



Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people?

Key belief:

The Torah is the Jewish Holy writing – it is a scroll and is the same as the first five books in the Christian Bible.

The yad is used to point to the words as it cannot be touched by hands.



The Shema:

- The Shema (Sh'mah) is a very important prayer which Jewish people say 3 times a day.
- It reminds them of what they believe.
- (Jews think that the name of God is too special to write down –sometimes it is written like this – G*d or Adonai)

Main beliefs:

- There is only 1 G*d
- G*d is good and loves them and they should love G*d.
- G*d's rules apply to every part of life.
- Children should be taught about the Torah.



The Torah:

- The Torah is the sacred text of the Jewish people.
- Traditional Jewish people believe that God told Moses all of the Torah on Mount Sinai, and that Moses wrote down his exact words.
- The word Torah actually means 'teaching'. The Torah is made up of five books, also known as the five books of Moses.
- These books are called: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- When Jewish people talk about the Torah, they sometimes include other important books written by people to help explain the Jewish laws.
- The Torah contains lots of instructions about how Jewish people should live.
- Altogether, there are 613 commandments like this.
- They tell Jewish people how to pray, what to eat and which festivals to celebrate.

Vocabulary

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| Synagogue | A place of worship for Jewish people. |
| Tenakh | The Hebrew Bible |
| Torah (5 books) | Jews regard this as the holiest part of the Tenakh (the Jewish Bible). The word 'torah' means 'instruction' in Hebrew (the oldest Jewish language). The Jewish Bible is mainly written in Hebrew. The Torah is known as the Five Books of Moses and it is within this that the Ten Commandments are found. |
| Nevi'im (8 books) | Nevi'im (Prophets) – eight books These books describe the history of Judaism after the death of Moses. They tell of the Jews' relationship with Yahweh and their history. They show the covenant relationship with God in action and how the Jewish people worked through this. |
| Ketuvim (11 books) | The purpose of this collection, as with the Nevi'im, is to record the history of the Jews and their actions within the covenant relationship with God. |
| Mezuzah | A small parchment scroll upon which the Hebrew words of the Shema are handwritten by a scribe. Mezuzah scrolls are rolled up and affixed to the doorposts of Jewish homes, designating the home as Jewish and reminding those who live there of their connection to G-d and their heritage. |

The Torah is the "instruction manual" for being Jewish. Not every Jewish person follows all the rules, but all Jews see the Torah as being sacred and special. It has lots of stories in it that make up the 'Old Testament' for Christians and Muslims too.

