewfaq.org/glossary.htm

A transliteration of kaddish: http://members.aol.com/jewfaq/prayer/kaddish.htm

A description of the Friday evening ritual: http://members.aol.com/jewfaq/prayer/shabbat.htm

A description of many aspects of Shabbos (Orthodox): http://www.shabat.com/

A discussion of conversion: http://www.convert.org/

A resource for Jewish family living (changes content periodically): http://jewishfamily.com/

Jewish Renaissance Center (for women, Orthodox perspective): http://www.jewishrenaissance.org/

An introduction to the traditional siddur: http://www.jtsa.edu/melton/courses/siddur/

This has trope for all readings: http://bible.ort.org/bible/start.htm

This is a search engine for Jewish sites: http://www.maven.co.il/

This is a list of lists of Jewish resources on the net: http://shamash.org/trb/judaism.html

A educational page including a link to a transliterated siddur, with explanations of rituals:
http://members.aol.com/judaism/lm/index.htm

Women's league for Conservative Judaism: http://www.jtsa.edu/wlcj/

Masorti (Conservative) congregations in Israel: http://www.masorti.org/congregations/index.html

Masorti (Conservative) congregations in England: http://www.masorti.org.uk/acontents.htm

The Jewish Publication Society Bible (translations): http://www.breslov.com/bible/bible.htm

Excerpts describing the Law Committee (from a book by Neil Gilman, and an article by Elliot Dorff):
http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/reading/bookexc/gillman_conservativej/chap6/part3.shtml
http://www.uscj.org/scripts/uscj/paper/Article.asp?ArticleID=435

A sermon by a conservative Rabbi which includes a discussion of two halachic issues:
http://www.uscj.org/ctvalley/beki/nobuts.html

A compilation of many Internet sites from the Conservative Movement:
http://www.jtsa.edu/affiliat/conserv.html

Information about Tu b'Shevat for people of all ages: http://learn.jtsa.edu/tubshevat/

A publisher and vendor of Jewish music (Tara Publications): http://www.jewishmusic.com/

Listings of kosher restaurants and bakeries in the USA and in other countries. (Note that the status of restaurants changes often, and this information should be confirmed from a reliable source.) http://shamash.org/kosher/, http://www.kosherzone.com/usakoshr/, and http://www.kashrut.com/travel/

Instructions and helpful hints on building a sukka (a web site from a Reform congregation): http://www.bethelsudbury.org/sukkah/index.htm

One of many companies which sells sukka kits on the web: http://www.sukkot.com/sukkah_kits.htm (I have no connection with this company.)

A (free) Hebrew/Civil calendar (with more information than most people need): http://www.kaluach.org/

Suggestions on how to start keeping kosher: http://www.kashrus.org/kosher/easing.html

A site listing Conservative synagogues (useful when traveling): http://uscj.org/find_a_synagogue.html

A Conservative site designed for college students. It includes some information on Shabbat and Festivals: http://www.uscj.org/koach/

Attachment 2. Suggested Ritual Objects and Books for a Conservative Jewish Home

A Jewish home should contain Jewish ritual objects and books needed to celebrate Judaism in your home. When not being used, they can decorate the home and provide visual reminders that it is a Jewish home. The lists below suggest a basic complement of religious objects related to halachic practices, and some related books, all from a Conservative standpoint. Some additional information about the books is given in the Bibliography. (Many of these may serve as gift ideas for a person or couple starting a new home.) A Jewish home should also contain other Jewish books on such topics as history and culture, but these are not included here. (See the Bibliography for publisher information for these publications.)

Books

1. *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*
   This official publication of the Conservative movement includes a 50 page section with many home rituals. The first sections provide the Shabbat and Festival prayers in a format that is easy to read, with some transliteration and aids for Hebrew pronunciation.
2. A Conservative bentcher such as *B'Kol Echad; In One Voice* edited by Cantor Jeffrey Shiovitz. This edition has Shabbat blessings and zemirot, a well as the birkat ha-mazon, all with transliterations. It is best to have one for each family member.
3. *Daily Siddur Sim Shalom* (due to be published soon by the Conservative movement)
4. *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* by Rabbi Isaac Klein
   This gives more information on Conservative religious practice and served as a basic reference for this Guide.
5. Dresner, Siegel, and Pollack's *The Jewish Dietary Laws*
   This provides information on keeping a kosher home.
6. Chumash (the Torah, with the haftorah readings for each week). The Conservative movement has just published a new chumash with commentary called *Etz Hayim*. There is also the older Hertz edition of the chumash, which too has commentary.
7. Bible (Tanakh) - Jewish Publication Society edition.
8. Ethics of the Fathers (Pirke Avot)
9. Passover Haggada (enough copies for everyone at your Passover Seder)
10. *Emet ve-Emunah: Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism*. Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Daily Ritual Objects

a. Mezuzot (on doorposts)
b. Tallis

c. Kippa
d. Tefillin
e. Cos Netilat Yedayim (washing cup, usually with two handles)

Shabbat Ritual Objects

a. Kiddush cup
b. Candle sticks and Shabbat candles
c. Challa cover/tray/knife
d. Havdala candle
e. Havdala set (spice box, candle holder, kiddush cup)
f. Tzedakah Box (In Yiddish, Pushke: a charity box used to give a little donation before the onset of each Shabbat)

Other

Luach (Jewish calendar) - A new printed luach is needed each year. Many people have placed (free) computerized Jewish calendars on the web. (See Attachment 1, Some Resources on the Web.)
Seder plate
Hanukka menora (also called a Hanukkia)
Lulav and Etrog (used for the festival of Succot; must be bought each year shortly before the holiday)

Attachment 3. Brachot for Various Occasions

There are three types of blessings. Some express gratitude for gifts from heaven before we partake of them, such as before we eat, drink, or smell a fragrance. Some simply acknowledge commandments when we perform them, such as lighting Shabbat candles or putting on a tallit. Some just praise and thank God for his goodness, such as before eating a new fruit.

Brachot for some various occasions are listed here. You may find more listed in most siddurim. Some of the brachot listed here are not given in the body of the Guide. The shorter brachot are given in full transliteration. For longer brachot, a few of the words are given and the reader is referred to a siddur to find the full wording. When saying prayers it is best to move our lips and say the words out loud. Just thinking the words is not enough. (In synagogue, when speaking may disturb others, we speak very softly.) We say amen when we hear someone else say a bracha, but not after our own. (It is common to refer to "making a bracha" rather than "saying a bracha" but they both refer to reading or reciting a bracha.)

1. After using the bathroom to meet your bodily needs:
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher yatzar et ha-adam b'choch-ma...
   (...who created people with wisdom...)
   In the morning this brocha is usually said during the morning prayers. (The full bracha may be found in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*, page 63; also Klein, page 16.) This bracha thanks God for the functioning of our complex bodies. After relieving ourselves we wash our hands but do not say the bracha for hand washing.

2. After washing hands (but only after ritual washing, as before eating bread):
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim.
   (...who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us on washing the hands.
   Nothing should prevent the water from coming in contact with the hands, so we take off jewelry when washing. If you wear a ring that does not come off, consult a Rabbi.
   (Klein, pages 2-3, and *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 61.)

3. Before eating bread or matzah:
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, HaMotzi lechem min ha-aretz.
   (...who brings forth bread from the land.)
   Bread includes white/rye and other breads, challa, rolls, pita, bagels, and matzah.
   (Klein, pages 42-43.) (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 314.)

4. Before drinking wine or grape juice:
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Borei pri ha-gafen.
   (...who creates fruit of the vine.)
   (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 315.)

5. Before eating baked goods made of the five grains (wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt):
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Borei minei mezonot.
   These foods include spaghetti, cake and cookies.
   (...who creates various kinds of nourishment.)

6. Before eating a vegetable in its usual form (e.g., baked potatoes, cooked beets, cooked beans):
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Borei pri ha-adama.
   Bananas are included in this category.
   (...who creates fruit of the earth.)

7. Before eating fruit of a tree in its usual form (e.g., a raw apple or orange):
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Borei pri ha-etz.
   This bracha is also used for grapes, due to their importance.
   (...who creates fruit of the tree.)

8. Before all other foods, including water:
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro.
   If you do not know what bracha to say over food this one will suffice, but it is better to determine the appropriate bracha.
   (...by whose word everything came to be.)

9. On lighting Shabbat candles:
   Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.
   (...who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to light the Shabbat candle*.)
   (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 301.)

* We always use two candles (or more), but whenever we light candles the mitzva is satisfied if we light at least one, so the bracha is in the singular.

10. On lighting candles for a Yom Tov:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel yom tov.
    (...who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to light the Yom Tov candle*.)
    (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 303.)

11. On lighting candles for a Yom Tov that begins on Friday night:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat v'shel yom tov.
    (...who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to light the candle* for Shabbat and for Yom Tov.)

12. On lighting candles for Yom Kippur:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel yom ha-kippurim.
    (...who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to light the candle* for Yom Kippur.)
    If Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat we add the words "Shabbat v'shel" before the words yom ha-kippurim.
    (*Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals* page 303.)

13. Blessing on major holidays, on eating the first of the season's new crop, or on joyous occasions:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Sheheheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh
    (...who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this time.)
    This is omitted from the kiddush on the seventh and eighth nights of Pesach.

14. On affixing a mezuza:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu likboa mezuza.
    (...who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to affix a mezuza.
    (Klein, pages 49-50.)

* We always use two candles (or more), but whenever we light candles the mitzva is satisfied if we light at least one, so the bracha is in the singular.

15. After eating a meal that included bread:
    The full birkat hamazon may be found in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, on pages 337-343.

16. After eating certain grains (wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt, as they are mentioned in the Bible), certain fruit (grapes, figs, olives, pomegranates, or dates, as they are mentioned in the Bible), or wine (all not together with bread), a short bracha ahrona (grace) is said. (Klein, pages 42-47.)
    The wording for this bracha may be found in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, on pages 349-350.

17. After eating foods that are preceded by any of the three brachot ha-adama, ha-etz, or shehakol, a one sentence bracha is said.
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei nfashot rabot...
    (...who brings forth many living things...)
    (This sentence is somewhat long and not given here in full. (Klein page 44.) The wording for this bracha may be found in *Siddur Sim Shalom for Sabbath and Festivals*, on page 350.

18. On smelling a fragrance
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, Borei minei vesamim.
    (...who created various kinds of fragrances.)

19 On hearing good news:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, melech haolom, ha-tov v'hamativ.
    (...who is good and does good.)

20. On hearing bad news:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, dayan emet.
    (...the true judge.)

21. On seeing wonders of nature (e.g., comet, high mountains, hurricane, earthquake, lightning):
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, ose maase vrasheit.
    (... who created the universe.)

22. On hearing thunder:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-kocho ugvurato malai olam.
    (... whose strength and power fill the world.)

23. On seeing a rainbow:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, zachar habrit vneeman bevreto vkayam bmaamaro.
    (... who remembers the covenant and keeps his promise faithfully.)

24. On seeing a great Jewish scholar:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shenatan maichachamato liraov.
    (... who gives wisdom to those who revere him.)

25. On seeing a great Secular scholar:
    Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shenatan maichachamato livsar vadam.
    (... who gives wisdom to flesh and blood.)

Attachment 4. The 39 Classes of Labor (Melachot)

Observance of Shabbat is central to Judaism. The 19th century preserver of Jewish values and tradition, Ahad Ha'am, said that more than the Jews kept the Shabbat, the Shabbat kept the Jews. That still true. We prohibit certain activities commonly called work, and use day for prayer and study. As Rabbi Isaac Klein said, "It is a tested institution which modern man in search of his soul would be wise to adopt." (Klein, page 94.)

The 39 primary classes or categories of prohibited activities are given in the Talmud. Each of the classes of labor that are forbidden on Shabbat have associated with them related types of work, and gezerot (rabbinically prohibited activities that are close to the Biblically prohibited activities). The 39 primary categories are listed below with short explanations, and with some related activities given in parentheses. The Rabbis prohibited additional activities by gezera, to guard against breaking a Biblical law.

1. Sowing - planting seeds (watering plants or cut flowers, grafting, fertilizing)
2. Ploughing - softening the earth (digging, removing stones from the ground)

3. Reaping - detaching a plant from the place where it is growing (picking flowers or fruits, breaking off a branch or twig)
4. Binding sheaves - this is part of the harvesting process (making fruit into a pile for storage)

5. Threshing - breaking apart the grain into the edible kernels of grain and the inedible husks (shelling nuts, other than for immediate consumption; squeezing liquid from fruit)
6. Winnowing - this is usually done by throwing the threshed grain in the air and letting the wind take the husks

7. Selecting (choosing fit food from unfit by hand) - separating inedible from edible food by hand (selecting the wormy fruit from a pile, leaving only the good fruit, sorting objects into groups)
8. Grinding - grinding grain into flour (crushing food in a mortar, grinding coffee)

9. Sifting - sifting flour (straining solids from a liquid)
10. Kneading - pouring water on flour and working it to mix it (can involve liquids other than water)

11. Baking - cooking (adding ingredients to a boiling pot, cooking of any type such as frying or roasting)
12. Shearing wool - cutting wool from a live or dead animal (includes shaving one's face, cutting fingernails or hangnails)

13. Bleaching hackling - washing wool (removing stains such as by soaking and rubbing)
14. Disentangling (to prepare for spinning) - preparing wool for spinning (combing raw wool)

15. Dyeing - coloring fibers (dissolving dyes, painting objects)
16. Spinning - twisting fibers together (manufacturing rope)

17. Stretching the threads (on a loom) - preparing the warp threads in a loom
18. Making of two meshes - this is preparation for the weaving process

19. Weaving two threads - this is the process of turning thread into material (macrame, basketry, knitting, crocheting)
20. Dividing two threads - removing threads from dense areas where they are not wanted

21. Tying (knotting) - making a permanent connection with any of many types of knots
22. Untying - untying a permanent knot
    (Tying and untying temporary knots, as in tying shoes with a bow, is allowed.)

23. Sewing two stitches - passing a needle through cloth (gluing stapling papers together)
24. Tearing in order to sew two stitches - tearing was sometimes done to prepare for mending. (Pure destruction by tearing is not punishable.)

25. Capturing a deer - trapping or hunting any type of animal, including insects (using a net to catch butterflies, setting traps)
26. Slaughtering - killing, including ritual slaughter (removing fish from water)

27. Flaying - skinning the animal after it is dead
28. Salting a hide - the first step in tanning (and the other steps in the tanning process)

29. Tracing lines - this was done on a hide in preparation for cutting (ruling lines that will b used to guide lettering)
30. Scraping a hide - making the hide smooth by removing the hair (polishing boots)

31. Cutting up a hide - trimming and cutting shapes from a hide (cutting out a newspaper article; cutting

food for immediate consumption is allowed)
32. Writing two letters - writing (typing, painting, drawing on paper wood, etc.)

33. Erasing in order to write two letters (over the erasure) - erasing in order to be able to write with an eraser or by scraping
34. Building - any amount of building (hammering a nail, erecting a tent, repairing a part of a home)

35. Pulling down - demolish in order to rebuild
36. Extinguishing fire - putting out a fire

37. Kindling fire - lighting a fire (smoking a cigarette, poking a fire to get it to burn better, striking a match)
38. Striking with a hammer - to complete an article (repair or improve an article)

39. Carrying out from one domain to another - from a private domain to a public or from a public domain to a private (carrying by hand, in a pocket or bag, or throwing or pushing from one domain to another)

(Any of these are permitted to save a life, as in a medical emergency.)

Although these are the 39 primary categories, various restrictions were added to by the Rabbis, such as not riding or doing regular business. In addition, one may only travel a limited distance on Shabbat (about 3/4 of a mile past the city limits).

Attachment 5. Brief Explanations for Some Things You May See Orthodox Jews Doing

Since Conservative Jews sometimes look to their Orthodox brethren as models of Jewish observance, I have listed here a few explanations for some behaviors or dress you may observe on the part of an Orthodox Jew, and given a Conservative view of the reason for it. In the instances where the reason is custom rather than law, usually it is not the Conservative tradition and Conservative Jews rarely do that, but it is allowable to do so. In the instances where the reason is that halacha requires it, Conservative Jews should do so also. Sometimes the Conservative interpretation of halacha is different than the Orthodox.

1. Payos or Payot (side locks, side curls, ear locks, sideburns) on boys and men

The Torah (Leviticus 19:27) says a man may not round his head, which is interpreted to prohibit shaving one's hair around the temples (extending toward the ears). Some people expand on this (thereby avoiding any possible risk of wrongdoing) and do not even cut their hair there, and so grow side locks. (Some trim the side locks when they get long, either with scissors or by burning.) This has become a symbol of some communities. It is a custom and not required.

2. Beards

The Torah (Leviticus 19:27) says a man shall not mar the corners of his beard. This is interpreted as referring to certain parts of a man's face (chin, mustache, and sideburns). Some people understand this to prohibit shaving any part of the face. Some people who do not shave with a straight razor will shave with an electric razor if it operates with a scissor-like cutting action.

3. Wearing a kippa in public places and during all waking hours

There is no Biblical or Talmudic requirement to wear a kippa during all waking hours, but it is the custom of some who do it for one or more reasons. First, since we habitually wear a kippa when praying (including saying a bracha over food) it is convenient to wear one continually rather than put it on and take it off. Second, wearing a kippa has become a symbol of observance, and it is a simple way to make a statement about yourself. Third, some have the practice of not going more than four cubits with an uncovered head, which virtually requires wearing a kippa at all times. Also, there is less overt antisemitism than in the past, so today there is little hazard involved in wearing a kippa in public places.

4. Wearing a knit versus a black cloth or black velvet kippa

The knit kippa is more usually worn by modern Orthodox Jews, and the black velvet or cloth kippa by Hasidic or ultra-Orthodox. A knit kippa is often associated with support of Zionism. The type of kippa worn has no religious or halachic importance.

5. Wearing a hat over a kippa

Some people wear a kippa under their "outside" hat (e.g., a fedora). For many, this is just a matter of convenience; when putting on a hat when wearing a kippa, it is convenient to keep the kippa in place so it is there when needed. Some think it is a requirement to pray wearing a hat as well as a kippa.

6. Wearing hats by men (such as a fedora, baseball or other cap)

Many Orthodox Jews wear a hat or cap when in public to keep their head covered without calling attention to themselves as Jews by wearing a kippa. Others wear a hat as a matter of style or social custom, or because it is an even more complete head covering than a kippa. Some wear their hats while praying (sometimes with a kippa underneath it).

7. Wearing a black hat (with or without fur around it)

The color and style of hat may reflect the community or ancestral home, or one's own personal preference. This can contribute to a distinctive Jewish style of dress, which some people see as desirable. The type of hat worn is custom.

8. Wearing long black coats by men

The color and style of coat worn may reflect the preferences of one's community, or one's own personal preference. This can contribute to a distinctive Jewish style of dress, which some people see as desirable. The type of coat worn is custom.

9. Wearing tzitzit (and wearing in or out)

There is no Biblical requirement to wear tzitzit, rather the commandment is to put tzitzit (fringes) on those garments with four corners. Some people purposefully wear a four-cornered garment to be able to fulfill this commandment; it is usually small and worn under a shirt. Some wear the tzitzit tucked in where they are not seen. With respect to wearing tzitzit out (where they can be seen), as it says in the Shema, looking at the tzitzit may help the wearer to remember and observe other mitzvot. Some wear the tzitzit are wound around the belt; in that way they are seen but are kept tidy.

10. Hats, Scarves and Wigs for women

For the sake of modesty, many married women see a halachic obligation to cover their hair using wigs and/or other head coverings (scarves, snoods/hats). A married woman may or may not cut her hair, so there may be long hair under a wig.

11. Long sleeves for women

This is a matter of modesty and custom.

12. Long skirts or dresses

This is a matter of modesty and custom.

13. No slacks or shorts for women

The Bible prohibits cross-dressing (wearing clothing of the other gender). Some people consider pants to be mens' clothing, and so do not wear pants, slacks or shorts. Also shorts may be a matter of modesty.

14. Large families

There is a Biblical injunction to be fruitful and multiply, although our tradition tells us this is satisfied with one boy and one girl. There is also halacha that limits the type of birth control that may be used, and when it may be used (typically not until the obligation to have children is fulfilled). There is no commandment for a family to have as many children as possible but the tradition encourages this and some people think large families are a better fulfillment of this mitzva.

15. Eating only glatt kosher meats and chalav yisrael dairy products

Glatt means smooth. Some people do not want to rely on the judgmental decisions that must be made if there is a potentially disqualifying imperfection found in a slaughtered animal. So they eat only meat that was found to be without any such imperfections. Today the word glatt is being used more generally to mean the food has met more stringent or scrupulous standards. (For example, the word glatt is being applied to foods other than meat.) One Orthodox view is that, since today we have easy access to food prepared to higher standards at minimal extra cost, we might as well dispense with the leniencies that in earlier times were followed as concessions to practical or financial necessities. Similarly, chalav yisrael dairy products are dairy products that are certain not to have been adulterated with anything not kosher. Since chalav yisrael products are available, many Orthodox hold that we no longer need to rely on the government supervision of milk preparation, which in the past had been widely accepted as sufficient, and is still accepted by many Orthodox. Many Conservative see glatt and chalav yisrael as unnecessary stringencies that make eating more difficult.

16. Saying a bracha before eating or drinking, even water.

This is halachically required.

17. Having a Rebbe and a group name (e.g., Bostoner Rebbe, or Satmar Hasidim)

Particularly among Hasidic groups, the groups are long standing and the Rabbinic leadership is inherited. Some people use the term rebbe to refer to a Rabbi with whom they have a close personal relationship. This is a custom.

18. Why very young boys have long hair

Some families do not cut the hair of a boy baby until he reaches the age of three. This can be taken

as a type of coming of age, with several things happening at that age: formal education, wearing tzitzit, and wearing kippa (but not all wait for age 3 for these). For those who observe this, there is a celebration surrounding the first haircut called an Upsherin (Yiddish for haircut). This is the first chance the boy has to keep the mitzvah of not cutting payot (side curls).

19. Wearing a large tallit in synagogue

The typical tallit seen in Orthodox synagogues is large, woolen, and white with black stripes (as compared with the relatively narrow, white and blue, silk-like tallit so universally found in Conservative synagogues). The type of tallit is a custom. The minimum definition of a tallit is that it have 4 corners, have ritual fringes in each corner (the tzitzit), has a top (so that it is worn in a particular side up), and is a certain minimum size. The cloth and color of the material are a custom.

20. Shukkle when praying

Shukkling means swaying to and fro while praying. Some feel this is a way to pray with their whole body. This is a custom.

21. No handshaking or other touching between men and women

There are various Orthodox positions on touching someone of the opposite sex that reflect halacha concerning modesty and chastity. Some forbid all hugging and kissing but allow impersonal touching (e.g., a handshake), and some forbid handshakes as well. There are various other views and complexities concerning touching. The various positions reflect different interpretations of halacha as well as personal stringencies.

22. Speaking Yiddish rather than Hebrew (particularly noticeable in Israel)

Some people hold that Hebrew should be used for holy purposes only, and so speak another language for secular purposes. This is less prevalent than in the past. This is a custom.

23. Electricity and the Use of Electric Timers on Shabbat and Festivals

Despite the variety of Orthodox views on the nature of electricity, in practice most Orthodox (and some Conservative) treat electricity as if it were fire, and apply to electricity the prohibitions concerning starting and extinguishing fire. As a result, many Orthodox use automatic timers to control lights and other electrical devices on Shabbat and refrain from personally adjusting or turning electrical devices on or off. Most Orthodox and some Conservative feel that turning electrical devices on and off is inconsistent with the spirit of Shabbat and Yom Tov, and refrain for that reason. Some Orthodox go further and do not use timers to turn electrical devices on or off. One prevalent Conservative view is that since electricity is not fire it may be used in many (but not all) ways on Shabbat and Yom Tov, and this view is taken to allow one to turn on and off otherwise permitted electrical devices. In this view, an electrical device is permitted if its function is permitted. So, under this view, turning on and adjusting a

lamp or a home air conditioner would be permitted, since there is no prohibition involved, but turning on or using a barbeque would not be permitted since cooking is not allowed on Shabbat.

Attachment 6. On What is Halacha Based?

Halacha, or Jewish law, is based on traditional sources and legitimate precedent. It is impossible to give even an adequate basic overview of the halachic sources in just a page or two. However, a few of the major bases of halacha are described here. Many but not all of the works mentioned here are available in English translation.

The Torah contains many explicit commandments, some positive, such as, observe the Sabbath, and honor your parents, and some negative, such as, not stealing and not marrying certain relatives. These commandments form the foundation for much of halacha. The Torah is referred to as the written law.

The Talmud is known as the oral law, since it was originally transmitted orally, and was not written down until later. It consists of statements of legal tradition; statements, discussions and debates about various laws and their application; and narratives, many of which relate to halacha. Many of the laws found in the Torah are explained in the Talmud, such as what constitutes work forbidden on Shabbat, or how one goes about entering or dissolving a Jewish marriage, or what makes up a Passover seder. The Talmud often records conflicting positions of various rabbis and schools, and often tries to reconcile the conflicts. The Talmud is the foundation for much of halacha. It is comprised of two components: the Mishan and the Gemara. The Mishnah was completed in about the year 200 CE and the Gemara in about the year 600 CE. There really are two Gemarot, one from Babylonia and the other from Israel (Palestine). Both Gemarot are extensive commentaries on the Mishnah. The Babylonian Talmud is more developed and edited than the Palestinian (or, Yerushalmi), and is also the more widely studied. Indeed, "Talmud" alone always refers to the Babylonian Talmud.

Jewish law distinguishes between laws that are called de-oraita and those that are called de-rabbanan. De-oraita means that the laws have the legal status of the Torah itself, while law that is de-rabbanan has the authority of the sages, but not of the Torah itself. In addition to interpreting, expanding upon, and extrapolating from earlier texts, the rabbis also sometimes engaged in actual legislation. When their legislation is positive in nature, it is called a takkanah. When the legislation is negative, it is called a gezerah.

The styles of the Mishnah and the Gemara are very different from one another. The Mishnah is written in Hebrew, is organized by topics, and includes very little give and take between the different rabbis whose views are recorded. Its language is quite concise, but sometimes quite cryptic. The sages of the period of the Mishnah are called tannaim (singular: tanna). Rabbi Akiva, for example, was a tanna.

The style of the Gemara, on the other hand, reflects voluminous give and take, questions and answers, digressions, jumping from one subject to another. It sounds much more like the stream of consciousness discussion that would have taken place in the academy, based on the text of the Mishnah. The sages of the period of the Gemara are called amoraim (singular: amora). Rav and Rav Ashi, for example, are amoraim.

The Talmud is quite pluralistic, recording many conflicting positions and opinions of the Rabbis on many issues, and the deliberation in the Gemara often ends without a definitive conclusion about which view is correct as a matter of law.

The complexity of Talmud led to the composition of influential commentaries written over time. The most famous and most widely used is that of Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Yitzhak), of the 11th Century.

Over the centuries several major works that codify Jewish law based on the Talmud have been written and widely accepted. A few are mentioned here. Moses Maimonides, known as the Rambam, wrote a 14 volume code of law and ethics based on his masterful knowledge of the Talmud, the Bible, and the responsa literature to his time. His code covers all areas of halacha and is titled the Mishneh Torah. Published in 1180, it serves as an important, and perhaps the most important, summary of Jewish law. It covers matters no longer practiced (such as many things related to the Temple services), as well as matters that are still current.

Another major codification of Jewish law, the Shulchan Aruch, was written in the 16th century by Joseph Karo. He presents a Sefardic viewpoint. Not long after its publication, extensive glosses were added by Rabbi Moses Isserles (known as the Rema) presenting an Ashkenazic viewpoint. These are printed together. This work is a practical guide to observance, and is an extremely influential halachic work.

The Mishnah Berurah by Rabbi Israel Meir haCohen Kagan (known as the Hafetz Hayyim, 1838-1932) consists of 6 volumes that comment on the first part of the Shulchan Aruch that deal with religious practice. It is widely thought to be the most important modern summary of daily halacha.

Another major source for halacha is the responsa literature which is a collection of the rulings of various individual rabbis over the centuries. Some of this literature dates back to the time of the Talmud, and responsa have been written throughout the centuries, and new responsa are written to this day. A responsum is the written answer of a rabbi in response to a specific practical question. The responsa literature reflects the customs and cultures of the times. Sometimes the same question was asked of different experts (poskim) in different eras or different lands. Sometimes the questions that were asked reflected new developments, such as automobiles or artificial insemination. Many

collections of responsa have been published. Since each responsum answers a particular real-life question, its applicability to other situations must be determined as needed. Even if not perfectly applicable, the responsa literature is very useful to a rabbi who is faced with a similar question, since often the relevant halachic sources bearing on a topic are cited and evaluated. The responsa literature is so voluminous as to be unknowable in its entirety.

In addition to actual laws, sometimes custom (minhag) comes to be so widely observed that it takes on the force of law.

These many and complex sources, together with many others, are used by rabbis in deciding halacha. Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis all have this common source material to draw on. The challenge to the rabbis of today is to read, learn and apply these sources respectfully, thoughtfully, and judiciously. (See also section Z at the end of Chapter One, describing the way in which halachic decisions made by the Law Committee of the Conservative movement.)

(Note: In writing this Guide to Practical Halacha for Conservative Jews, I relied mainly on secondary sources, such as Klein. I am not familiar with the content of most of the primary sources described in this attachment, much less an expert in any of them.)

Attachment 7. Transliteration of the Mourner's Kaddish

A mourner's kaddish is said by mourners at a funeral, at all services during the period of mourning, and on the anniversary of death (yahrzeit). A minyan is required to say kaddish. Transliterations are available in almost any siddur. At a funeral, cards with a transliteration are almost always available. A transliteration of the mourner's kaddish is as follows:

Yit-ga-dal v'yit-ka-dash she-mei raba (Non-mourners will say amen)
b'alma di v'ra chir-eu-tei
v'-yam-lich mal-chu-tei
b'chay-eichon uv'yo-mei-chon uv'cha-yei d'chol beit Yisrael
ba-a-ga-la u-viz'man ka-riv
v'im-ru amen*.

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'va-rach l'olam ul'al-mei al-ma-ya. (Non-mourners will say this line also.)

Yit-ba-rach v'yish-ta-bach v'yit-pa-ar v'yit-ro-mam v'yit-na-sei
v'yit-ha-dar v'yit-a-leh v'yit-ha-lal she-mei d'kud'sha
b'rich hu (Non-mourners will say this line also.)
l'ay-la min kol bir'cha-ta v'shir-a-ta
tush-b'cha-ta v'ne-che-ma-ta
da-a-mir-an b'al-ma
v'im-ru amen*.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'ma-ya
v'cha-yim a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis-rael
v'im-ru amen*.

O-se sha-lom bim'ro-mav,
hu ya-a-seh sha-lom a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis-rael
v'im-ru amen*.

*Non-mourners will say amen also.

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