

Ghetto – walled off area of a city to which Jews were confined

Pogroms – violent riots against the Jewish people in the Ukraine area

Orthodox Jewish women's wig

Orthodox refers to the denomination that keeps closest to ancient Jewish tradition. Married women do not show their hair to anyone but their husbands, so they wear wigs or head coverings.

Yarmulke – head covering worn by Orthodox Jewish men traditionally

And today worn by men or women who wish to

Meshuggener – crazy person; should not have an “r” at the end since it refers to a woman

Dreeing her a kop – Making her crazy in the head

Shabbos (Shabbat) the sabbath

Women lighting candles and waving their hands over them

On Friday night before sundown, women light the sabbath candles because they cannot use a source of light after the sabbath starts; they wave their hands to cover their eyes so they don't see the light until after they say the blessings for the candles

Goy is a foreigner

Women's balcony in the synagogue; women do not participate directly in the sacred space of the synagogue. They are either in a balcony or on the other side of a wall called a mechitzah.

I was surprised that they carried prayer shawls (talithes) and prayer books (siddurim) on the sabbath. The prohibition is against carrying anything unless there is a special fence around the area that allows carrying.

Cheder – school

Kosher – technically, kosher refers to a specific way animals are slaughtered to minimize blood and pain; there are also other rules regarding what Jews can or cannot eat, such as the animal has to chew its cud; no bottom feeder fish such as catfish, no pork in any form. The list is too long to cover everything.

Discussion about speaking English or Yiddish. Someone asks if Harry speaks Yiddish. His mother says her children speak only English. It is implied that sometimes the Jewish people are speaking English and sometimes Yiddish and sometimes what in America was called Yinglish, a strange combination spoken when new immigrants were being acculturated.

Shaigets – non-Jewish man

Emmos – truth in Yiddish; emmos Adonai – truth of God or truth to God

Shivah is explained; it means seven; a mourner sits on a small, hard wooden chair for seven days; people come to the house and bring food. They also cover the mirrors (I don't remember why). When a child breaches important Jewish laws or customs such as marrying a non-Jew, the family treats them as if they died and they sit shivah and say the memorial prayer – Kaddish – for them.

Haggadah (or Haggadah); booklet containing the story of Passover read and sung at the seder.

Four Questions: Why is this night different from all other nights, etc.; text chanted at the seder, traditionally by the youngest participant

Talmud; Jewish law was an oral tradition for a long time before it became a written book

Seder means order and refers to the entire ritual of the first two nights of Passover including the reciting of the Haggadah, the meal and the singing afterward.

Dip a finger – we dip a finger into the wine and spill it to diminish our celebration by reminding ourselves that the dead Egyptians were God's children too.

Matzohs (or Matzahs) flat bread not allowed to rise because the Hebrews had to leave Egypt in a hurry

The Bolsheviks revolted in 1917 and took over the Russian government from the Czar. They created Russia as the first Communist country. My own family came from the Ukraine. My maternal grandmother and her sister came to the U.S. in 1915, two years before the Revolution and during WWI. The rest of the family, I'm told, went to Argentina. Many Jews were socialists. Some who immigrated to the U.S. were in the forefront of the Labor movement. The famous Triangle Fire, the 111th anniversary of which was just last week, was a major factor.

Chometz – any food not Kosher for Passover.

Circumcision – a male Jewish child is circumcised 8 days after birth as a sign of entering the Jewish people's Covenant with God. There was no equivalent ceremony for girls until recently when a custom developed to give the girl a baby naming ceremony.

Bar Mitzvah – a Jewish boy accepts adult responsibility for following Jewish spiritual practices when he turns 13. He is called to the Torah for the first time. A custom has developed to say he was Bar Mitzvahed. This is even used in the book. It is more accurate to say he becomes a Bar Mitzvah, a son of the mitzvot, the Commandments. Again, there was no equivalent for girls until recently. Girls become Bat Mitzvah at

the age of 12. What kind of ceremony she has depends on which Jewish denomination her family is affiliated with.

Rosh Hashanah – at the fall equinox, the Jewish year turns. It is now year 5782 in the Jewish calendar. The New Year is celebrated with a spiritual cleansing that leaves one open spiritually and ready for the challenges of the year to come.