

I was at the wall just looking down at the wall watching my cousin getting barmitzvaed. I was shocked at the pure traditions. The women were separated by a wall. When they threw candy they had to throw it over. When I asked my dad about it he said "It's a tradition". They were practicing orthodox Judaism. Then in the middle of it, he read from the Torah, the most holy Jewish book. After the bar mitzvah when me and my family were going to the air BnB be rented I started to wonder, did I fit in this bracket of Judaism.

On this trip to Israel visiting my cousins who lived there. I thought it was just a vacation and a time just to watch my cousin's (Tevel) bar mitzvah. Soon it changed my mind of what I thought of myself. Who am I? Am I Jewish? When we returned back to America my dad put us into a secular humanistic Sunday school called folk shool. There I learned about all of the different types of Judaism and how each one celebrated it. I also learned many people believed Judaism not just to be a religion but a culture.

Let me elaborate about the folkshool I mentioned earlier. When I was there I learned about my identity. I knew I was Jewish but I did not what type I was. I learned all about the types of Judaism. Orthodox, the type of Judaism that follows the Torah to the letter and believes in god. There is reformest witch preaches the renovation of some of their beliefs to fit the modern-day structure. And finally, the one I will spend the most time on is Humanistic Judaism. This brach offers a non-religious form of Judaism. I went over all of these branches very quickly but that is just the basses of them.

When my sister was 12 she had her bar mitzvah. Normally you would read from the Torah but my Hebrew school decided to do something different, they said to do a presentation on your identity as a jew. People would do a topic like the history of Jewish dancing or how the Jewish people played a role in the civil war. My sister decided to to the history of Jewish food. This might seem like a very nich topic but It proved very consequential to figuring out who I am.

All of these events lead me to believe that I was secular humanistic. During the pandemic, I had a lot of time to think about who I was. I believe that I am in fact secular humanistic. I do not believe in god, but I do believe that Judaism is a culture and not just a religion. The journey I took on to figure out who I was, was long and honestly not like a straight forward quest you see in video games but more like slowly finding small puzzle pieces and putting them together one bit at a time. The puzzle I went through helped with my self-identity and made me who I am today. Thank you for reading.