[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Redirect](/wiki/Template:Redirect) [Template:Pp-protected](/wiki/Template:Pp-protected) [Template:Infobox ethnic group](/wiki/Template:Infobox_ethnic_group) [Template:Jews and Judaism sidebar](/wiki/Template:Jews_and_Judaism_sidebar)

The **Jews** ([Template:IPA-en](/wiki/Template:IPA-en);[[1]](#cite_note-1) [Template:Lang-he-n](/wiki/Template:Lang-he-n) [ISO 259-3](/wiki/ISO_259-3) [Template:Transl](/wiki/Template:Transl), Israeli pronunciation [Template:IPA-he](/wiki/Template:IPA-he)), also known as the **Jewish people**, are an [ethnoreligious group](/wiki/Ethnoreligious_group)[[2]](#cite_note-2) originating from the [Israelites](/wiki/Israelite), or [Hebrews](/wiki/Hebrews), of the [Ancient Near East](/wiki/Ancient_Near_East).[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4) Jewish [ethnicity](/wiki/Ethnic_group), [nationhood](/wiki/Nationhood) and [religion](/wiki/Religion) are strongly interrelated, as [Judaism](/wiki/Judaism) is the [traditional faith](/wiki/Ethnic_religion) of the Jewish nation,[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7) while its observance varies from strict observance to complete nonobservance.

Jews [originated](/wiki/Ethnogenesis) as a national and religious group in the Middle East during the second millennium BCE,[[8]](#cite_note-8) in the part of the [Levant](/wiki/Levant) known as the [Land of Israel](/wiki/Land_of_Israel).[[9]](#cite_note-9) The [Merneptah Stele](/wiki/Merneptah_Stele) appears to confirm the existence of a people of Israel, associated with the god [El](/wiki/El_(deity)),[[10]](#cite_note-10) somewhere in [Canaan](/wiki/Canaan) as far back as the 13th century BCE (Late Bronze Age).[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) The Israelites, as an outgrowth of the Canaanite population,[[13]](#cite_note-13) consolidated their hold with the emergence of the [Kingdom of Israel](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(Samaria)), and the [Kingdom of Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah). Some consider that these Canaanite sedentary Israelites melded with incoming nomadic groups known as 'Hebrews'.[[14]](#cite_note-14) Though few sources in the [Bible](/wiki/Tanakh) mention the exilic periods in detail,[[15]](#cite_note-15) the experience of [diaspora](/wiki/Jewish_diaspora) life, from the [Ancient Egyptian rule over the Levant](/wiki/New_Kingdom_of_Egypt), to [Assyrian Captivity and Exile](/wiki/Assyrian_captivity), to [Babylonian Captivity and Exile](/wiki/Babylonian_captivity), to [Seleucid Imperial rule](/wiki/Seleucid_Empire), to the [Roman occupation](/wiki/Judea_(Roman_province)), and the historical relations between Israelites and the homeland, became a major feature of Jewish history, identity and memory.[[16]](#cite_note-16)[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19)[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25) The worldwide [Jewish population](/wiki/Jewish_population) reached a peak of 16.7 million prior to [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II),[[26]](#cite_note-26) but approximately 6 million Jews were systematically murdered[[27]](#cite_note-27)[[28]](#cite_note-28) during [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust). Since then the population has slowly risen again, and [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) was estimated at 14.3 million by the [Berman Jewish DataBank](/wiki/Berman_Jewish_DataBank),[[29]](#cite_note-29) or less than 0.2% of the total world population (roughly one in every 514 people).[[30]](#cite_note-30) According to the report, about 43% of all Jews reside in [Israel](/wiki/Israel) (6.2 million), and 40% in the [United States](/wiki/United_States) (5.7 million), with most of the remainder living in [Europe](/wiki/Europe) (1.4 million) and [Canada](/wiki/Canada) (0.4 million).[[29]](#cite_note-29) These numbers include all those who self-identified as Jews in a socio-demographic study or were identified as such by a respondent in the same household.[[31]](#cite_note-31) The exact world Jewish population, however, is difficult to measure. In addition to issues with census methodology, disputes among proponents of [*halakhic*](/wiki/Halakha), secular, political, and ancestral identification factors regarding [who is a Jew](/wiki/Who_is_a_Jew?) may affect the figure considerably depending on the source.[[32]](#cite_note-32) Israel is the only country where Jews form a majority of the population. The modern [State of Israel](/wiki/Israel) was established as a [Jewish state](/wiki/Jewish_state) and defines itself as such in its [Declaration of Independence](/wiki/Israeli_Declaration_of_Independence) and [Basic Laws](/wiki/Basic_Laws_of_Israel). Its [Law of Return](/wiki/Law_of_Return) grants the right of citizenship to any Jew who requests it.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Despite their small percentage of the world's population, Jews have significantly influenced and contributed to [human progress](/wiki/Progress_(history)) in many fields, including [philosophy](/wiki/Jewish_philosophy),[[34]](#cite_note-34) [ethics](/wiki/Jewish_ethics),[[35]](#cite_note-35) [literature](/wiki/Jewish_literature), [business](/wiki/Jewish_culture#Economic_activity), [fine arts and architecture](/wiki/Jewish_art), [music](/wiki/Jewish_culture#Music), [theatre](/wiki/Jewish_culture#Theatre)[[36]](#cite_note-36) and [cinema](/wiki/Jewish_culture#cinema), [medicine](/wiki/Jewish_medicine),[[37]](#cite_note-37)[[38]](#cite_note-38) as well as [science and technology](/wiki/Jewish_culture#Science_and_technology), both historically and in modern times.

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## Name and etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The English word *Jew* continues [Middle English](/wiki/Middle_English) [*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang). These terms derive from [Old French](/wiki/Old_French) [*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang), earlier [*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang), which had [elided](/wiki/Elision) (dropped) the letter "d" from the [Medieval Latin](/wiki/Medieval_Latin) *Iudaeus*, which, like the [New Testament](/wiki/New_Testament) [Greek](/wiki/Greek_language) term [Ioudaios](/wiki/Ioudaios), meant both *Jews* and *Judeans / "of* [*Judea*](/wiki/Judea)*"*.[[39]](#cite_note-39) The Greek term was originally a loan from [Aramaic](/wiki/Middle_Aramaic) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl), corresponding to [Template:Lang-he-n](/wiki/Template:Lang-he-n), *Yehudi* (sg.); [Template:Hebrew](/wiki/Template:Hebrew), *Yehudim* ([pl.](/wiki/Plural)), in origin the term for a member of the [tribe of Judah](/wiki/Tribe_of_Judah) or the people of the [kingdom of Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah). According to the [Hebrew Bible](/wiki/Hebrew_Bible), the name of both the tribe and kingdom derive from [Judah](/wiki/Judah_(Bible)), the fourth son of [Jacob](/wiki/Jacob).[[40]](#cite_note-40) The Hebrew word for Jew, [Template:Hebrew](/wiki/Template:Hebrew) [ISO 259-3](/wiki/ISO_259-3) Yhudi, is pronounced [Template:IPA-he](/wiki/Template:IPA-he), with the stress on the final syllable, in Israeli Hebrew, in its basic form.<ref name=EJ253>[Template:Cite encyclopedia](/wiki/Template:Cite_encyclopedia)</ref> The [Ladino](/wiki/Ladino_language) name is [Template:Hebrew](/wiki/Template:Hebrew), *Djudio* (sg.); [Template:Hebrew](/wiki/Template:Hebrew), *Djudios* (pl.); [Yiddish](/wiki/Yiddish_language): [Template:Hebrew](/wiki/Template:Hebrew) *Yid* (sg.); [Template:Hebrew](/wiki/Template:Hebrew), *Yidn* (pl.).

The etymological equivalent is in use in other languages, e.g., يَهُودِيّ *yahūdī* (sg.), *al-yahūd* (pl.), and بَنُو اِسرَائِيل *banū isrāʼīl* in [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic), "Jude" in [German](/wiki/German_language), "judeu" in [Portuguese](/wiki/Portuguese_language), "juif" in [French](/wiki/French_language), "jøde" in [Danish](/wiki/Danish_language) and [Norwegian](/wiki/Norwegian_language), "judío" in [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language), "jood" in [Dutch](/wiki/Dutch_language), etc., but derivations of the word "Hebrew" are also in use to describe a Jew, e.g., in [Italian](/wiki/Italian_language) (*Ebreo*), in [Persian](/wiki/Persian_language) ("Ebri/Ebrani" ([Template:Lang-fa](/wiki/Template:Lang-fa))) and [Russian](/wiki/Russian_language) (*Еврей, Yevrey*).[[41]](#cite_note-41) The German word "Jude" is pronounced [Template:IPA-de](/wiki/Template:IPA-de), the corresponding [adjective](/wiki/Adjective) "jüdisch" [Template:IPA-de](/wiki/Template:IPA-de) (Jewish) is the origin of the word "Yiddish".[[42]](#cite_note-42) (See [Jewish ethnonyms](/wiki/Jewish_ethnonyms) for a full overview.)

According to [*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*](/wiki/The_American_Heritage_Dictionary_of_the_English_Language), Fourth Edition (2000):

It is widely recognized that the attributive use of the noun *Jew*, in phrases such as *Jew lawyer* or *Jew ethics*, is both [vulgar](/wiki/Vulgarism) and highly offensive. In such contexts *Jewish* is the only acceptable possibility. Some people, however, have become so wary of this construction that they have extended the stigma to any use of *Jew* as a noun, a practice that carries risks of its own. In a sentence such as *There are now several Jews on the council*, which is unobjectionable, the substitution of a circumlocution like *Jewish people* or *persons of Jewish background* may in itself cause offense for seeming to imply that Jew has a negative connotation when used as a noun.[[43]](#cite_note-43)

## Origins[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [180px|thumbnail|right|Map of](/wiki/File:A_map_of_Canaan_(8343807206).jpg) [Canaan](/wiki/Canaan) According to the [Hebrew Bible](/wiki/Tanakh) narrative, Jewish ancestry is traced back to the [Biblical patriarchs](/wiki/Patriarchs_(Bible)) such as [Abraham](/wiki/Abraham), [Isaac](/wiki/Isaac) and [Jacob](/wiki/Jacob), and the Biblical matriarchs [Sarah](/wiki/Sarah), [Rebecca](/wiki/Rebecca), [Leah](/wiki/Leah), and [Rachel](/wiki/Rachel), who lived in [Canaan](/wiki/Canaan) around the 18th century BCE. Jacob and his family migrated to [Ancient Egypt](/wiki/Ancient_Egypt) after being invited to live with Jacob's son [Joseph](/wiki/Joseph_(son_of_Jacob)) by the [Pharaoh](/wiki/Pharaohs_in_the_Bible) himself. The patriarchs' descendants were later enslaved until the [Exodus](/wiki/The_Exodus) led by [Moses](/wiki/Moses), traditionally dated to the 13th century BCE, after which the Israelites conquered Canaan.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Modern [archaeology](/wiki/Archaeology) has largely discarded the historicity of the Patriarchs and of the Exodus story,[[44]](#cite_note-44) with it being reframed as constituting the [Israelites'](/wiki/Israelites) inspiring [national myth](/wiki/National_myth) narrative. The Israelites and their culture, according to the modern archaeological account, did not overtake the region by force, but instead branched out of the [Canaanite peoples](/wiki/Canaanite_languages) and culture through the development of a distinct [monolatristic](/wiki/Monolatrism) — and later [monotheistic](/wiki/Monotheism) — religion centered on [Yahweh](/wiki/Yahweh),[[45]](#cite_note-45)[[46]](#cite_note-46)[[47]](#cite_note-47) one of the [Ancient Canaanite deities](/wiki/Ancient_Canaanite_religion#Beliefs). The growth of Yahweh-centric belief, along with a number of cultic practices, gradually gave rise to a distinct Israelite [ethnic group](/wiki/Ethnic_group), setting them apart from other Canaanites. The Canaanites themselves are archeologically attested in the [Middle Bronze Age](/wiki/Bronze_Age),[[48]](#cite_note-48) while the [Hebrew language](/wiki/Hebrew_language) is the last extant member of the [Canaanite languages](/wiki/Canaanite_languages). In the [Iron Age](/wiki/Iron_Age) I period (1200–1000 BCE) Israelite culture was largely Canaanite in nature.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Although the Israelites were divided into [Twelve Tribes](/wiki/Twelve_Tribes), the Jews (being one offshoot of the Israelites, another being the [Samaritans](/wiki/Samaritans)) are traditionally said to descend mostly from the Israelite tribes of [Judah](/wiki/Tribe_of_Judah) (from where the Jews derive their ethnonym) and [Benjamin](/wiki/Tribe_of_Benjamin), and partially from the tribe of [Levi](/wiki/Tribe_of_Levi), who had together formed the ancient [Kingdom of Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah),[[49]](#cite_note-49) and the remnants of the northern [Kingdom of Israel](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(Samaria)) who migrated to the Kingdom of Judah and assimilated after the 720s BCE, when the Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the [Neo-Assyrian Empire](/wiki/Neo-Assyrian_Empire).[[50]](#cite_note-50) Israelites enjoyed political independence twice in [ancient history](/wiki/Ancient_history), first during the periods of the [Biblical judges](/wiki/Biblical_judges) followed by the [United Monarchy](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(united_monarchy)).[Template:Disputed inline](/wiki/Template:Disputed_inline) After the fall of the United Monarchy the land was divided into [Israel](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(Samaria)) and [Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah). The term Jew originated from the Roman "Judean" and denoted someone from the southern kingdom of Judah.[[51]](#cite_note-51) The shift of [ethnonym](/wiki/Ethnonym) from "Israelites" to "Jews" (inhabitant of Judah), although not contained in the [Torah](/wiki/Torah), is made explicit in the [Book of Esther](/wiki/Book_of_Esther) (4th century BCE),[[52]](#cite_note-52) a book in the [Ketuvim](/wiki/Ketuvim), the third section of the Jewish [Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh). In 587 BC [Nebuchadnezzar II](/wiki/Nebuchadnezzar_II), King of the [Neo-Babylonian Empire](/wiki/Neo-Babylonian_Empire), [besieged Jerusalem](/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(587_BC)), destroyed the [First Temple](/wiki/Solomon's_Temple), and deported the most prominent citizens of Judah.[[53]](#cite_note-53) In 586 BC, Judah itself ceased to be an independent kingdom, and its remaining Jews were left [stateless](/wiki/Stateless_nation). The [Babylonian exile](/wiki/Babylonian_exile) ended in 539 BCE when the [Achaemenid Empire](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire) conquered Babylon and [Cyrus the Great](/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great) allowed the exiled Jews to return to [Yehud](/wiki/Yehud_Medinata) and rebuild their Temple. The [Second Temple](/wiki/Second_Temple) was completed in 515 BCE. Yehud province was a peaceful part of the Achaemenid Empire until the fall of the Empire in c. 333 BCE to [Alexander the Great](/wiki/Alexander_the_Great). Jews were also politically independent during the [Hasmonean dynasty](/wiki/Hasmonean_dynasty) spanning from 140 to 37 BCE and to some degree under the [Herodian dynasty](/wiki/Herodian_dynasty) from 37 BCE to 6 CE. Since the [destruction](/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(AD_70)) of the [Second Temple](/wiki/Second_Temple) in 70 CE, most Jews have lived in [diaspora](/wiki/Jewish_diaspora).[[54]](#cite_note-54) As an [ethnic minority](/wiki/Minority_group#Racial_or_ethnic_minorities) in every country in which they live (except [Israel](/wiki/Israel)), they have frequently experienced [persecution](/wiki/Persecution_of_Jews) throughout history, resulting in a population that has fluctuated both in numbers and distribution over the centuries.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

[Genetic studies on Jews](/wiki/Genetic_studies_on_Jews) show that most Jews worldwide bear a common genetic heritage which originates in the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East), and that they bear their strongest resemblance to the peoples of the [Fertile Crescent](/wiki/Fertile_Crescent).<ref name=WhoAreTheJews>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Natural History 102:11 (November 1993): 12-19.</ref>[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) The genetic composition of different Jewish groups shows that Jews share a common genetic pool dating back 4,000 years, as a marker of their common ancestral origin. Despite their long-term separation, Jews maintained a common culture, tradition, and language, while also forming unique diasporic identities, each as authentically Jewish as the next.[[57]](#cite_note-57) in [North Africa](/wiki/North_Africa) and the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East),[[63]](#cite_note-63) [India](/wiki/Indian_Jews),[[64]](#cite_note-64) [China](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_China),[[65]](#cite_note-65) or the contemporary [United States](/wiki/American_Jews)[[66]](#cite_note-66) and [Israel](/wiki/Israel),[[67]](#cite_note-67) cultural phenomena have developed that are in some sense characteristically Jewish without being at all specifically religious. Some factors in this come from within Judaism, others from the interaction of Jews or specific communities of Jews with their surroundings, others from the inner social and cultural dynamics of the community, as opposed to from the religion itself. This phenomenon has led to considerably different Jewish cultures unique to their own communities.[[68]](#cite_note-68)

## Babylon and Rome[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

After the destruction of the Second Temple Judaism lost much of its sectarian nature. Nevertheless, a significant [Hellenized Diaspora](/wiki/Hellenistic_Judaism) remained, centered in [Alexandria](/wiki/Alexandria), at the time the largest urban Jewish community in the world. Hellenism was a force not just in the Diaspora but also in the Land of Israel over a long period of time. Generally, scholars view Rabbinic Judaism as having been meaningfully influenced by Hellenism.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Without a Temple, Greek speaking Jews no longer looked to Jerusalem in the way they had before. Judaism separated into a linguistically Greek and a Hebrew / Aramaic sphere.[[69]](#cite_note-69)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) The theology and religious texts of each community were distinctively different.[[69]](#cite_note-69)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) Hellenized Judaism never developed yeshivas to study the Oral Law. Rabbinic Judaism (centered in the Land of Israel and Babylon) almost entirely ignores the Hellenized Diaspora in its writings.[[69]](#cite_note-69)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) Hellenized Judaism eventually disappeared as its practitioners assimilated into Greco-Roman culture, leaving a strong Rabbinic eastern Diaspora with large centers of learning in Babylon.[[69]](#cite_note-69)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)

By the first century, the Jewish community in [Babylonia](/wiki/Babylonia), to which Jews migrated after the Babylonian conquest as well as after the [Bar Kokhba revolt](/wiki/Bar_Kokhba_revolt) in 135 CE, already held a speedily growing[[70]](#cite_note-70) population of an estimated one million Jews, which increased to an estimated two million[[71]](#cite_note-71) between the years 200 CE and 500 CE, both by natural growth and by immigration of more Jews from the [Land of Israel](/wiki/Land_of_Israel), making up about one-sixth of the world Jewish population at that era.[[71]](#cite_note-71) The 13th-century author [Bar Hebraeus](/wiki/Bar_Hebraeus) gave a figure of 6,944,000 Jews in the Roman world [Salo Wittmayer Baron](/wiki/Salo_Wittmayer_Baron) considered the figure convincing.[[72]](#cite_note-72) The figure of seven million within and one million outside the Roman world in the mid-first century became widely accepted, including by [Louis Feldman](/wiki/Louis_Feldman). However, contemporary scholars now accept that Bar Hebraeus based his figure on a census of total Roman citizens. The figure of 6,944,000 being recorded in [Eusebius' Chronicon](/wiki/Chronicon_(Eusebius)).[[73]](#cite_note-73)[[74]](#cite_note-74) Louis Feldman, previously an active supporter of the figure, now states that he and Baron were mistaken.[[75]](#cite_note-75)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) Feldman's views on active Jewish missionizing have also changed. While viewing classical Judaism as being receptive to converts, especially from the second century BCE through the first century CE, he points to a lack of either missionizing tracts or records of the names of rabbis who sought converts, as evidence for the lack of active Jewish missionizing.[[75]](#cite_note-75)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) Feldman maintains that conversion to Judaism was common and the Jewish population was large both within the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora.[[75]](#cite_note-75)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) Other historians believe that conversion during the Roman era was limited in number and did not account for much of the Jewish population growth, due to various factors such as the illegality of male conversion to Judaism in the Roman world from the mid-second century. Another factor that made conversion difficult in the Roman world was the halakhic requirement of [circumcision](/wiki/Brit_milah), a requirement that proselytizing [Christianity quickly dropped](/wiki/Circumcision_controversy_in_early_Christianity). The [Fiscus Judaicus](/wiki/Fiscus_Judaicus), a tax imposed on Jews in 70 CE and relaxed to exclude [Christians](/wiki/Christian) in 96 CE, also limited Judaism's appeal.[[76]](#cite_note-76)

## Who is a Jew?[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Judaism](/wiki/Judaism) shares some of the characteristics of a [nation](/wiki/Nation), an [ethnicity](/wiki/Ethnicity),[[2]](#cite_note-2) a [religion](/wiki/Religion), and a [culture](/wiki/Culture), making the definition of who is a Jew vary slightly depending on whether a religious or national approach to identity is used.[[77]](#cite_note-77)[[78]](#cite_note-78) Generally, in modern secular usage Jews include three groups: people who were born to a Jewish family regardless of whether or not they follow the religion, those who have some Jewish ancestral background or lineage (sometimes including those who do not have strictly [matrilineal descent](/wiki/Matrilineality_in_Judaism)), and people without any Jewish ancestral background or lineage who have formally [converted to Judaism](/wiki/Conversion_to_Judaism) and therefore are followers of the religion.[[79]](#cite_note-79) Historical definitions of [Jewish identity](/wiki/Jewish_identity) have traditionally been based on [*halakhic*](/wiki/Halakha) definitions of matrilineal descent, and halakhic conversions. Historical definitions of who is a Jew date back to the codification of the [Oral Torah](/wiki/Oral_Torah) into the [Babylonian Talmud](/wiki/Talmud), around 200 [CE](/wiki/Common_Era). Interpretations of sections of the Tanakh, such as [Deuteronomy](/wiki/Book_of_Deuteronomy) 7:1–5, by Jewish sages, are used as a warning against [intermarriage](/wiki/Interfaith_marriage_in_Judaism) between Jews and [Canaanites](/wiki/Canaan#Canaan_in_the_Bible) because "[the non-Jewish husband] will cause your child to turn away from Me and they will worship the gods (i.e., idols) of others." [Template:Bibleref2](/wiki/Template:Bibleref2) says that the son in a marriage between a Hebrew woman and an [Egyptian](/wiki/Egyptians) man is "of the community of Israel." This is complemented by [Template:Bibleref2](/wiki/Template:Bibleref2), where Israelites returning from Babylon vow to put aside their [gentile](/wiki/Gentile) wives and their children.[[80]](#cite_note-80)[[81]](#cite_note-81) Since the anti-religious [*Haskalah*](/wiki/Haskalah) movement of the late 18th and 19th centuries, *halakhic* interpretations of Jewish identity have been challenged.[[82]](#cite_note-82) According to historian [Shaye J. D. Cohen](/wiki/Shaye_J._D._Cohen), the status of the offspring of mixed marriages was determined [patrilineally](/wiki/Patrilineality) in the Bible. He brings two likely explanations for the change in [Mishnaic](/wiki/Mishnah) times: first, the Mishnah may have been applying the same logic to mixed marriages as it had applied to other mixtures ([*Kil'ayim*](/wiki/Kil'ayim_(prohibition))). Thus, a mixed marriage is forbidden as is the union of a [horse](/wiki/Horse) and a [donkey](/wiki/Donkey), and in both unions the offspring are judged matrilineally.[[83]](#cite_note-83) Second, the [Tannaim](/wiki/Tannaim) may have been influenced by [Roman law](/wiki/Roman_law), which dictated that when a parent could not contract a legal marriage, [offspring would follow the mother](/wiki/Mater_semper_certa_est).[[83]](#cite_note-83)

## Ethnic divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|left|](/wiki/File:Gottlieb-Jews_Praying_in_the_Synagogue_on_Yom_Kippur.jpg)[Ashkenazi Jews](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) of late 19th century [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe) portrayed in [*Jews Praying in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur*](/wiki/Jews_Praying_in_the_Synagogue_on_Yom_Kippur) (1878), by [Maurycy Gottlieb](/wiki/Maurycy_Gottlieb) Within the world's [Jewish population](/wiki/Jewish_population) there are distinct ethnic divisions, most of which are primarily the result of geographic branching from an originating [Israelite](/wiki/Israelite) population, and subsequent independent evolutions. An array of Jewish communities was established by Jewish settlers in various places around the [Old World](/wiki/Old_World), often at great distances from one another, resulting in effective and often long-term isolation. During the [millennia](/wiki/Millennia) of the [Jewish diaspora](/wiki/Jewish_diaspora) the communities would develop under the influence of their local environments: [political](/wiki/Politics), [cultural](/wiki/Culture), [natural](/wiki/Nature), and populational. Today, manifestations of these differences among the Jews can be observed in [Jewish cultural expressions](/wiki/Jewish_culture) of each community, including [Jewish linguistic diversity](/wiki/Jewish_languages), culinary preferences, liturgical practices, religious interpretations, as well as degrees and sources of [genetic admixture](/wiki/Genetic_admixture).[[84]](#cite_note-84) [thumb|150px|](/wiki/File:1900_photo_of_a_Sephardi_couple_from_Sarajevo.png)[Sephardi](/wiki/Sephardi) Jewish couple from [Sarajevo](/wiki/Sarajevo) in traditional clothing. Photo taken in 1900. Jews are often identified as belonging to one of two major groups: the [*Ashkenazim*](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) and the [*Sephardim*](/wiki/Sephardi_Jews). Ashkenazim, or "Germanics" ([Ashkenaz](/wiki/Ashkenaz) meaning "[Germany](/wiki/Germany)" in Hebrew), are so named denoting their [German Jewish](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Germany) cultural and geographical origins, while Sephardim, or "[Hispanics](/wiki/Hispanics)" ([Sefarad](/wiki/Sefarad) meaning "[Spain](/wiki/Spain)/[Hispania](/wiki/Hispania)" or "[Iberia](/wiki/Iberian_peninsula)" in Hebrew), are so named denoting their Spanish/Portuguese Jewish cultural and geographic origins. The more common term in [Israel](/wiki/Israel) for many of those broadly called Sephardim, is [*Mizrahim*](/wiki/Mizrahi_Jews) (lit. "Easterners", Mizrach being "East" in Hebrew), that is, in reference to the diverse collection of Middle Eastern and North African Jews who are often, as a group, referred to collectively as *Sephardim* (together with Sephardim proper) for liturgical reasons, although Mizrahi Jewish groups and Sephardi Jews proper are ethnically distinct.[[85]](#cite_note-85) Smaller groups include, but are not restricted to, [Indian Jews](/wiki/Jews_in_India) such as the [Bene Israel](/wiki/Bene_Israel), [Bnei Menashe](/wiki/Bnei_Menashe), [Cochin Jews](/wiki/Cochin_Jews), and [Bene Ephraim](/wiki/Bene_Ephraim); the [Romaniotes](/wiki/Romaniote_Jews) of Greece; the [Italian Jews](/wiki/Italian_rite_Jews) ("Italkim" or "Bené Roma"); the [Teimanim](/wiki/Teimanim) from [Yemen](/wiki/Yemen); various [African Jews](/wiki/Jews_and_Judaism_in_Africa), including most numerously the [Beta Israel](/wiki/Beta_Israel) of [Ethiopia](/wiki/Ethiopia); and [Chinese Jews](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_China), most notably the [Kaifeng Jews](/wiki/Kaifeng_Jews), as well as various other distinct but now almost extinct communities.<ref name=EJ571>[Template:Cite encyclopedia](/wiki/Template:Cite_encyclopedia)</ref>

The divisions between all these groups are approximate and their boundaries are not always clear. The Mizrahim for example, are a heterogeneous collection of [North African](/wiki/North_Africa), [Central Asian](/wiki/Central_Asia), [Caucasian](/wiki/Caucasus_(geographic_region)), and Middle Eastern Jewish communities that are no closer related to each other than they are to any of the earlier mentioned Jewish groups. In modern usage, however, the Mizrahim are sometimes termed *Sephardi* due to similar styles of liturgy, despite independent development from Sephardim proper. Thus, among Mizrahim there are [Egyptian Jews](/wiki/Egyptian_Jews), [Iraqi Jews](/wiki/Iraqi_Jews), [Lebanese Jews](/wiki/Lebanese_Jews), [Kurdish Jews](/wiki/Kurdish_Jews), [Libyan Jews](/wiki/Libyan_Jews), [Syrian Jews](/wiki/Syrian_Jews), [Bukharian Jews](/wiki/Bukharian_Jews), [Mountain Jews](/wiki/Mountain_Jews), [Georgian Jews](/wiki/Georgian_Jews), [Iranian Jews](/wiki/Iranian_Jews) and various others. The [Teimanim](/wiki/Teimanim) from [Yemen](/wiki/Yemen) are sometimes included, although their style of liturgy is unique and they differ in respect to the admixture found among them to that found in Mizrahim. In addition, there is a differentiation made between Sephardi migrants who established themselves in the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East) and [North Africa](/wiki/North_Africa) after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal in the 1490s and the pre-existing Jewish communities in those regions.[[86]](#cite_note-86)[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Yemenite_Elder_Blowing_Shofat,_February_1,_1949.jpg)[Yemenite](/wiki/Yemenite_Jews) Jew blows [shofar](/wiki/Shofar), 1947

Ashkenazi Jews represent the bulk of modern Jewry, with at least 70% of Jews worldwide (and up to 90% prior to [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II) and [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust)). As a result of their emigration from Europe, Ashkenazim also represent the overwhelming majority of Jews in the [New World](/wiki/New_World) continents, in countries such as the [United States](/wiki/United_States), [Canada](/wiki/Canada), [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina), [Australia](/wiki/Australia), and [Brazil](/wiki/Brazil). In [France](/wiki/France), the immigration of Jews from [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria) (Sephardim) has led them to outnumber the Ashkenazim.<ref name=EJ572>[Template:Cite encyclopedia](/wiki/Template:Cite_encyclopedia)</ref> Only in [Israel](/wiki/Israel) is the Jewish population representative of all groups, a [melting pot](/wiki/Melting_pot) independent of each group's proportion within the overall world Jewish population.[[87]](#cite_note-87)

## Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|A page from](/wiki/File:Page_from_Yiddish-Hebrew-Latin-German_dictionary_by_Elijah_Levita.jpg) [Elia Levita's](/wiki/Elia_Levita) (right to left) [Yiddish](/wiki/Yiddish_language)-[Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrew_language)-[Latin](/wiki/Latin_language)-[German](/wiki/German_language) dictionary (1542) contains a list of nations, including an entry for Jew: [Template:Lang-he](/wiki/Template:Lang-he), [Template:Lang-yi](/wiki/Template:Lang-yi), [Template:Lang-de](/wiki/Template:Lang-de), [Template:Lang-la](/wiki/Template:Lang-la) [Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrew_language) is the [liturgical language](/wiki/Liturgical_language) of Judaism (termed *lashon ha-kodesh*, "the holy tongue"), the language in which most of the Hebrew scriptures ([Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh)) were composed, and the daily speech of the Jewish people for centuries. By the 5th century BCE, [Aramaic](/wiki/Aramaic_language), a closely related tongue, joined Hebrew as the spoken language in [Judea](/wiki/Judea).<ref name=Grintz>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref> By the 3rd century BCE, some Jews of the diaspora were speaking [Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek).[[88]](#cite_note-88) Others, such as in the Jewish communities of Babylonia, were speaking Hebrew and Aramaic, the languages of the [Babylonian Talmud](/wiki/Talmud#Babylonian_Talmud). These languages were also used by the Jews of Israel at that time.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

For centuries, Jews worldwide have spoken the local or dominant languages of the regions they migrated to, often developing distinctive [dialectal](/wiki/Dialect) forms or branches that became independent languages. [Yiddish](/wiki/Yiddish_language) is the Judæo-German language developed by [Ashkenazi Jews](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) who migrated to [Central Europe](/wiki/Central_Europe). [Ladino](/wiki/Judaeo-Spanish) is the Judæo-Spanish language developed by [Sephardic](/wiki/Sephardi_Jews) Jews who migrated to the [Iberian peninsula](/wiki/Iberian_peninsula). Due to many factors, including the impact of [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust) on European Jewry, the [Jewish exodus from Arab and Muslim countries](/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_and_Muslim_countries), and widespread emigration from other Jewish communities around the world, ancient and distinct [Jewish languages](/wiki/Jewish_languages) of several communities, including [Judæo-Georgian](/wiki/Judaeo-Georgian), [Judæo-Arabic](/wiki/Judeo-Arabic_languages), [Judæo-Berber](/wiki/Judeo-Berber_language), [Krymchak](/wiki/Krymchak_language), [Judæo-Malayalam](/wiki/Judæo-Malayalam) and many others, have largely fallen out of use.[[89]](#cite_note-89) For over sixteen centuries Hebrew was used almost exclusively as a liturgical language, and as the language in which most books had been written on Judaism, with a few speaking only Hebrew on the [Sabbath](/wiki/Shabbat).[[90]](#cite_note-90) Hebrew was revived as a spoken language by [Eliezer ben Yehuda](/wiki/Eliezer_ben_Yehuda), who arrived in [Palestine](/wiki/Palestine_(region)) in 1881. It had not been used as a [mother tongue](/wiki/Mother_tongue) since [Tannaic](/wiki/Tannaim) times.[[91]](#cite_note-91) [Modern Hebrew](/wiki/Modern_Hebrew) is now one of the two official languages of the State of Israel along with [Modern Standard Arabic](/wiki/Modern_Standard_Arabic).[[92]](#cite_note-92) Despite efforts to revive Hebrew as the national language of the Jewish people, knowledge of the language is not commonly possessed by Jews worldwide and [English](/wiki/English_language) has emerged as the [lingua franca](/wiki/Lingua_franca) of the Jewish diaspora.[[93]](#cite_note-93)[[94]](#cite_note-94)[[95]](#cite_note-95)[[96]](#cite_note-96)[[97]](#cite_note-97) Although many Jews once had sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to study the classic literature, and [Jewish languages](/wiki/Jewish_languages) like [Yiddish](/wiki/Yiddish) and [Ladino](/wiki/Judaeo-Spanish) were commonly used as recently as the early 20th century, most Jews lack such knowledge today and English has by and large superseded most Jewish vernaculars. The three most commonly spoken languages among Jews today are Hebrew, English, and [Russian](/wiki/Russian_language). Some [Romance languages](/wiki/Romance_languages), particularly [French](/wiki/French_language) and [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language), are also widely used.[[89]](#cite_note-89) Yiddish has been spoken by more Jews in history than any other language,[[98]](#cite_note-98) but it is far less used today following [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust) and the adoption of [Modern Hebrew](/wiki/Modern_Hebrew) by the [Zionist movement](/wiki/Zionism) and the [State of Israel](/wiki/Israel). In some places, the mother language of the Jewish community differs from that of the general population or the dominant group. For example, in [Quebec](/wiki/Quebec), the Ashkenazic majority has adopted English, while the Sephardic minority uses French as its primary language.[[99]](#cite_note-99)[[100]](#cite_note-100)[[101]](#cite_note-101)[[102]](#cite_note-102) Similarly, [South African Jews](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_South_Africa) adopted English rather than [Afrikaans](/wiki/Afrikaans).[[103]](#cite_note-103) Due to both Czarist and Soviet policies,[[104]](#cite_note-104)[[105]](#cite_note-105) Russian has superseded Yiddish as the language of [Russian Jews](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Russia), but these policies have also affected neighboring communities.[[106]](#cite_note-106) Today, Russian is the first language for many Jewish communities in a number of [Post-Soviet states](/wiki/Post-Soviet_states), such as [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine)[[107]](#cite_note-107)[[108]](#cite_note-108)[[109]](#cite_note-109)[[110]](#cite_note-110) and [Uzbekistan](/wiki/Uzbekistan),[[111]](#cite_note-111) as well as for Ashkenazic Jews in [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan),[[112]](#cite_note-112) Georgia,[[113]](#cite_note-113) and [Tajikistan](/wiki/Tajikistan).[[114]](#cite_note-114)[[115]](#cite_note-115) Although communities in [North Africa](/wiki/North_Africa) today are small and dwindling, Jews there had shifted from a multilingual group to a monolingual one (or nearly so), speaking French in [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria),[[116]](#cite_note-116) [Morocco](/wiki/Morocco),[[112]](#cite_note-112) and the city of [Tunis](/wiki/Tunis),[[117]](#cite_note-117)[[118]](#cite_note-118) while most North Africans continue to use [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic) as their mother tongue.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

## Genetic studies[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[Y DNA](/wiki/Y_chromosome) studies tend to imply a small number of founders in an old population whose members parted and followed different migration paths.[[119]](#cite_note-119) In most Jewish populations, these male line ancestors appear to have been mainly [Middle Eastern](/wiki/Middle_East). For example, Ashkenazi Jews share more common paternal lineages with other Jewish and Middle Eastern groups than with non-Jewish populations in areas where Jews lived in [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe), [Germany](/wiki/Germany) and the French [Rhine Valley](/wiki/Rhine). This is consistent with Jewish traditions in placing most Jewish paternal origins in the region of the Middle East.[[120]](#cite_note-120)[[121]](#cite_note-121)Conversely, the maternal lineages of Jewish populations, studied by looking at [mitochondrial DNA](/wiki/Mitochondrial_DNA), are generally more heterogeneous.[[122]](#cite_note-122) Scholars such as [Harry Ostrer](/wiki/Harry_Ostrer) and [Raphael Falk](/wiki/Raphael_Falk) believe this indicates that many Jewish males found new mates from European and other communities in the places where they migrated in the diaspora after fleeing ancient Israel.[[123]](#cite_note-123) In contrast, Behar has found evidence that about 40% of Ashkenazi Jews originate maternally from just four female founders, who were of Middle Eastern origin. The populations of Sephardi and Mizrahi Jewish communities "showed no evidence for a narrow founder effect."[[122]](#cite_note-122) Subsequent studies carried out by Feder et al. confirmed the large portion of non-local maternal origin among Ashkenazi Jews. Reflecting on their findings related to the maternal origin of Ashkenazi Jews, the authors conclude "Clearly, the differences between Jews and non-Jews are far larger than those observed among the Jewish communities. Hence, differences between the Jewish communities can be overlooked when non-Jews are included in the comparisons."[[124]](#cite_note-124)[[125]](#cite_note-125)[[126]](#cite_note-126) Studies of [autosomal DNA](/wiki/Autosome), which look at the entire DNA mixture, have become increasingly important as the technology develops. They show that Jewish populations have tended to form relatively closely related groups in independent communities, with most in a community sharing significant ancestry in common.[[127]](#cite_note-127) For Jewish populations of the diaspora, the genetic composition of [Ashkenazi](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews), [Sephardi](/wiki/Sephardi_Jews), and [Mizrahi](/wiki/Mizrahi_Jews) Jewish populations show a predominant amount of shared Middle Eastern ancestry. According to Behar, the most parsimonious explanation for this shared Middle Eastern ancestry is that it is "consistent with the historical formulation of the Jewish people as descending from ancient [Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrews) and [Israelite](/wiki/Israelites) residents of the [Levant](/wiki/Levant)" and "the dispersion of the people of ancient Israel throughout the [Old World](/wiki/Old_World)".[[128]](#cite_note-128) [North African](/wiki/North_Africa), [Italian](/wiki/Italian_Peninsula) and others of [Iberian](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula) origin show variable frequencies of admixture with non-Jewish historical host populations among the maternal lines. In the case of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews (in particular [Moroccan Jews](/wiki/Moroccan_Jews)), who are closely related, the source of non-Jewish admixture is mainly [southern European](/wiki/Southern_Europe), while Mizrahi Jews show evidence of admixture with other Middle Eastern populations and [Sub-Saharan Africans](/wiki/Sub-Saharan_Africa). Behar *et al.* have remarked on an especially close relationship of Ashkenazi Jews and modern [Italians](/wiki/Italians).[[128]](#cite_note-128)<ref name=zooss>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref>[[129]](#cite_note-129) Jews were found to be more closely related to groups in the north of the Fertile Crescent (Kurds, Turks, and Armenians) than to Arabs.[[130]](#cite_note-130) The studies also show that the [Sephardic Bnei Anusim](/wiki/Sephardic_Bnei_Anusim) (descendants of the "[anusim](/wiki/Anusim)" [forced converts](/wiki/Forced_conversion) to [Catholicism](/wiki/Catholicism)) of [Iberia](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula) (estimated at about 19.8% of modern Iberia) and [Ibero-America](/wiki/Ibero-America) (estimated at least 10% of modern Ibero-America) have Sephardic Jewish origins within the last few centuries, while the [Bene Israel](/wiki/Bene_Israel) and [Cochin Jews](/wiki/Cochin_Jews) of [India](/wiki/India), [Beta Israel](/wiki/Beta_Israel) of [Ethiopia](/wiki/Ethiopia), and a portion of the [Lemba people](/wiki/Lemba_people) of [Southern Africa](/wiki/Southern_Africa), despite more closely resembling the local populations of their native countries, also have some more remote ancient Jewish descent.[[131]](#cite_note-131)<ref name=discovermagazine>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[132]](#cite_note-132)[[126]](#cite_note-126)

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

### Population centers[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) According to the [Israel Central Bureau of Statistics](/wiki/Israel_Central_Bureau_of_Statistics) there were 13,421,000 Jews worldwide in 2009, roughly 0.19% of the world's population at the time.[[133]](#cite_note-133) According to the 2007 estimates of [The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute](/wiki/The_Jewish_People_Policy_Planning_Institute), the world's Jewish population is 13.2 million.[[134]](#cite_note-134) [Adherents.com](/wiki/Adherents.com) cites figures ranging from 12 to 18 million.[[135]](#cite_note-135) These statistics incorporate both practicing Jews affiliated with [synagogues](/wiki/Synagogue) and the Jewish community, and approximately 4.5 million unaffiliated and [secular Jews](/wiki/Jewish_secularism).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

According to [Sergio DellaPergola](/wiki/Sergio_DellaPergola), a demographer of the [Jewish population](/wiki/Jewish_population), in 2015 there were about 6.3 million Jews in [Israel](/wiki/Israel), 5.7 million in the [United States](/wiki/United_States), and 2.3 million in the rest of the world.[[136]](#cite_note-136)

#### Israel[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Israel](/wiki/Israel), the Jewish nation-state, is the only country in which Jews make up a majority of the citizens.[[137]](#cite_note-137) Israel was established as an independent [democratic](/wiki/Parliamentary_democracy) and Jewish state on May 14, 1948.[[138]](#cite_note-138) Of the 120 members in its parliament, the [Knesset](/wiki/Knesset),[[139]](#cite_note-139) as of 2016, 14 members of the Knesset are [Arab citizens of Israel](/wiki/Arab_citizens_of_Israel) (not including the Druze), most representing Arab political parties. One of Israel's [Supreme Court](/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_Israel) judges is also an Arab citizen of Israel.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Between 1948 and 1958, the Jewish population rose from 800,000 to two million.[[141]](#cite_note-141) Currently, Jews account for 75.4% of the Israeli population, or 6 million people.[[142]](#cite_note-142)[[143]](#cite_note-143) The early years of the State of Israel were marked by the [mass immigration](/wiki/Aliyah) of [Holocaust survivors](/wiki/Holocaust_survivors) in the [aftermath of the Holocaust](/wiki/Aftermath_of_the_Holocaust) and Jews [fleeing Arab lands](/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_and_Muslim_countries).[[144]](#cite_note-144) Israel also has a large population of [Ethiopian Jews](/wiki/Ethiopian_Jews), many of whom were airlifted to Israel in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[[145]](#cite_note-145) Between 1974 and 1979 nearly 227,258 immigrants arrived in Israel, about half being from the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union).[[146]](#cite_note-146) This period also saw an increase in [immigration to Israel](/wiki/Aliyah) from [Western Europe](/wiki/Western_Europe), [Latin America](/wiki/Latin_America), and [North America](/wiki/North_America).[[147]](#cite_note-147) A trickle of immigrants from other communities has also arrived, including [Indian Jews](/wiki/Indian_Jews) and others, as well as some descendants of [Ashkenazi](/wiki/Ashkenazi) Holocaust survivors who had settled in countries such as the [United States](/wiki/United_States), [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina), [Australia](/wiki/Australia), [Chile](/wiki/Chile), and [South Africa](/wiki/South_Africa). Some Jews have emigrated from Israel elsewhere, because of economic problems or disillusionment with political conditions and the continuing [Arab-Israeli conflict](/wiki/Arab-Israeli_conflict). Jewish Israeli emigrants are known as [yordim](/wiki/Yerida).[[148]](#cite_note-148)

#### Diaspora (outside Israel)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The waves of [immigration to the United States](/wiki/Immigration_to_the_United_States) and elsewhere at the turn of the 19th century, the founding of [Zionism](/wiki/Zionism) and later events, including [pogroms](/wiki/Pogroms) in Russia, the massacre of European Jewry during [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust), and the founding of the [state of Israel](/wiki/State_of_Israel), with the subsequent [Jewish exodus from Arab lands](/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_lands), all resulted in substantial shifts in the population centers of world Jewry by the end of the 20th century.[[149]](#cite_note-149) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Hanukkah_sign_Nicosia_Republic_of_Cyprus.JPG)[Public Hanukkah menorah](/wiki/Public_menorah) in [Nicosia](/wiki/Nicosia), [Cyprus](/wiki/Cyprus) [thumb|upright|In this](/wiki/File:Happynewyearcard.jpg) [Rosh Hashana](/wiki/Rosh_Hashana) greeting card from the early 1900s, Russian Jews, packs in hand, gaze at the American relatives beckoning them to the United States. Over two million Jews fled the [pogroms](/wiki/Pogroms) of the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire) to the safety of the U.S. between 1881 and 1924.[[150]](#cite_note-150) More than half of the Jews live in the Diaspora (see Population table). Currently, the largest Jewish community outside Israel, and either the largest or second-largest Jewish community in the world, is located in the United States, with 5.2 million to 6.4 million Jews by various estimates. Elsewhere in the Americas, there are also large Jewish populations in [Canada](/wiki/Canada) (315,000), [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina) (180,000-300,000), and [Brazil](/wiki/Brazil) (196,000-600,000), and smaller populations in [Mexico](/wiki/Mexico), [Uruguay](/wiki/Uruguay), [Venezuela](/wiki/Venezuela), [Chile](/wiki/Chile), [Colombia](/wiki/Colombia) and several other countries (see [History of the Jews in Latin America](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Latin_America)).[[151]](#cite_note-151) Demographers disagree on whether the United States has a larger Jewish population than Israel, with many maintaining that Israel surpassed the United States in Jewish population during the 2000s, while others maintain that the United States still has the largest Jewish population in the world. Currently, a major national Jewish population survey is planned to ascertain whether or not Israel has overtaken the United States in Jewish population.[[152]](#cite_note-152) [Western Europe's](/wiki/Western_Europe) largest Jewish community, and the third-largest Jewish community in the world, can be found in [France](/wiki/France), home to between 483,000 and 500,000 Jews, the majority of whom are immigrants or refugees from North African Arab countries such as [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria), [Morocco](/wiki/Morocco), and [Tunisia](/wiki/Tunisia) (or their descendants).[[153]](#cite_note-153) The [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom) has a Jewish community of 292,000. In [Eastern Europe](/wiki/East_Europe), there are anywhere from 350,000 to one million Jews living in the former [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union), but exact figures are difficult to establish. In [Germany](/wiki/Germany), the 102,000 Jews registered with the Jewish community are a slowly declining population,[[154]](#cite_note-154) despite the immigration of tens of thousands of Jews from the former [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) since the fall of the [Berlin Wall](/wiki/Berlin_Wall).[[155]](#cite_note-155) Thousands of [Israelis](/wiki/Israelis) also live in Germany, either permanently or temporarily, for economic reasons.[[156]](#cite_note-156) Prior to 1948, approximately 800,000 Jews were living in lands which now make up the [Arab world](/wiki/Arab_world) (excluding Israel). Of these, just under two-thirds lived in the French-controlled [Maghreb](/wiki/Maghreb) region, 15–20% in the [Kingdom of Iraq](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Iraq), approximately 10% in the [Kingdom of Egypt](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Egypt) and approximately 7% in the [Kingdom of Yemen](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Yemen). A further 200,000 lived in [Pahlavi Iran](/wiki/Pahlavi_Iran) and the [Republic of Turkey](/wiki/Republic_of_Turkey). Today, around 26,000 Jews live in Arab countries[[157]](#cite_note-157) and around 30,000 in [Iran](/wiki/Iran) and [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey). A small-scale exodus had begun in many countries in the early decades of the 20th century, although the only substantial [aliyah](/wiki/Aliyah) came from [Yemen](/wiki/Yemen) and [Syria](/wiki/Syria).[[158]](#cite_note-158) The [exodus from Arab and Muslim countries](/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_and_Muslim_countries) took place primarily from 1948. The first large-scale exoduses took place in the late 1940s and early 1950s, primarily in [Iraq](/wiki/Iraq), Yemen and [Libya](/wiki/Libya), with up to 90% of these communities leaving within a few years. The peak of the exodus from [Egypt](/wiki/Egypt) occurred in 1956. The exodus in the Maghreb countries peaked in the 1960s. [Lebanon](/wiki/Lebanon) was the only Arab country to see a temporary increase in its Jewish population during this period, due to an influx of refugees from other Arab countries, although by the mid-1970s the Jewish community of Lebanon had also dwindled. In the aftermath of the exodus wave from Arab states, an additional migration of [Iranian Jews](/wiki/Iranian_Jews) peaked in the 1980s when around 80% of Iranian Jews left the country.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Outside [Europe](/wiki/Europe), the [Americas](/wiki/Americas), the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East), and the rest of [Asia](/wiki/Asia), there are significant Jewish populations in [Australia](/wiki/Australia) (112,500) and [South Africa](/wiki/Jewish_population_of_South_Africa) (70,000).[[26]](#cite_note-26) There is also a 7,500-strong community in [New Zealand](/wiki/New_Zealand).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Demographic changes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

#### Assimilation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Since at least the time of the [Ancient Greeks](/wiki/Ancient_Greece), a proportion of Jews have assimilated into the wider non-Jewish society around them, by either choice or force, ceasing to practice Judaism and losing their [Jewish identity](/wiki/Jewish_identity).<ref name=Johnson171>Johnson (1987), p. 171.</ref> Assimilation took place in all areas, and during all time periods,[[159]](#cite_note-159) with some Jewish communities, for example the [Kaifeng Jews](/wiki/Kaifeng_Jews) of [China](/wiki/China), disappearing entirely.[[160]](#cite_note-160) The advent of the Jewish Enlightenment of the 18th century (see [Haskalah](/wiki/Haskalah)) and the subsequent [emancipation of the Jewish populations](/wiki/Jewish_emancipation) of Europe and America in the 19th century, accelerated the situation, encouraging Jews to increasingly participate in, and become part of, [secular society](/wiki/Secularism). The result has been a growing trend of assimilation, as Jews marry non-Jewish spouses and stop participating in the Jewish community.[[161]](#cite_note-161) Rates of [interreligious marriage](/wiki/Interfaith_marriage) vary widely: In the United States, it is just under 50%,[[162]](#cite_note-162) in the United Kingdom, around 53%; in France; around 30%,[[163]](#cite_note-163) and in Australia and Mexico, as low as 10%.[[164]](#cite_note-164)[[165]](#cite_note-165) In the United States, only about a third of children from intermarriages affiliate with Jewish religious practice.[[166]](#cite_note-166) The result is that most countries in the [Diaspora](/wiki/Jewish_diaspora) have steady or slightly declining religiously Jewish populations as Jews continue to assimilate into the countries in which they live.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

#### War and persecution[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:The_Jews_the_world_over_love_liberty_poster.jpg)[World War I](/wiki/World_War_I) poster shows a soldier cutting the bonds from a Jewish man, who says, "You have cut my bonds and set me free – now let me help you set others free!" The Jewish people and [Judaism](/wiki/Judaism) have experienced various [persecutions](/wiki/Persecution) throughout [Jewish history](/wiki/Jewish_history). During [Late Antiquity](/wiki/Late_Antiquity) and the [Early Middle Ages](/wiki/Early_Middle_Ages) the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire) (in its later phases known as the [Byzantine Empire](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire)) repeatedly repressed the [Jewish population](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_the_Roman_Empire), first by ejecting them from their homelands during the pagan [Roman era](/wiki/Roman_era) and later by officially establishing them as [second-class citizens](/wiki/Justinian_I#Suppression_of_religions) during the Christian Roman era.[[167]](#cite_note-167)[[168]](#cite_note-168) According to [James Carroll](/wiki/James_P._Carroll), "Jews accounted for 10% of the total population of the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire). By that ratio, if other factors had not intervened, there would be 200 million Jews in the world today, instead of something like 13 million."[[169]](#cite_note-169) [thumb|left|The Roman Emperor](/wiki/File:The_Emperor_sends_Vespasian_with_an_army_to_destroy_the_Jews_(f._177v)_Cropped.jpg) [Nero](/wiki/Nero) sends [Vespasian](/wiki/Vespasian) with an army to destroy the Jews, 69 CE

Later in [medieval](/wiki/Middle_Ages) [Western Europe](/wiki/Western_Europe), further persecutions of Jews by Christians occurred, notably during the [Crusades](/wiki/Crusades)—when Jews all over Germany [were massacred](/wiki/Rhineland_massacres)—and a series of expulsions from the [Kingdom of England](/wiki/Edict_of_Expulsion), Germany, France, and, in the [largest expulsion of all](/wiki/Alhambra_Decree), Spain and Portugal after the [Reconquista](/wiki/Reconquista) (the Catholic Reconquest of the [Iberian Peninsula](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula)), where both unbaptized Sephardic Jews and the ruling [Muslim](/wiki/Muslim) [Moors](/wiki/Moors) were expelled.[[170]](#cite_note-170)[[171]](#cite_note-171) In the [Papal States](/wiki/Papal_States), which existed until 1870, Jews were required to live only in specified neighborhoods called [ghettos](/wiki/Ghetto).[[172]](#cite_note-172) In the 19th and (before the end of [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II)) 20th centuries, the [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Catholic_Church) adhered to a distinction between "good antisemitism" and "bad antisemitism". The "bad" kind promoted hatred of Jews because of their descent. This was considered un-Christian because the Christian message was intended for all of humanity regardless of ethnicity; anyone could become a Christian. The "good" kind criticized alleged Jewish conspiracies to control newspapers, banks, and other institutions, to care only about accumulation of wealth, etc.[[173]](#cite_note-173) [Islam and Judaism](/wiki/Islam_and_Judaism) have a complex relationship. Traditionally Jews and Christians living in Muslim lands, known as [dhimmis](/wiki/Dhimmis), were allowed to practice their religions and administer their internal affairs, but they were subject to certain conditions.[[174]](#cite_note-174) They had to pay the [jizya](/wiki/Jizya) (a per capita tax imposed on free adult non-Muslim males) to the Islamic state.[[174]](#cite_note-174) Dhimmis had an inferior status under Islamic rule. They had several social and legal [disabilities](/wiki/Disabilities_(Jewish)) such as prohibitions against bearing arms or giving testimony in courts in cases involving Muslims.[[175]](#cite_note-175) Many of the disabilities were highly symbolic. The one described by [Bernard Lewis](/wiki/Bernard_Lewis) as "most degrading"[[176]](#cite_note-176) was the requirement of [distinctive clothing](/wiki/Yellow_badge), not found in the [Quran](/wiki/Quran) or [hadith](/wiki/Hadith) but invented in [early medieval](/wiki/Early_Middle_Ages) [Baghdad](/wiki/Baghdad); its enforcement was highly erratic.<ref name=Lewis131>Lewis (1999), p.131</ref> On the other hand, Jews rarely faced martyrdom or exile, or forced compulsion to change their religion, and they were mostly free in their choice of residence and profession.[[177]](#cite_note-177) Notable exceptions include the massacre of Jews and forcible conversion of some Jews by the rulers of the [Almohad](/wiki/Almohad_Caliphate) dynasty in [Al-Andalus](/wiki/Al-Andalus) in the 12th century,[[178]](#cite_note-178) as well as in [Islamic Persia](/wiki/Islamic_conquest_of_Persia),[[179]](#cite_note-179) and the forced confinement of Moroccan Jews to walled quarters known as [mellahs](/wiki/Mellah) beginning from the 15th century and especially in the early 19th century.[[180]](#cite_note-180) In modern times, it has become commonplace for standard [antisemitic themes to be conflated with anti-Zionist](/wiki/Anti-Zionism_and_antisemitism) publications and pronouncements of Islamic movements such as [Hezbollah](/wiki/Hezbollah) and [Hamas](/wiki/Hamas), in the pronouncements of various agencies of the [Islamic Republic of Iran](/wiki/Iran), and even in the newspapers and other publications of Turkish [Refah Partisi](/wiki/Refah_Partisi)."<ref name=Lewis\_MEQ>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

[thumb|left|Jews in](/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_N_1576_Bild-006,_Minsk,_Juden.jpg) [Minsk](/wiki/Minsk), 1941. Before World War II some 40% of the population was Jewish. By the time the Red Army retook the city on 3 July 1944, there were only a few Jewish survivors. Throughout history, many rulers, empires and nations have oppressed their Jewish populations or sought to eliminate them entirely. Methods employed ranged from [expulsion](/wiki/Deportation) to outright [genocide](/wiki/Genocide); within nations, often the threat of these extreme methods was sufficient to silence dissent. The [history of antisemitism](/wiki/History_of_antisemitism) includes the [First Crusade](/wiki/First_Crusade) which resulted in the massacre of Jews;[[170]](#cite_note-170) the [Spanish Inquisition](/wiki/Spanish_Inquisition) (led by [Tomás de Torquemada](/wiki/Tomás_de_Torquemada)) and the [Portuguese Inquisition](/wiki/Portuguese_Inquisition), with their persecution and [*autos-da-fé*](/wiki/Auto-da-fé) against the [New Christians](/wiki/New_Christians) and [Marrano](/wiki/Marrano) Jews;[[181]](#cite_note-181) the [Bohdan Chmielnicki](/wiki/Bohdan_Chmielnicki) [Cossack](/wiki/Cossack) massacres in [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine);[[182]](#cite_note-182) the [Pogroms](/wiki/Pogrom) backed by the Russian [Tsars](/wiki/List_of_Russian_rulers);[[183]](#cite_note-183) as well as expulsions from Spain, Portugal, England, France, Germany, and other countries in which the Jews had settled.[[171]](#cite_note-171) According to a 2008 study published in the [American Journal of Human Genetics](/wiki/American_Journal_of_Human_Genetics), 19.8% of the modern [Iberian](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula) population has Sephardic Jewish ancestry,[[184]](#cite_note-184) indicating that the number of [conversos](/wiki/Converso) may have been much higher than originally thought.[[185]](#cite_note-185)[[186]](#cite_note-186) The persecution reached a peak in [Nazi Germany's](/wiki/Nazi_Germany) [Final Solution](/wiki/Final_Solution), which led to [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust) and the slaughter of approximately 6 million Jews.[[187]](#cite_note-187) Of the world's 15 million Jews in 1939, more than a third were killed in the Holocaust.[[188]](#cite_note-188)[[189]](#cite_note-189) The Holocaust—the state-led systematic [persecution](/wiki/Persecution) and [genocide](/wiki/Genocide) of European Jews (and certain communities of North African Jews in [European controlled North Africa](/wiki/History_of_North_Africa#European_colonization)) and other [minority groups](/wiki/Minority_group) of Europe during [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II) by Germany and its [collaborators](/wiki/Collaboration_with_the_Axis_Powers_during_World_War_II) remains the most notable modern-day persecution of Jews.[[190]](#cite_note-190) The persecution and [genocide](/wiki/Genocide) were accomplished in stages. [Legislation to remove the Jews from civil society](/wiki/Nuremberg_Laws) was enacted years before the outbreak of [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II).[[191]](#cite_note-191) [Concentration camps](/wiki/Nazi_concentration_camps) were established in which inmates were used as [slave labour](/wiki/Slavery) until they died of exhaustion or disease.[[192]](#cite_note-192) Where the [Third Reich](/wiki/Nazi_Germany) conquered new territory in [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe), specialized units called [Einsatzgruppen](/wiki/Einsatzgruppen) murdered Jews and political opponents in mass shootings.[[193]](#cite_note-193) Jews and [Roma](/wiki/Romani_people) were crammed into [ghettos](/wiki/Ghettos_in_Nazi-occupied_Europe) before being transported hundreds of miles by freight train to [extermination camps](/wiki/Extermination_camp) where, if they survived the journey, the majority of them were killed in gas chambers.[[194]](#cite_note-194) Virtually every arm of Germany's bureaucracy was involved in the logistics of the mass murder, turning the country into what one Holocaust scholar has called "a genocidal nation."<ref name=Berenbaum103>Berenbaum, Michael. *The World Must Know," United States Holocaust Museum*, 2006, p. 103.</ref>

#### Migrations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[thumb|Etching of the](/wiki/File:1614jews.jpg) [expulsion of the Jews from Frankfurt](/wiki/Frankfurter_Judengasse#The_Fettmilch_Rising) on August 23, [1614](/wiki/Timeline_of_antisemitism). The text says: "1380 persons old and young were counted at the exit of the gate" [thumb|upright|Jews fleeing pogroms, 1882](/wiki/File:Jewish_refugees_Liverpool_1882.jpg) Throughout Jewish history, Jews have repeatedly been directly or indirectly expelled from both their original homeland, the [Land of Israel](/wiki/Land_of_Israel), and many of the areas in which they have settled. This experience as [refugees](/wiki/Jewish_refugees) has shaped [Jewish identity](/wiki/Jewish_identity) and religious practice in many ways, and is thus a major element of Jewish history.[[195]](#cite_note-195) The incomplete list of major and other noteworthy [migrations](/wiki/Human_migration) that follows includes numerous instances of expulsion or departure under duress:

* The mythical patriarch [Abraham](/wiki/Abraham) is described as a migrant to the land of [Canaan](/wiki/Canaan) from [Ur](/wiki/Ur) of the [Chaldees](/wiki/Chaldea)[[196]](#cite_note-196) after an attempt on his life by King [Nimrod](/wiki/Nimrod).[[197]](#cite_note-197)\* The [Children of Israel](/wiki/Children_of_Israel), in the Biblical story whose historicity is uncertain, undertook [the Exodus](/wiki/The_Exodus) (meaning "departure" or "exit" in Greek) from [ancient Egypt](/wiki/Ancient_Egypt), as recorded in the [Book of Exodus](/wiki/Book_of_Exodus).[[198]](#cite_note-198)\* [Assyrian](/wiki/Assyria) policy was to deport and displace conquered peoples, and it is estimated some 4,500,000 among captive populations suffered this dislocation over 3 centuries of Assyrian rule.[[199]](#cite_note-199) With regard to Israel, [Tiglath-Pileser III](/wiki/Tiglath-Pileser_III) claims he deported 80% of the population of [Lower Galilee](/wiki/Lower_Galilee), some 13,520 people.[[200]](#cite_note-200) Some 27,000 Israelites, 20-25% of the population of the [Kingdom of Israel](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(Samaria)), were described as being deported by [Sargon II](/wiki/Sargon_II), and were replaced by other deported populations and sent into permanent exile by Assyria, initially to the Upper Mesopotamian provinces of the Assyrian Empire,[[201]](#cite_note-201)[[202]](#cite_note-202)\* Between 10,000 and 80,000 people from the [Kingdom of Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah) were exiled by [Babylonia](/wiki/Babylon),[[199]](#cite_note-199) then returned to [Judea](/wiki/Judea) by [Cyrus the Great](/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great) of the Persian [Achaemenid Empire](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire),[[203]](#cite_note-203) and then many were exiled again by the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire).[[204]](#cite_note-204)\* The 2,000 year dispersion of the [Jewish diaspora](/wiki/Jewish_diaspora) beginning under the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire),[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) as Jews were spread throughout the Roman world and, driven from land to land,[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) settled wherever they could live freely enough to practice their religion. Over the course of the diaspora the center of Jewish life moved from [Babylonia](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Iraq)[[205]](#cite_note-205) to the [Iberian Peninsula](/wiki/Golden_age_of_Jewish_culture_in_the_Iberian_Peninsula)[[206]](#cite_note-206) to [Poland](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland)[[207]](#cite_note-207) to the [United States](/wiki/Jewish_American)[[208]](#cite_note-208) and, as a result of [Zionism](/wiki/Zionism), back to [Israel](/wiki/Israel).<ref name=Gartner431>Gartner (2001), p. 431.</ref>
* Many expulsions during the Middle Ages and Enlightenment in Europe, including: 1290, 16,000 Jews were expelled from England, see the *(*[*Statute of Jewry*](/wiki/Statute_of_Jewry)*)*; in 1396, 100,000 from France; in 1421 thousands were expelled from Austria. Many of these Jews settled in [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe), especially Poland.[[209]](#cite_note-209)\* Following the [Spanish Inquisition](/wiki/Spanish_Inquisition) in 1492, the Spanish population of around 200,000 [Sephardic](/wiki/Sephardi) Jews were expelled by the Spanish crown and [Catholic church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church), followed by expulsions in 1493 in Sicily (37,000 Jews) and Portugal in 1496. The expelled Jews fled mainly to the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire), the Netherlands, and [North Africa](/wiki/North_Africa), others migrating to [Southern Europe](/wiki/Southern_Europe) and the Middle East.[[210]](#cite_note-210)\* During the 19th century, France's policies of equal citizenship regardless of religion led to the immigration of Jews (especially from Eastern and Central Europe).[[211]](#cite_note-211)\* The arrival of millions of Jews in the [New World](/wiki/New_World), including immigration of over two million Eastern European Jews to the United States from 1880 to 1925, see [History of the Jews in the United States](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_the_United_States) and [History of the Jews in Russia and the Soviet Union](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Russia_and_the_Soviet_Union).[[212]](#cite_note-212)\* The [pogroms](/wiki/Pogrom) in Eastern Europe,[[183]](#cite_note-183) the rise of modern [antisemitism](/wiki/Antisemitism),[[213]](#cite_note-213) the Holocaust,[[214]](#cite_note-214) and the rise of [Arab nationalism](/wiki/Arab_nationalism)[[215]](#cite_note-215) all served to fuel the movements and migrations of huge segments of Jewry from land to land and continent to continent, until they arrived back in large numbers at their original historical homeland in Israel.[[216]](#cite_note-216)\* The [Islamic Revolution of Iran](/wiki/Iranian_Revolution) caused many [Iranian Jews](/wiki/Iranian_Jews) to flee Iran. Most found refuge in the US (particularly [Los Angeles](/wiki/Los_Angeles)) and Israel. Smaller communities of Persian Jews exist in Canada and Western Europe.[[217]](#cite_note-217)\* When the [Soviet Union collapsed](/wiki/History_of_the_Soviet_Union_(1985–1991)#Dissolution_of_the_USSR), many of the Jews in the affected territory (who had been [refuseniks](/wiki/Refusenik)) were suddenly allowed to leave. This produced a wave of migration to Israel in the early 1990s.[[148]](#cite_note-148)

#### Growth[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[thumb|A man praying at the](/wiki/File:A_man_prays_at_the_Western_Wall_in_Jerusalem.jpg) [Western Wall](/wiki/Western_Wall) Israel is the only country with a Jewish population that is consistently growing through [natural population growth](/wiki/Natural_population_growth), although the Jewish populations of other countries, in Europe and North America, have recently increased through immigration. In the Diaspora, in almost every country the Jewish population in general is either declining or steady, but [Orthodox](/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism) and [Haredi](/wiki/Haredi) Jewish communities, whose members often shun [birth control](/wiki/Birth_control) for religious reasons, have experienced rapid population growth.[[218]](#cite_note-218) Orthodox and [Conservative Judaism](/wiki/Conservative_Judaism) discourage [proselytism](/wiki/Proselytism) to non-Jews, but many Jewish groups have tried to reach out to the assimilated Jewish communities of the Diaspora in order for them to reconnect to their Jewish roots. Additionally, while in principle [Reform Judaism](/wiki/Reform_Judaism) favors seeking new members for the faith, this position has not translated into active proselytism, instead taking the form of an effort to reach out to non-Jewish spouses of intermarried couples.[[219]](#cite_note-219) There is also a trend of Orthodox movements pursuing secular Jews in order to give them a stronger [Jewish identity](/wiki/Jewish_identity) so there is less chance of intermarriage. As a result of the efforts by these and other Jewish groups over the past 25 years, there has been a trend (known as the [*Baal Teshuva*](/wiki/Baal_Teshuva) movement) for secular Jews to become more religiously observant, though the demographic implications of the trend are unknown.[[220]](#cite_note-220) Additionally, there is also a growing rate of conversion to [Jews by Choice](/wiki/Jews_by_Choice) of [gentiles](/wiki/Gentiles) who make the decision to head in the direction of becoming Jews.[[221]](#cite_note-221)

## Leadership[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) There is no single governing body for the Jewish community, nor a single authority with responsibility for religious doctrine.[[222]](#cite_note-222) Instead, a variety of secular and religious institutions at the local, national, and international levels lead various parts of the Jewish community on a variety of issues.[[223]](#cite_note-223)

## Notable individuals[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Jews have made a myriad of contributions to humanity in a broad and diverse range of fields, including the sciences, arts, politics, and business.[[224]](#cite_note-224) Although Jews comprise only 0.2% of the world's population, over 20%[[225]](#cite_note-225)[[226]](#cite_note-226)[[227]](#cite_note-227)[[228]](#cite_note-228)[[229]](#cite_note-229)[[230]](#cite_note-230) of [Nobel Prize](/wiki/Nobel_Prize) laureates have been Jewish, with [multiple winners in each category](/wiki/List_of_Jewish_Nobel_laureates).

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

* [Hebrews](/wiki/Hebrews)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

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* Ruderman, David B. *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton University Press; 2010) 326 pages. Examines print culture, religion, and other realms in a history emphasizing the links among early modern Jewish communities from Venice and Kraków to Amsterdam and Smyrna.
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Stillman, Norman](/wiki/Norman_Stillman) (1979). *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America. ISBN 0-8276-0198-0
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