

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish Connection

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee – Written By Linda S Trapasso

Making and Keeping a Jewish Home

My mom recently moved and I now have a lot of stuff to sort through. In dealing with her move, I realized how different we are in the way we make a home. Yes, I learned a lot from my mom but I also learned from others.



When I set up my home, I had Blu Greenberg's book *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*. (You can go to Amazon and Search on her name – use the link on the [TBA home page](#).) It provided me with all the basics I needed to know about making a Jewish home.

What objects do you think indicate a home is Jewish? Go to [Keeping a Jewish Home](#) and click on the link for Jewish Home Inventory. This is a checklist of Jewish objects found in homes. Surrounding ourselves with these types of objects enhances our home and our Jewishness.



My Jewish Learning has an interesting article on [What Makes a Home Jewish?](#) The author Vanessa Ochs talked with many families and states:

“Within Jewish homes, things, people, and even times of day and seasons of the year and of life interact in a fluid process, through which things make the home Jewish...”

As you visit others' homes during the year, you notice subtle (and not so subtle) differences in home décor and what is of importance. This is true in non-Jewish homes as well, but somehow it's different for Jews. As Ochs states:

“The telephone is a telephone, but when it's being used by a Jew who is checking on a sick friend who lives far away, it is a *klei kodesh*, a holy vessel used in the practice of *bikkur holim*, the commandment to connect to the sick...we have objects that are endowed with meaning, memory, and sacred purposes – they are not changed, but they have the potential to become charged...”

For more examples, read [Ochs' extended article](#).

In contrast to objects, read the article [What is a Jewish Home?](#) This was enjoyable reading and I identified with many of the statements. I found statements like “A Jewish home shares its blessings” and “A Jewish home is not blind to pain” and “A Jewish home provides nourishment and joy to all who participate”. This list made me think about the intangible things that are part of a Jewish home (but not necessarily limited to Jews).

For many Jews, keeping kosher identifies their home as Jewish. Read this short article at [jWeekly.com](#) about keeping a kosher home and this one on [Kashruth: An Interpretation for the 21st Century](#).

So why should we care whether or not we have a “Jewish” home? The Coffee Shop Rabbi has some reasons in her article [Home Sweet Jewish Home](#). The one that I really like is *mikdash me'at* or little sanctuary. She states that the home is the primary worship environment for Jews, which is a powerful idea.

It would be remiss not to mention women in relation to a Jewish home as they have special *mitzvot*. Check out these articles on women and *mitzvot*:



- [Women and Mitzvot](#)
- [Observance of Mitzvot: Custom and Halakah](#)
- [Women and the Fulfillment of Positive Time-Bound Commandments](#)

For a lighthearted look at women and *mitzvot*, read [The Jewish Woman's 10 Commandments](#). This had me laughing and it's hard to pick one, but I really liked “Thou shall never be fully prepared.”

So between the serious nature of making and keeping a Jewish home and laughing at ourselves, I wish you the blessings and opportunities for laughter, joy, and sadness that touch all of us.