

Some then the males.
written in the jewish



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Some say that the role of women in Judaism has been misrepresented and misunderstood. Today when people think of women's role in Judaism, they think of them as being of very low importance. Yet, through the Halakha (Jewish laws) we are able to see how significant the role of women is in Judaism. There are many Jewish feminist leaders in today's society. This is because throughout the years of education and study of Judaism, the women learned that everyone must be respected.

Within Judaism the women are considered to be on a separate level. They are on the world for one reason, and the men for another. Yet, within the religion they are considered as equals. In Judaism, God is not viewed as a male or female. They believe that God has both masculine and feminine qualities. Some Jewish people refer to God as a man only for convenience, not because they actually believe that he is a male. Both man and woman were created in the image of God. Some even believe that women were created with higher role of importunacy because they were "built" (Gen 2: 22) rather than "formed" (Gen 2: 7).

In traditional Orthodox Judaism, women are not allowed to be a rabbi. They are not allowed to read for the Torah. Because women are not obligated to do certain commandments, some of their worships do not count for group purposes.

Women are also not obligates to the formal prayer service (praying 3 times a day, at specific times). Due to women not being required to join congregational worship, it is their primary responsibility as a wife and a mother. If a women volunteers to attend daily worship services, it is said that

their prayers are not counted in a minyan. A minyan is a group of 10 people, over the age of bar mitzvah, who gather together and recite specific prayers. While women are still required to pray, they are able to do so at any convenient time they want. They can do so privately without having to attend a public service.

Most observant Jewish women usually attend the synagogue on Sabbaths and festival. Yet, their attendance is not a religious requirement. Therefore they may be regarded and less privileged than the males. Written in the Jewish scriptures, it is understood that the men and women are not allowed to be together during prayer. In Orthodox Judaism, the men and women are usually in separate sections of the synagogue, and is often separated by a curtain, or in some cases even a wall. To the Jewish men, this is not a sexist act.

It is solely done, so that the men would not be distracted by the women's beauty. For some this may seem chauvinistic, and unfair. But, as Judaism evolved, other segregations were formed. Within many of these new forms of Judaism, the Conservative and Reform Judaism was created.

Both these forms of Judaism see women's role as being very different than the Orthodox view. However, the basic gender differentiation of traditional laws has created serious tensions in many sections of the Orthodox community. The Reform movement was created in the eighteenth-century Germany as an attempt to modernize the religion. Within this new form of Judaism, they have adapted many ideas from Christianity. The rabbi, or maybe even priest, can be male or female.

This allows all females to be counted in all the rituals and prayers. They have introduced alternative mitzvot (Good deeds that are based on Jewish tradition) and rituals to address religious needs for the women. In some cases, in Reform synagogues they may have someone playing a musical instrument during services, just like they do in a church. Reform and Conservative Judaism have for the most part embraced religious egalitarianism, allowing women to participate as men do in most rituals. Feminism in Judaism has grown in the last century. These women have come back to religious observance, but not in the traditional way. Some women view it as being patriarchal and sexist. Women have begun taking an active role in today's Judaism.

They want to be counted in the every-day prayers, and they want to sit with the men in all circumstances. Some women scribes are also trying to re-analyze the role of women in the Torah. They believe that men did the original analysis, and their approach is much different to women's. They believe there are hints all over the religious scrolls about powerful prophecy by women, but the men gave very little information about them.

Among all these changes, the women are also striving to revise liturgical language, into a gender neutral way. In early Jewish history, Zionist women envisioned their promised land (Israel) as being a place where men and women would work side by side and each applying their full capabilities to the creation of this new world. There were many laws created supporting gender equality. Sexual discrimination between sexes in the labor force was perpetuated. Especially once the orthodox parties took a major role in the governing of Israel. They believed that all people even minorities in the state

should become equals at all levels. That is why, in most part of the country, people live on what is called Kibbutz. These are mass populated farm areas, where hundreds of families live together and are self-sufficient.

To live on a Kibbutz you must give up most of your worldly possessions, mostly only your money, to the government, and you have everything one could need to live a healthy and happy life on the Kibbutz. Throughout the history of Judaism, women have not only been the housekeeper, the mother, and the wife, they have also been a large part of the religious culture. We are able to see this especially when Moses went to get the Ten Commandments. While he was on Mount Sinai obtaining the commandments from God himself, the Jewish people had given up hope, and begun praying to idols. It was only the women who kept their faith and did not once dishonor their God. Even though, the laws of traditional Judaism are considered to be more biased towards men, the women have always played an important role in Jewish society and religion.

In the 20th century we have already seen many new forms of Judaism appear. This has allowed women to slowly become a more important role in all aspects of the religion. In the near future, no one can tell how the religion will change, and how it will transform. Bibliography: The Role of Women, Judaism 101 <http://www.jewfaq.org/women.htm>? Women carving new place in Judaism <http://jewishsf.com/bk950901/1woman.htm>? Living Religions - 4th edition Mary Pat Fisher? Judaism and the new woman Sally Priesand? Tradition in a rootless world : women turn to Orthodox JudaismLynn Davidman? The crown of creation : the lives of great biblical women based on rabbinic & mystical sourcesChana Wesiberg

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