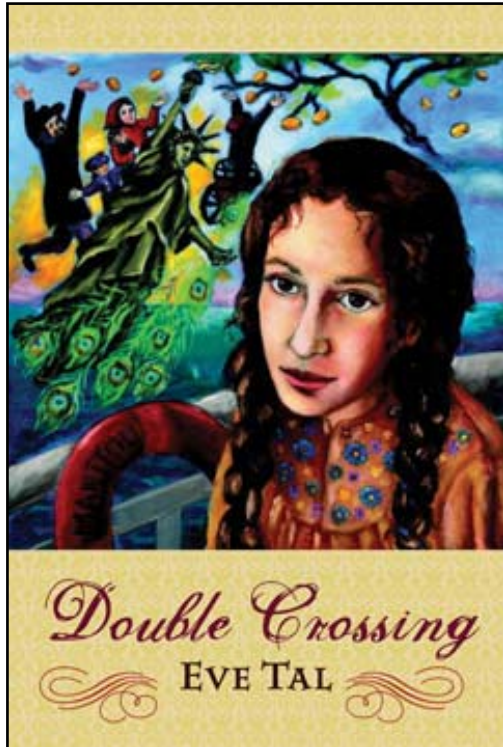


Teacher's Guide To

DOUBLE CROSSING

by Eve Tal



THEMES

- Immigration
- Myths vs. Reality
- Historical Fiction (Europe one hundred years ago, Ellis Island)
- Conformity
- Gender Roles
- Jewish Religion and Traditions
- Anti-Semitism (racism)
- Illiteracy
- Transitions (cultural)

CRITIC'S PRAISE

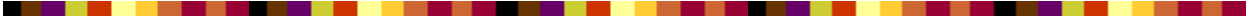
Booklist, August 2005

STARRED REVIEW: Grades 7-10. Based on the experience of the author's grandfather at the turn of the twentieth century, this novel starts off as the archetypal Jewish coming-to-America story. Raizel, 12, leaves the Ukraine with her father,

a devout peddler who flees pogroms and conscription into the Czar's army, intending to send for the rest of his family later. The separation, the trauma, the dream of golden America, the journey across Europe, the ocean voyage, the inspections and arrival at Ellis Island—the historical detail is dense. But Raizel's lively first-person narrative is anything but reverential. She misses her brother, but she's jealous because he gets to go to school, and she resents her father's keeping kosher, which means they stay hungry during the journey in the crowded ship. Her view of adults and kids, family and strangers, back home and on the perilous adventure, brings the people on the journey very close. Best of all is the shocking surprise that changes everything, even Papa—a haunting aspect of the immigrant story left too long untold. — Hazel Rochman

Gail Carson Levine, Ella Enchanted (Newbery Honor Book, 1998)

Double Crossing is the finest thing I've read in a long time... This is the world—unknown to me—of my mother's mother. I suppose I have a genetic interest. But if I were a Martian I'd still be drawn in. I'd still be unable to put Double Crossing down. Adjectives crowd in: gripping, charming, poignant, luminous.



A. LaFaye, Worth, (Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, 2005)

Tal weaves deftly told folktales, strong emotional depth, and the trials of forced assimilation into a compelling story of a young girl and her father's harrowing journey to escape Russian pogroms by fleeing to America ...In this strong debut novel, Tal writes in an engaging and rich voice that I hope we hear a lot from in the future.

Miriam Bat-Ami, Two Suns in the Sky (Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, 2000)

Double Crossing not only teaches us something new about immigration to the U.S., but it does so in a sophisticated and original manner that hearkens back to the great Jewish storytellers like Aleichem and Singer...I hope [she] creates a sequel.

BOOK SUMMARY


Twelve-year-old Raizel lives with her family in the small Ukrainian town of Jibatov in 1905. Like other Jewish families of the period, she lives in fear of the violent pogroms that sweep periodically through the villages, leaving a trail of murder and trauma. When Papa announces he has bought two tickets to America, the family is thrilled. But when Raizel's parents decide that she will accompany her father to America, shy, insecure Raizel is terrified. She wants nothing more than to remain with her mother and younger siblings, telling the stories that they love, and, eventually, fulfilling her dream of learning to read.

Raizel obeys her parents and her odyssey across Europe is filled with good and bad experiences: the perilous border crossing, a near-drowning, her recovery at the home of a Jewish widow, the stay in a boarding house where she makes new friends and learns about the temptations of life in a modern European city. During the difficult Atlantic crossing, both Raizel and her father fall ill but when they arrive in America, their dreams of a new life for their family seem about to come true.

Papa's rejection at Ellis Island and the revelation that he will be drafted into the Czar's army when he returns to Russia shatter their dreams. For the first time in her life, Raizel must take the initiative, overcoming her shyness and the restrictions of her traditional upbringing to find a way to save her family. The choices she and Papa face are hard: giving up their traditions to conform to the requirements of the new world they must enter. Throughout the novel, Raizel grapples with her fears, her loyalty to her family and traditions, and her own sense that the double crossing has changed her irrevocably.

TEACHING OVERVIEW

Double Crossing provides students with the opportunity to identify with an unusual protagonist whose shyness and conformity to the traditional female roles of her society



may appear alien to contemporary students, but will help them expand their understanding of different people and cultures.

The suggested activities in this Guide are geared to children of varying ages and can be chosen or modified by the teacher to meet the needs of the specific class.

BACKGROUND FOR THE TEACHER

Double Crossing is a work of historical fiction that focuses on a Jewish family at the turn of the 20th century. Because students may not be familiar with the history and traditions of the Jewish people which figure prominently in the novel, the following brief history and glossary are presented to prepare the teacher to answer student questions. See Appendix A.

BEFORE READING

The cover art for *Double Crossing* is an original painting by Susan Klahr. The cover focuses on a realistic portrait, which is the artist's conception of how Raizel looks. Above Raizel the artist has painted a number of smaller images.

1. What do you think they represent?
2. How do they tie in with the story?


Have students plan a virtual visit to Ellis Island. The following websites may be useful:

1. <http://www.nps.gov/elis/>
2. <http://www.ellisland.com>
3. <http://www.historychannel.com/ellisland/index2.html>

Have students imagine what it was like to live 100 years ago. Divide students into two groups: The first group will list all the things they can do today because of electricity. The second group will list all the things they could do even if they did not have electricity. Discuss what activities in the second group replaced activities in the first group

1. What did people do when they did not have television or radio?
2. What did they do before they had computer games?
3. Before they could look up information on the Internet?
4. Talk on the telephone to friends?
5. Send e-mails or SMSs?

Remind students that the story explores and covers subjects as current today as they



were 100 years ago. In particular, *Double Crossing* offers an opportunity for the discussion of the following subjects: Immigration, Conformity, and Anti-Semitism/Racism. Before working with the story, the teacher is encouraged to create foundational knowledge and stimulate student exploration and discussion on these central topics. See Appendix B for background information, specific learning activities and discussion prompts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS


These may be used during the reading process or after completion. They are based on Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge Questions, Comprehension Questions, Application Questions, Analysis Questions, Synthesis Questions, and Evaluation Questions.

Knowledge Questions

- Why did Raizel's family want to immigrate to America?
- Why did her relatives remain behind?
- Why was Lemmel mad at Raizel after she was chosen to accompany Papa to America?
- Why didn't Papa have a passport to cross the border?
- Why was Raizel upset at the attitude of the other guests at Frau Buchthal's?
- Why was Susan afraid of dark places?
- Why was Papa rejected on Ellis Island?
- Why did Papa sleep all the time and refuse to eat with Raizel in the dining room on the return trip to Europe?
- On the second crossing, why were Raizel and Papa afraid that someone would find out this was their second crossing?

Comprehension Questions

- Why do you think the doctor did not want to treat Papa at first?
- Why do you think the first, second and third class passengers were kept in separate sections on the boat?
- Discuss why you believe Papa made his decision to give up his strong religious traditions.
- How was Raizel limited in her society by being a girl? What were boys allowed to do that girls were forbidden?
- Raizel's cousins and Susan and Reuben are from well-off families, while Raizel's family is poor. What differences can you list between the way the two classes lived?
- Papa reveals to Raizel that he will be drafted into the army if he returns to



Russia. What hints were given that his decision to immigrate to America was based on more than the desire to improve the family's economic situation?

- Give as many explanations as you can for the title "Double Crossing."

Application Questions

- Give examples of how Raizel changed during her journey. Compare her behavior in Jibatov and the journey to America with her behavior on the way back to Europe, at the Goldenbergs' and on the second crossing.
- Predict what would have happened if Raizel had not become friends with the Goldenbergs.

Analysis Questions

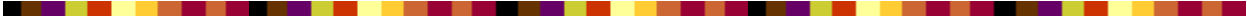
- How would the story have been different if Raizel had kept her promise to Mama and not told any stories? How do the stories Raizel tells contribute to the book?
- Analyze Raizel's behavior. Do you think she is a coward or a brave person? Do her fears prevent her from acting?

Synthesis Questions

- Raizel says she is shy. Do you think that Raizel's shyness was a handicap? What might have been different in the story if Raizel had not been so shy?

Evaluation Questions

- After Papa was rejected at Ellis Island, did you think he would return to Russia or succeed in entering America? What clues did you find in the story to support your opinion?
- Do you think that Papa was treated fairly on Ellis Island? [The real Binyamin Balaban Altman went on to become the owner of a grocery store. He sent four of his five children to college. He never lacked work, even during the depression years when many American were unemployed.]
- What criteria do you think a country should use to decide who is allowed to enter and who is not?
- Raizel lied in order to get into America. Do you think she was right to tell a lie? Can you think of situations when telling a lie is justified? In your own life, do you ever tell a lie and believe it is the right thing to do?
- Raizel is confused by the behavior of Ivan, the man who takes people across the border for a high price. On the one hand, he does not like Jewish people and tries to cheat Papa by raising the price he must pay to cross the border. On the other, he risks his own life to rescue Raizel, whom he barely knows. Raizel wonders




how someone can be good and bad at the same time. Do you know anyone like Ivan? The person might hold many prejudices, but be kind to their own family. Or they might be cruel to their children, but help other people. How can you explain this type of behavior?

- Papa gave up his religious traditions in order to enter America. When people move to a new place, they often change their clothes, food, behavior, and beliefs in order to fit into their new environment. This can even happen when a family moves from one state to another. Have you ever moved, gone away to camp, or visited a relative in a different place? Discuss the changes you made in order to fit into your new environment and make friends there. Can you think of other books you have read or movies you have seen in which a leading character must change in order to fit in?
- Is conformity a positive or negative act? Think about people you know who try to fit in by conforming to the standards of the majority. What happens to people who refuse to change? Are they happier or sadder than people who do not conform? What do you think makes some people refuse to conform? Why might this work for some people but cause problems for others?

CURRICULUM-ORIENTED POST READING ACTIVITIES

Language Arts

- Discuss the tradition of oral folk tales. Many of the Disney movies are based on folk tales that have often been reinterpreted for a modern audience. Have students bring examples of their favorite folk tales/fairy tales.
- Chelm stories are based on the foolish antics of the people of an imaginary town (although there is a real city of Chelm). Reread the Chelm stories in *Double Crossing*. A web page discussing this type of folktale with links to additional stories can be found at <http://www.eldrbarry.net/roos/books/nood.htm>. Have students write their own Chelm tales.
- The tradition of storytelling is difficult to keep alive in an age of electronic media. However, there are people who still love to tell stories and organizations that run storytelling festivals. If you can find a storyteller in your area, invite her to class or to tell stories to the entire school. Another option is to have someone conduct a storytelling workshop in which students learn to tell stories. Films and DVDs of storytellers are available.
- Pretend you are Raizel writing a letter to Reuben and Susan after learning to write in an American school. Tell them what has happened to you since saying goodbye. Or, pretend you are Lemel writing to Raizel telling her everything that



has happened since she left Jibatov.

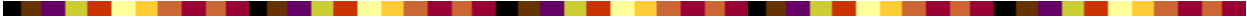
- Proverbs are brief sayings handed down through generations, usually because they contain a kernel of wisdom or truth. Different cultures have different proverbs, but many embody the same folk wisdom in a different form. The Book of Proverbs is one of the books of the Bible, attesting to the importance of proverbs in Jewish tradition. Have students list proverbs used in *Double Crossing*. Have them list proverbs they are familiar with. Do any of these proverbs mean the same as a proverb in *Double Crossing*? A series of links to the proverbs of different cultures can be found at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proverb>. Have students compare the proverbs of different cultures. This may tie-in with their study of immigrant groups.

Social Studies

- Transportation – make a list of the different types of transportation Raizel and Papa use to get to America. If they were going to America today, what means of transportation could they use? Choose a place you would like to visit. How could you get there and how long would it take? If you were trying to get there one hundred years ago, how would you travel and approximately how long would it take?
- Illiteracy – Raizel does not know how to write. Illiteracy was more common one hundred years ago than it is today, but it still exists. Using the Internet or library, find out the illiteracy rate in your state. What countries of the world have the highest illiteracy rate? Why do you think this is so? Make a list of all the things you would be prevented from doing if you could not read.

Math

- Using an atlas or the Internet, calculate the distance Raizel had to travel to reach America (one way). Since you will have difficulty finding Jibatov on a map, you can start from Kiev, which is a large city not far from where the Balaban family lived. How far had she traveled by the end of *Double Crossing*?
- Outside the U.S., the metric system is in common use. If you calculated the length of Raizel's journey in miles, recalculate it in kilometers.
- During their journey, Papa and Raizel passed through several countries, each of which used its own currency. Today, the Euro has made currency calculation in Europe much simpler, but the ruble is still the currency of Russia. Make a list of some common items you sometimes buy and the price. Using a conversion factor rather than an Internet site, convert the price into rubles.



Science/Health

- Communications- When Papa needed money quickly, he sent a telegram to Nahum from Belgium to Jibatov. How does a telegraph work? What other means of communication were used one hundred years ago? If Raizel and Papa were traveling today, what could they use to communicate? How do you think we will be communicating in another 50 or 100 years?
- Transportation- Raizel traveled by cart, train, foot and boat to reach America. How were boats and trains powered one hundred years ago? How are they powered today?
- On the Atlantic crossing, the passengers suffered from seasickness. What causes seasickness? Have you ever been seasick? One hundred years later, is there a cure for seasickness or a way to prevent it?

Art

- The images in the upper portion of the cover are reminiscent of the work of artist Marc Chagall, who was born in 1887 in the Jewish ghetto of Vitebsk, Russia. Find examples of Chagall's work and read about his life. Do you see any similarities between the cover of *Double Crossing* and a work of Chagall? Possible sources:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Chagall
http://www.fantasyarts.net/Marc_Chagall.htm
<http://cgfa.sunsite.dk/chagall/index.html>
<http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Parc/2331/russia/chagallgallery.html>
- When a cover is designed for a book, certain choices need to be made. The cover artist chooses a central moment or theme in the story to illustrate. The artist tries to draw a picture that will represent what the book is about and tempt the reader to open the cover and read the story. Choose your own central moment or theme to illustrate to make a new cover for *Double Crossing*.



About the Author

Eve Tal was born in Brooklyn in 1947 and grew up in Rockville Centre, New York in a warm Jewish environment. Her mother kept a kosher home and family holiday celebrations are among her fondest memories. She majored in Literature and social protest at Oberlin College during the turbulent sixties. After graduation she went to Israel for a year to teach English and, with a few breaks, has been there ever since.

Today Eve lives on Kibbutz Hatzor, Israel where she works in marketing and grant writing. She holds an M.Ed in special education and is completing a M.A. in children's literature. Eve has published four picture books (in Hebrew) as well as scholarly articles on children's literature.



APPENDIX A

A Very Brief Introduction to Jewish History


Jewish History covers a number of periods. The early Biblical Period cannot be dated with any certainty because the events are not confirmed by outside sources.

The Biblical Period – covers the events described in the Bible:

- The Patriarchal Period – Abraham, the first patriarch, the beginnings of monotheism, and the twelve tribes
- The Egyptian Period – the enslavement in Egypt, the Exodus, and the conquest of Canaan, the land of Israel
- The Judges – a turbulent period in which there was no central government
- The Monarchy – the monarchies of Saul, David and Solomon, who built the Temple in Jerusalem, the center for Jewish worship
- The Two Kingdoms – the split into two kingdoms: Judah and Israel
- Captivity and Conquest – the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians, exile, the return and building of the Second Temple, the revolts against the Greeks and later the Romans, the destruction of the Second Temple.

The Diaspora Period – roughly covers the two thousand year period from the fall of the Second Temple to the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948. Throughout this period, there was a continuous though small Jewish population in the area of present-day Israel. Jews prayed for a return to Israel in their daily prayers and some made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The return from Exile remained a central motif in Jewish life to the present day.

The Jews of Europe – Throughout the Middle Ages and into modern times, Ashkenazic Jews lived in enforced segregation from the Christian majority, often in walled ghettos. Their conditions varied according to the country and period in which they lived. In general, civil laws confined them from participating in most professional guilds, owning land, and engaging in agriculture. They were often attacked and expelled from their homes and from their country of residence. They formed their own religious communities and supported themselves by trade and money lending, which was forbidden to Christians, an activity that made them very unpopular with the Christian population. The Jews had their own schools and a great emphasis was placed on learning. While there were wealthy Jews, the majority was poor and a middle class did not exist.



The Jews of the Islamic Countries – also lived under restrictive laws but were allowed more freedom than the Jews in the European countries and suffered less persecution. They played an important role in the flowering of Islamic culture and learning four hundred years before the European Renaissance. Their status declined after this “golden age” and their expulsion from Spain in 1492. Most lived in the same condition as their neighbors, but because there were no ghettos, there were more interactions with Moslems.

The Modern Period – In the 18th and 19th centuries, with the rise of nationalism, the Jews of Europe began making an effort to assimilate into the secular culture of Europe. Large-scale persecution in the form of pogroms in the 19th century led many Jews to emigrate from the area of Poland, Russia and the Ukraine. Many immigrated to North America, while others settled in South America, South Africa, and Palestine. The new Zionist movement proposed a return to Israel, maintaining that Jews could never be safe from anti-Semitism unless they lived in their own country, just like any other people.


The Holocaust – Six million Jews throughout Europe were murdered during World War Two by the Nazi regime. The aftermath left thousands of survivors homeless, poverty-stricken, and traumatized. The British government, which held a mandate over the area of Palestine, refused to allow mass immigration of Jews into the area both before and after the war.

The Creation of the State of Israel – On Nov.29, 1947 the U.N. ratified the creation of two states in the area of the British Mandate – one for the Arab population and one for the Jewish, to solve the problem of the refugees from Nazi destruction. The Arab states did not accept this solution and attacked the Jews. The state of Israel was declared on May 15, 1948. Israel was victorious over the attacking Arab states, but the war created a refugee problem that continues to incite hostility throughout the Middle East and the demand for the creation of a Palestinian State.

GLOSSARY OF JUDAISM

Orthodox Judaism

Raizel and her family, like the vast majority of Eastern European Jews of her time, were Orthodox Jews and followed the system of religious beliefs and traditions that had developed in Europe over thousands of years. In the U.S. today, there are three major Jewish denominations: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. Conservative and Reform



Jews have adapted Orthodox beliefs and traditions to conform to contemporary needs.

Basic Beliefs of Judaism

The Jewish religion is called Judaism. Orthodox Jews like Raizel and her family would have believed the following:

Belief in One God - Unlike many religions, Judaism has no dogma, or formal set of beliefs that one must hold in order to be a Jew. Judaism is monotheistic and holds that there is only one God, who created the world and is all knowing and all-powerful.

The Ten Commandments – were given by God to Moses and must be observed by all Jews. Five Commandments deal with the individual’s relationship with God and five deal with the individual’s relationship to other people.

The 613 Commandments – or mitzvot. These are found in the Torah and are considered sub-categories of the Ten Commandments. Because Judaism focuses on action as well as belief, religious Jews are expected to follow all 613 commandments. In actuality, many pertain to rituals carried out in the First and Second Temples by priests and are not relevant today. Some have been interpreted to include activities unknown in Biblical times. The prohibition against lighting a fire on the Sabbath, for example, now includes turning on electricity, which is forbidden on the Sabbath. In order to save a human life, these laws must be violated, which is known as pikuach-nefesh.

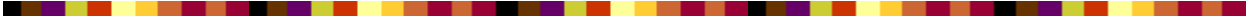
Some Important Jewish Religious Books

The Jews are often called “the people of the book,” which refers to the Bible, the foundation stone of the three major monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

- **The Torah** – is the Hebrew Bible. It consists of 24 books which are the same books found in the Protestant Old Testament, but in a different order. The Catholic Old Testament contains six extra books not found in the Hebrew Bible.
- **The Talmud** – is a written compilation of rabbinical discussions which took place over the course of several hundred years
- **The Kabala** – is not a specific book. The term is used to denote a series of writings which grew out of the tradition of Jewish mysticism.

Kashrut, Kosher, or the Dietary Laws

The Jewish dietary laws deal with foods that may or may not be eaten and how they must be prepared. It is not clear whether health or environmental reasons were the origin of these laws. These laws are included in the 613 laws in the Torah and are



observed by all religious Jews with very few variations. Food that is not kosher, is called tref. Dietary prohibitions exist in many religions, and while they may seem strange, those who practice them consider them natural and view them as a privilege rather than burden, since they are in fulfillment of God's commandments.

Because the laws of Kashrut figure prominently in *Double Crossing*, I will outline the fundamentals.


- Only mammals that chew their cud and have a split hoof may be eaten. This excludes pigs, camels, rabbits and other animals.
- Only fish that have fins and scales may be eaten. This excludes shellfish like shrimp, crabs and lobsters.
- Rodents, reptiles, amphibians and most insects are forbidden.
- Animals that have died or been killed by other animals must not be eaten.
- Animals must be healthy when killed, and slaughtered by a proscribed method by a Jewish butcher who has been trained in ritual slaughter.
- Blood may not be eaten and must be drained from all food by broiling, soaking, or salting.
- Certain parts of kosher animals may not be eaten.
- Meat and milk products may not be eaten together. Milk may not be used in cooking meat or served on the same set of plates and flatware. Two sets of plates and flatware are used in homes that keep kosher.
- A reasonable amount of time (between 3 – 6 hours, depending on the source) must pass between the eating of meat and milk products.

Today, all products that are kosher carry certification, which means they have been examined by reliable religious sources and found compatible with the laws of Kashrut. This did not exist in Raizel's time. When Papa learns from Raizel that the ice cream she ate in Antwerp was not served by Jews, it is clear to him that she has eaten tref, unkosher food, because kosher food can only be prepared by Jews who observe the dietary laws for preparation.

Worship

Religious Jews are required to say their prayers three times a day. Most of the prayers can be said alone, but certain prayers require the presence of a minyon, consisting of ten adult male Jews. In addition, prayers and blessings are recited during the day before eating and drinking.

While praying, Jewish males wrap themselves in a white prayer shawl. A skullcap or yarmulke is always worn during prayers and religious Jews wear one at all times as a sign of respect and honor to God. Phylacteries, two small leather boxes containing



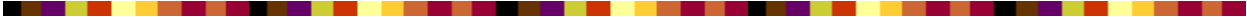
portions of the Torah are wrapped around the arms and head during the morning prayers. A four-corned vest with fringes called a tzitzit is worn at all times under clothes as a reminder of the 613 Mitzvot. Papa prayed on the journey to America several times a day, using his own prayer book, prayer shawl and phylacteries.

Jews go to synagogue to pray together. In Orthodox synagogues, the men and women are separated from each other with a partition. Services are usually conducted by the rabbi, who has undergone religious training, but members of the congregation may also lead the service, and a rabbi is not required. The heart of the service is the reading of a Torah portion. At the age of thirteen, after an intensive period of study, Jewish boys are called up to read the Torah in the synagogue. Called a Bar Mitzvah, the boy is now considered a man in the eyes of the Jewish religion and given the privilege of fulfilling all 613 commandments.

Women in Orthodox Judaism

Orthodox Judaism acknowledges the importance of both men and women, but confines women to their roles as wives, mothers, and housekeepers. Women do not have to observe all the 613 commandments like men do. They cannot be part of the Minyon of ten men needed to conduct public prayer services and cannot lead the congregation in prayer. They are restricted to a closed area of the synagogue where they can see and hear, but not be seen. They are permitted to attend services, but not required to do so. At the same time, women have religious duties and privileges that are connected to their position in the home. Three commandments pertain solely to women. Women were encouraged to learn to read in order to read their prayer book, but were discouraged from further study, which might take them away from their duties as wives and mothers.

At the turn of the twentieth century, restrictions against advanced study for women began to be lifted and schools for girls were established. Boys and girls whose parents follow the Orthodox Jewish tradition do not study in the same school. Most girls did learn to read and write in Yiddish so Raizel's case was slightly unusual. Her grandmother would most likely have taught her to read if she had lived longer and her brother Lemel might have taught her if he had been a better student. If she had lived closer to her rich relatives, she might have studied with her cousins and their private tutor. Neither of Raizel's parents was opposed to her learning to read. Papa was only home on the Sabbath, and Mama was too busy with the younger children and homemaking to teach her. If Jibatov had been a bigger town, it would have had a cheder (elementary school) for girls where Raizel could have learned to read and write Yiddish and a bit of Hebrew for a few hours a day for a few years. Part of Raizel's frustration lies in her knowledge that if circumstances had been different, she would have learned to read.



Girls are considered to have reached maturity at the age of twelve, at which time they are expected to observe the commandments that pertain to women. All women are required to dress modestly by wearing long sleeved high-necked blouses or dresses with long skirts (no pants). Married women must also cover their hair using a hat, scarf, or wig.

Charity and Good Deeds – are a fundamental part of Jewish life. Traditional Jews give at least 10% of their income to charity. Giving to the poor is an obligation in Judaism and confers a blessing on the giver. Raizel mentions that her family was never too poor to give to beggars. Frau Buchthal welcomes the opportunity to help Raizel and Papa in their time of need, calling it a “mitzvah” or good deed, another meaning for the word mitzvah (see discussion of the 613 commandments above).

Jewish Holidays

All Jewish holidays begin the evening before the holiday itself. Jewish holidays do not occur on the same date every year because the Jewish calendar is a lunar-solar calendar, but they occur in the same season.

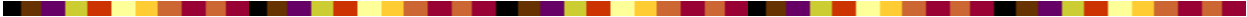
The Sabbath – is considered the most important of the Jewish holidays. It is the only one mentioned in the Ten Commandments. It is a weekly day of rest lasting from Friday night to Saturday evening. A rest day was a radical concept in Biblical times. Although prayers are said on the Sabbath as they are everyday, it is also a day of rest, study, and celebration. Thirty-nine different categories of activity are prohibited on the Sabbath, all of which derive from the kind of work undertaken in the construction of the Holy Ark in the Temple in Jerusalem. A large body of prohibitions has been derived from these categories.

Passover – celebrates the exodus from Egypt and always falls in the spring, often during the Easter holidays. It is celebrated at home with a family gathering called a Seder in which the story of the Exodus is read. Matza is eaten instead of bread during the weeklong observance of Passover, and there are other dietary restrictions.

Other Jewish holidays include Shavuot and Sukkot, both of which commemorate the Exodus from Egypt, Rosh HaShana, the Jewish new year which is celebrated in the fall, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which is a day of fasting, Hanukah, Purim, and TuB'Shevat.

Suggested Reading for more historical and religious background:

- Eban, Abba. *My People: The Story of the Jews*

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- Fast, Howard. *The Jews: Story of a People*
 - Harlow, Rabbi Jules. *Pray Tell: A Hadassah Guide to Jewish Prayer*
 - Mack, Stan. *The Story of the Jews: A 4,000 Year Adventure* (cartoon style, for young adults)
 - Meltzer, Milton. *A History of Jewish Life from Eastern Europe to America*
 - Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History.*
 - Zborowski Mark and Elizabeth Herzog. *Life Is With People: The Culture of the Shtetl*

Web sites that may be of interest include:

- Judaism 101: <http://www.jewfaq.org/index.htm>
- Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_history_timeline
- The Jewish Encyclopedia: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/index.jsp>
- The Jewish Virtual Library: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>



APPENDIX B


Immigration, Conformity, and Anti-Semitism/Racism

I. Immigration:

1. How do students relate to the idea of immigration to the U.S.?
2. Do they favor immigration?
3. Have they ever met an immigrant?
4. What do they think of illegal immigration?
5. Can they name immigrants who have made significant contributions to the U.S.?
6. How have immigrants contributed to the building of America?
7. How does the myth of America as the “golden” land shown in Hollywood movies and advertising conform to the reality?
8. What restrictions should be placed on immigration?
9. Have the events of 9/11 changed our attitudes to immigration?

Suggested Activities:

1. Divide students into two groups. One group will research immigration policies in 1905 and the second in 2005. Have the criterion changed? Why have changes been made? Should further changes be made, and why?
2. Have students individually research a specific immigrant group (Jewish, German, Japanese, etc.) Each student will attempt to answer questions such as: Why did the group immigrate? Did the reasons change over time? How many immigrants from the group live in the U.S. today? Where did the majority settle? What influence did they have in their geographical area? On the U.S. as a whole? List well-known actors, singers, artists, writers, politicians and others who are descended from the immigrant group. What other cultural contributions (i.e. foods, language, cultural icons) have the group made?
3. Have students invite a first generation immigrant to speak to the class. This can be a friend or relative of one of the students. The speaker can be encouraged to bring objects from her country of origin or pictures to show the class. Prepare for the visit by having students study the culture and history of the immigrant group the speaker represents. Have students prepare a list of questions to ask the speaker such as: What made you decide to leave your country? What was the hardest thing about leaving? What experiences did you have on your journey? Where did you enter the U.S? What was the experience like? Are people friendly to you? How did you become (or how are you becoming) an American citizen?



What can you suggest that people do to make immigrants feel more welcome?

4. If centers of immigrant activity operate in your area, students may want to visit to learn more about what these centers do to help immigrants and what their problems are. If no centers exist, students might explore the Internet sites of immigrant organizations.

II. Conformity:

1. How much should we conform to fit into a new environment, whether a new country, town or class?
2. Is conformity a negative or positive trait?

III. Anti-Semitism and Racism*:

1. Why is anti-Semitism still alive today?
2. Does it differ from other forms of racism?
3. How can we combat racism in our daily lives and in our communities?

Suggested Activities:

1. Discuss whether students have ever personally encountered incidents of anti-Semitism or racism.
2. Discuss examples of books they have read or movies they have seen that contain examples of anti-Semitism or racism.
3. Using the Internet, have students bring recent examples of anti-Semitic incidents from the U.S. and Europe. (You may want to monitor their work because it may expose them to racist neo-Nazi Internet sites.)

***Anti-Semitism and Racism**

Anti-Semitism, hostility or prejudice against Jews, has been called “the longest hatred.” It began in the early Christian period, continued in both Christian and Moslem countries during the Middle Ages, culminated during World War II, and continues to the present day. This is a sensitive topic since some students may hold racist attitudes while others may belong to minority groups and be very sensitive to racist slurs.