[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-protected](/wiki/Template:Pp-protected) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [thumb|250px|](/wiki/File:Judaica.jpg)[Judaica](/wiki/Judaica) (clockwise from top): [Shabbat](/wiki/Shabbat) candlesticks, [handwashing cup](/wiki/Ritual_washing_in_Judaism), [Chumash](/wiki/Chumash_(Judaism)) and [Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh), [Torah](/wiki/Sefer_Torah) [pointer](/wiki/Yad), [shofar](/wiki/Shofar) and [etrog](/wiki/Etrog) box [Template:Judaism](/wiki/Template:Judaism) [thumb|Silver case containing a handwritten](/wiki/File:Coffre_et_rouleau_de_Torah_ayant_appartenu_à_Abraham_de_Camondo_chef_de_la_communauté_juive_de_Constantinople_1860_-_Musée_d'Art_et_d'Histoire_du_Judaïsme.jpg) [Torah](/wiki/Sefer_Torah) ([Museum of Jewish Art and History](/wiki/Musée_d'Art_et_d'Histoire_du_Judaïsme), Paris) **Judaism** (from [Template:Lang-la](/wiki/Template:Lang-la), derived from [Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek) [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), originally from [Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrew_language) [Template:Hebrew](/wiki/Template:Hebrew), *Yehudah*, "[Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah)";[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2) in Hebrew: [Template:Hebrew](/wiki/Template:Hebrew), *Yahadut*, the distinctive characteristics of the Judean [ethnos](/wiki/Ethnic_group))[[3]](#cite_note-3) encompasses the [religion](/wiki/Religion), [philosophy](/wiki/Philosophy), [culture](/wiki/Culture) and way of life of the [Jewish people](/wiki/Jews).[[4]](#cite_note-4) Judaism is an ancient [monotheistic](/wiki/Monotheism) religion, with the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) as its foundational text (part of the larger text known as the [Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh) or [Hebrew Bible](/wiki/Hebrew_Bible)), and supplemental oral tradition represented by later texts such as the [Midrash](/wiki/Midrash) and the [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud). Judaism is considered by religious Jews to be the expression of the covenantal relationship that [God](/wiki/God_in_Judaism) established with the [Children of Israel](/wiki/Children_of_Israel).[[5]](#cite_note-5) Judaism includes a wide corpus of texts, practices, theological positions, and forms of organization. Within Judaism there are a variety of movements, most of which emerged from [Rabbinic Judaism](/wiki/Rabbinic_Judaism), which holds that God revealed his laws and [commandments](/wiki/613_Mitzvot) to [Moses](/wiki/Moses) on [Mount Sinai](/wiki/Biblical_Mount_Sinai) in the form of both the [Written](/wiki/Torah) and [Oral Torah](/wiki/Oral_Torah).[[6]](#cite_note-6) Historically, this assertion was challenged by various groups such as the [Sadducees](/wiki/Sadducees#General) and [Hellenistic Judaism](/wiki/Hellenistic_Judaism) during the [Second Temple period](/wiki/Second_Temple_period); the [Karaites](/wiki/Karaite_Judaism#Karaite_interpretations_of_the_Torah) and [Sabbateans](/wiki/Sabbateans) during the early and later medieval period;[[7]](#cite_note-7) and among segments of the modern non-Orthodox denominations. Modern branches of Judaism such as [Humanistic Judaism](/wiki/Humanistic_Judaism) may be [nontheistic](/wiki/Nontheistic).[[8]](#cite_note-8) Today, the largest [Jewish religious movements](/wiki/Jewish_religious_movements) are [Orthodox Judaism](/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism) ([Haredi Judaism](/wiki/Haredi_Judaism) and [Modern Orthodox Judaism](/wiki/Modern_Orthodox_Judaism)), [Conservative Judaism](/wiki/Conservative_Judaism) and [Reform Judaism](/wiki/Reform_Judaism). Major sources of difference between these groups are their approaches to [Jewish law](/wiki/Halakha), the authority of the [Rabbinic tradition](/wiki/Rabbinic_tradition), and the significance of the [State of Israel](/wiki/State_of_Israel).[[9]](#cite_note-9) Orthodox Judaism maintains that the Torah and Jewish law are divine in origin, eternal and unalterable, and that they should be strictly followed. Conservative and Reform Judaism are more liberal, with Conservative Judaism generally promoting a more "traditional" interpretation of Judaism's requirements than Reform Judaism. A typical Reform position is that Jewish law should be viewed as a set of general guidelines rather than as a set of restrictions and obligations whose observance is required of all Jews.[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11) Historically, [special courts](/wiki/Beth_din) enforced Jewish law; today, these courts still exist but the practice of Judaism is mostly voluntary.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Authority on theological and legal matters is not vested in any one person or organization, but in the sacred texts and [rabbis](/wiki/Rabbis) and scholars who interpret them.[[13]](#cite_note-13) The [history of Judaism](/wiki/History_of_Judaism) spans more than 3,000 years.[[14]](#cite_note-14) Judaism has its roots as a structured religion in the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East) during the [Bronze Age](/wiki/Bronze_Age).[[15]](#cite_note-15) Judaism is considered one of the oldest monotheistic religions.[[16]](#cite_note-16)[[17]](#cite_note-17) The [Hebrews](/wiki/Hebrews) and [Israelites](/wiki/Israelites) were already referred to as "Jews" in later books of the Tanakh such as the [Book of Esther](/wiki/Book_of_Esther), with the term Jews replacing the title "Children of Israel".[[18]](#cite_note-18) Judaism's texts, traditions and values strongly influenced later [Abrahamic religions](/wiki/Abrahamic_religions), including [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity), [Islam](/wiki/Islam) and the [Baha'i Faith](/wiki/Baha'i_Faith).[[19]](#cite_note-19)[[20]](#cite_note-20) Many aspects of Judaism have also directly or indirectly influenced secular Western [ethics](/wiki/Ethics) and civil law.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Jews are an [ethnoreligious group](/wiki/Ethnoreligious_group)[[22]](#cite_note-22) and include those born Jewish and [converts to Judaism](/wiki/Converts_to_Judaism). In 2012, the [world Jewish population](/wiki/Jewish_population_by_country) was estimated at about 14 million, or roughly 0.2% of the total world population.<ref name=jewfaq>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> About 42% of all Jews reside in [Israel](/wiki/Israel) and another 42% reside in North America, with most of the remainder living in Europe, and other minority groups spread throughout South America, Asia, Africa, and Australia.[[23]](#cite_note-23)

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## Defining characteristics and principles of faith[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

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

[thumb|250px|Glass platter inscribed with the Hebrew word *zokhreinu* – remember us](/wiki/File:5492_-_Venezia_-_Ghetto_Nuovo_-_Negozio_ebraico_-_Foto_Giovanni_Dall'Orto,_1-Aug-2008.jpg) [thumb|250px|A 19th-century silver](/wiki/File:Македонска_ханукија_-_מקדוני_חנוכייה_-_Macedonian_Hanukkah_menorah.jpg) [Macedonian](/wiki/Republic_of_Macedonia) Hanukkah menorah Unlike other ancient Near Eastern gods, the Hebrew God is portrayed as unitary and solitary; consequently, the Hebrew God's principal relationships are not with other gods, but with the world, and more specifically, with the people he created.[[24]](#cite_note-24) Judaism thus begins with ethical monotheism: the belief that God is one and is concerned with the actions of humankind.[[25]](#cite_note-25) According to the [Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh) (Hebrew Bible), God promised [Abraham](/wiki/Abraham) to make of his offspring a great nation.[[26]](#cite_note-26) Many generations later, he commanded the nation of [Israel](/wiki/Israelites) to love and worship only one God; that is, the Jewish nation is to reciprocate God's concern for the world.[[27]](#cite_note-27) He also commanded the Jewish people to love one another; that is, Jews are to imitate God's love for people.[[28]](#cite_note-28) These commandments are but two of a large corpus of [commandments](/wiki/613_mitzvot) and [laws](/wiki/Halakha) that constitute this [covenant](/wiki/Covenant_(biblical)), which is the substance of Judaism.

Thus, although there is an esoteric tradition in Judaism ([Kabbalah](/wiki/Kabbalah)), Rabbinic scholar [Max Kadushin](/wiki/Max_Kadushin) has characterized normative Judaism as "normal mysticism", because it involves everyday personal experiences of God through ways or modes that are common to all Jews.[[29]](#cite_note-29) This is played out through the observance of the [Halakha](/wiki/Halakha) and given verbal expression in the [Birkat Ha-Mizvot](/wiki/List_of_Jewish_prayers_and_blessings), the short blessings that are spoken every time a positive commandment is to be fulfilled.

The ordinary, familiar, everyday things and occurrences, we have constitute occasions for the experience of God. Such things as one's daily sustenance, the very day itself, are felt as manifestations of God's loving-kindness, calling for the *Berakhot*. *Kedushah*, holiness, which is nothing else than the imitation of God, is concerned with daily conduct, with being gracious and merciful, with keeping oneself from defilement by idolatry, adultery, and the shedding of blood. The *Birkat Ha-Mitzwot* evokes the consciousness of holiness at a rabbinic rite, but the objects employed in the majority of these rites are non-holy and of general character, while the several holy objects are [non-theurgic.](/wiki/Theurgy) And not only do ordinary things and occurrences bring with them the experience of God. Everything that happens to a man evokes that experience, evil as well as good, for a *Berakah* is said also at evil tidings. Hence, although the experience of God is like none other, the *occasions* for experiencing Him, for having a consciousness of Him, are manifold, even if we consider only those that call for Berakot.[[30]](#cite_note-30)Whereas [Jewish philosophers](/wiki/Jewish_philosophy) often debate whether God is [immanent](/wiki/Immanence) or [transcendent](/wiki/Transcendence_(religion)), and whether people have free will or their lives are determined, [Halakha](/wiki/Halakha) is a system through which any Jew acts to bring God into the world.

Ethical monotheism is central in all sacred or normative texts of Judaism. However, monotheism has not always been followed in practice. The Jewish Bible ([Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh)) records and repeatedly condemns the widespread worship of other gods in [ancient Israel](/wiki/Ancient_Israel).[[31]](#cite_note-31) In the Greco-Roman era, many different interpretations of monotheism existed in Judaism, including the interpretations that gave rise to Christianity.[[32]](#cite_note-32) Moreover, some have argued that Judaism is a non-creedal religion that does not require one to believe in God.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) For some, observance of Jewish law is more important than belief in God *per se*.[[33]](#cite_note-33) In modern times, some liberal Jewish movements do not accept the existence of a personified deity active in history.[[34]](#cite_note-34)[[35]](#cite_note-35)

### Core tenets[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

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Scholars throughout [Jewish history](/wiki/Jewish_history) have proposed numerous formulations of Judaism's core tenets, all of which have met with criticism.[[36]](#cite_note-36) The most popular formulation is [Maimonides'](/wiki/Maimonides) [thirteen principles of faith](/wiki/13_principles_of_faith), developed in the 12th century. According to Maimonides, any Jew who rejects even one of these principles would be considered an apostate and a heretic.[[37]](#cite_note-37)[[38]](#cite_note-38) Jewish scholars have held points of view diverging in various ways from Maimonides' principles.[[39]](#cite_note-39)[[40]](#cite_note-40) In Maimonides' time, his list of tenets was criticized by [Hasdai Crescas](/wiki/Hasdai_Crescas) and [Joseph Albo](/wiki/Joseph_Albo). Albo and [the Raavad](/wiki/Abraham_ben_David) argued that Maimonides' principles contained too many items that, while true, were not fundamentals of the faith.

Along these lines, the ancient historian [Josephus](/wiki/Josephus) emphasized practices and observances rather than religious beliefs, associating [apostasy](/wiki/Apostasy) with a failure to observe Jewish law and maintaining that the requirements for conversion to Judaism included [circumcision](/wiki/Circumcision) and adherence to traditional customs. Maimonides' principles were largely ignored over the next few centuries.[[41]](#cite_note-41) Later, two poetic restatements of these principles ("[*Ani Ma'amin*](/wiki/Ani_Ma'amin)" and "[*Yigdal*](/wiki/Yigdal)") became integrated into many Jewish liturgies,[[42]](#cite_note-42) leading to their eventual near-universal acceptance.[[43]](#cite_note-43)[[44]](#cite_note-44) In modern times, Judaism lacks a centralized authority that would dictate an exact religious dogma.[[13]](#cite_note-13)[[45]](#cite_note-45) Because of this, many different variations on the basic beliefs are considered within the scope of Judaism.[[39]](#cite_note-39) Even so, all [Jewish religious movements](/wiki/Jewish_religious_movements) are, to a greater or lesser extent, based on the principles of the [Hebrew Bible](/wiki/Hebrew_Bible) and various commentaries such as the [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud) and [Midrash](/wiki/Midrash). Judaism also universally recognizes the Biblical [Covenant](/wiki/Covenant_(biblical)) between God and the [Patriarch](/wiki/Patriarchs_(Bible)) [Abraham](/wiki/Abraham) as well as the additional aspects of the Covenant revealed to [Moses](/wiki/Moses), who is considered Judaism's greatest [prophet](/wiki/Prophet).[[39]](#cite_note-39)[[46]](#cite_note-46)[[47]](#cite_note-47)[[48]](#cite_note-48)[[49]](#cite_note-49) In the [Mishnah](/wiki/Mishnah), a core text of [Rabbinic Judaism](/wiki/Rabbinic_Judaism), acceptance of the Divine origins of this covenant is considered an essential aspect of Judaism and those who reject the Covenant forfeit their share in the [World to Come](/wiki/World_to_Come).[[50]](#cite_note-50)

## Jewish religious texts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

The following is a basic, structured list of the central works of Jewish practice and thought.

* [Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh)[[51]](#cite_note-51) ([Hebrew Bible](/wiki/Hebrew_Bible)) and [Rabbinic literature](/wiki/Rabbinic_literature)
  + [Mesorah](/wiki/Masoretic_Text)
  + [Targum](/wiki/Targum)
  + Jewish Biblical [exegesis](/wiki/Exegesis) (also see [Midrash](/wiki/Midrash) below)
* Works of the Talmudic Era (classic rabbinic literature)
  + [Mishnah](/wiki/Mishnah) and commentaries
  + [Tosefta](/wiki/Tosefta) and the [minor tractates](/wiki/Minor_tractates)
  + [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud):
    - The Babylonian Talmud and commentaries
    - [Jerusalem Talmud](/wiki/Jerusalem_Talmud) and commentaries
* [Midrashic](/wiki/Midrash) literature:
  + [Halakhic Midrash](/wiki/Midrash_Halakha)
  + [Aggadic Midrash](/wiki/Midrash#Aggadic_midrashim)
* [Halakhic](/wiki/Halakha) literature
  + Major Codes of Jewish Law and Custom
    - [Mishneh Torah](/wiki/Mishneh_Torah) and commentaries
    - [Tur](/wiki/Arba'ah_Turim) and commentaries
    - [Shulchan Aruch](/wiki/Shulchan_Aruch) and commentaries
  + [Responsa](/wiki/Responsa) literature
* Jewish Thought and Ethics
  + [Jewish philosophy](/wiki/Jewish_philosophy)
  + [Musar literature](/wiki/Musar_literature) and other works of [Jewish ethics](/wiki/Jewish_ethics)
  + [Kabbalah](/wiki/Kabbalah)
  + [Hasidic](/wiki/Hasidic_Judaism) works
* [Siddur](/wiki/Siddur) and [Jewish liturgy](/wiki/Jewish_services)
* [*Piyyut*](/wiki/Piyyut) (Classical Jewish poetry)

### Jewish legal literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The basis of Jewish law and tradition (halakha) is the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) (also known as the [Pentateuch](/wiki/Pentateuch) or the Five Books of Moses). According to rabbinic tradition there are [613 commandments](/wiki/613_mitzvot) in the Torah. Some of these laws are directed only to men or to women, some only to the ancient priestly groups, the [Kohanim](/wiki/Kohen) and [Leviyim](/wiki/Levite) (members of the tribe of [Levi](/wiki/Levi)), some only to farmers within the [Land of Israel](/wiki/Land_of_Israel). Many laws were only applicable when the [Temple in Jerusalem](/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem) existed, and fewer than 300 of these commandments are still applicable today.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

While there have been Jewish groups whose beliefs were claimed to be based on the written text of the Torah alone (e.g., the [Sadducees](/wiki/Sadducees), and the [Karaites](/wiki/Karaite_Judaism)), most Jews believed in what they call the [oral law](/wiki/Oral_law#Oral_law_in_Judaism). These oral traditions were transmitted by the [Pharisee](/wiki/Pharisees) sect of ancient Judaism, and were later recorded in written form and expanded upon by the rabbis.

Rabbinic Judaism (which derives from the Pharisees) has always held that the books of the Torah (called the written law) have always been transmitted in parallel with an oral tradition. To justify this viewpoint, Jews point to the text of the Torah, where many words are left undefined, and many procedures mentioned without explanation or instructions; this, they argue, means that the reader is assumed to be familiar with the details from other, i.e., oral, sources. This parallel set of material was originally transmitted orally, and came to be known as "the [oral law](/wiki/Oral_law)".

By the time of Rabbi [Judah haNasi](/wiki/Judah_haNasi) (200 CE), after the destruction of Jerusalem, much of this material was edited together into the [Mishnah](/wiki/Mishnah). Over the next four centuries this law underwent discussion and debate in both of the world's major Jewish communities (in Israel and [Babylonia](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Iraq)), and the commentaries on the Mishnah from each of these communities eventually came to be edited together into compilations known as the two [Talmuds](/wiki/Talmud). These have been expounded by commentaries of various Torah scholars during the ages.

Halakha, the rabbinic Jewish way of life, then, is based on a combined reading of the Torah, and the oral tradition—the Mishnah, the halakhic [Midrash](/wiki/Midrash), the Talmud and its commentaries. The Halakha has developed slowly, through a precedent-based system. The literature of questions to rabbis, and their considered answers, is referred to as [responsa](/wiki/Responsa) (in [Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrew_language), *Sheelot U-Teshuvot*.) Over time, as practices develop, codes of Jewish law are written that are based on the responsa; the most important code, the [Shulchan Aruch](/wiki/Shulchan_Aruch), largely determines Orthodox religious practice today.

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

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Jewish philosophy refers to the conjunction between serious study of philosophy and Jewish theology. Major Jewish philosophers include [Solomon ibn Gabirol](/wiki/Solomon_ibn_Gabirol), [Saadia Gaon](/wiki/Saadia_Gaon), [Judah Halevi](/wiki/Judah_Halevi), [Maimonides](/wiki/Maimonides), and [Gersonides](/wiki/Gersonides). Major changes occurred in response to the [Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) (late 18th to early 19th century) leading to the post-Enlightenment Jewish philosophers. Modern Jewish philosophy consists of both Orthodox and non-Orthodox oriented philosophy. Notable among Orthodox Jewish philosophers are [Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler](/wiki/Eliyahu_Eliezer_Dessler), [Joseph B. Soloveitchik](/wiki/Joseph_B._Soloveitchik), and [Yitzchok Hutner](/wiki/Yitzchok_Hutner). Well-known non-Orthodox Jewish philosophers include [Martin Buber](/wiki/Martin_Buber), [Franz Rosenzweig](/wiki/Franz_Rosenzweig), [Mordecai Kaplan](/wiki/Mordecai_Kaplan), [Abraham Joshua Heschel](/wiki/Abraham_Joshua_Heschel), [Will Herberg](/wiki/Will_Herberg), and [Emmanuel Lévinas](/wiki/Emmanuel_Lévinas).

**Related Topics**

* [Torah databases](/wiki/Torah_database) (electronic versions of the Traditional Jewish Bookshelf)
* [List of Jewish prayers and blessings](/wiki/List_of_Jewish_prayers_and_blessings)

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

[Template:Quote box](/wiki/Template:Quote_box) [Orthodox](/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism) and many other [Jews](/wiki/Jews) do not believe that the revealed [Torah](/wiki/Torah) consists solely of its written contents, but of its interpretations as well. The study of [Torah](/wiki/Torah) (in its widest sense, to include both poetry, narrative, and law, and both the [Hebrew Bible](/wiki/Tanakh) and the [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud)) is in Judaism itself a sacred act of central importance. For the sages of the [Mishnah](/wiki/Mishnah) and [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud), and for their successors today, the study of Torah was therefore not merely a means to learn the contents of God's revelation, but an end in itself. According to the [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud),

These are the things for which a person enjoys the dividends in this world while the principal remains for the person to enjoy in the world to come; they are: honoring parents, loving deeds of kindness, and making peace between one person and another. But the study of the Torah is equal to them all. (Talmud Shabbat 127a).

In Judaism, "the study of [Torah](/wiki/Torah) can be a means of experiencing God".[[52]](#cite_note-52) Reflecting on the contribution of the [Amoraim](/wiki/Amoraim) and [Tanaim](/wiki/Tanaim) to contemporary Judaism, Professor Jacob Neusner observed:

The rabbi's logical and rational inquiry is not mere logic-chopping. It is a most serious and substantive effort to locate in trivialities the fundamental principles of the revealed will of God to guide and sanctify the most specific and concrete actions in the workaday world .... Here is the mystery of Talmudic Judaism: the alien and remote conviction that the intellect is an instrument not of unbelief and desacralization but of sanctification."[[53]](#cite_note-53)To study the Written Torah and the Oral Torah in light of each other is thus also to study *how* to study the word of God.

In the study of Torah, the sages formulated and followed various [logical](/wiki/Logic) and [hermeneutical](/wiki/Hermeneutics) principles. According to David Stern, all Rabbinic hermeneutics rest on two basic axioms:

first, the belief in the omnisignificance of Scripture, in the meaningfulness of its every word, letter, even (according to one famous report) scribal flourish; second, the claim of the essential unity of Scripture as the expression of the single divine will.[[54]](#cite_note-54)These two principles make possible a great variety of interpretations. According to the Talmud,

A single verse has several meanings, but no two verses hold the same meaning. It was taught in the school of R. Ishmael: 'Behold, My word is like fire—declares the Lord—and like a hammer that shatters rock' (Jer 23:29). Just as this hammer produces many sparks (when it strikes the rock), so a single verse has several meanings." (Talmud Sanhedrin 34a).

Observant Jews thus view the Torah as dynamic, because it contains within it a host of interpretations[[55]](#cite_note-55) According to Rabbinic tradition, all valid interpretations of the [written Torah](/wiki/Written_Torah) were revealed to Moses at Sinai in [oral form](/wiki/Oral_Torah), and handed down from teacher to pupil (The oral revelation is in effect coextensive with the Talmud itself). When different rabbis forwarded conflicting interpretations, they sometimes appealed to hermeneutic principles to legitimize their arguments; some rabbis claim that these principles were themselves revealed by God to Moses at Sinai.[[56]](#cite_note-56) Thus, [Hillel](/wiki/Hillel_the_Elder) called attention to seven commonly used hermeneutical principles in the interpretation of laws ([baraita](/wiki/Baraita) at the beginning of [Sifra](/wiki/Sifra)); [R. Ishmael](/wiki/R._Ishmael), thirteen (baraita at the beginning of Sifra; this collection is largely an amplification of that of Hillel).[[57]](#cite_note-57) [Eliezer b. Jose ha-Gelili](/wiki/Eliezer_b._Jose_ha-Gelili) listed 32, largely used for the exegesis of narrative elements of Torah. All the hermeneutic rules scattered through the [Talmudim](/wiki/Talmudim) and [Midrashim](/wiki/Midrashim) have been collected by [Malbim](/wiki/Malbim) in *Ayyelet ha-Shachar,* the introduction to his commentary on the [Sifra](/wiki/Sifra). Nevertheless, R. Ishmael's 13 principles are perhaps the ones most widely known; they constitute an important, and one of Judaism's earliest, contributions to [logic](/wiki/Logic), [hermeneutics](/wiki/Hermeneutics), and [jurisprudence](/wiki/Jurisprudence).[[58]](#cite_note-58) [Judah Hadassi](/wiki/Judah_Hadassi) incorporated Ishmael's principles into [Karaite Judaism](/wiki/Karaite_Judaism) in the 12th century.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Today R. Ishmael's 13 principles are incorporated into the Jewish prayer book to be read by observant Jews on a daily basis.[[60]](#cite_note-60)[[61]](#cite_note-61)[[62]](#cite_note-62)[[63]](#cite_note-63)

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

### Origin of the term "Judaism"[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[right|thumb|A](/wiki/File:Macedonian_Mezuzah.jpg) [mezuzah](/wiki/Mezuzah) case The term Judaism derives from *Iudaismus*, a Latinized form of the Ancient Greek [Ἰουδαϊσμός](/wiki/Ioudaismos) or *Ioudaïsmos* (from the verb [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), "to side with or imitate the [Judeans]"),[[64]](#cite_note-64) and it was ultimately inspired by the [Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrew_language) יהודה, *Yehudah*, "[Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah)";[[65]](#cite_note-65)[[66]](#cite_note-66) in Hebrew: יַהֲדוּת, *Yahadut*. The term *Ἰουδαϊσμός* first appears in the [Hellenistic Greek](/wiki/Hellenistic_Greek) book of [2 Maccabees](/wiki/2_Maccabees) in the 2nd century BCE. In the context of the age and period it meant "seeking or forming part of a cultural entity"[[67]](#cite_note-67) and resembled its antonym [*hellenismos*](/wiki/Hellenismos), a word that signified a people's submission unto [Hellenic](/wiki/Hellenistic_period) ([Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greece)) cultural norms. The conflict between *iudaismos* and *hellenismos* lay behind the [Maccabean revolt](/wiki/Maccabean_revolt) and hence the invention of the term *iudaismos*.<ref name=influence>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> [Shaye J. D. Cohen](/wiki/Shaye_J._D._Cohen) writes in his book *The Beginnings of Jewishness*:

We are tempted, of course, to translate [*Ioudaïsmos*] as "Judaism," but this translation is too narrow, because in this first occurrence of the term, *Ioudaïsmos* has not yet be reduced to designation of a religion. It means rather "the aggregate of all those characteristics that makes Judaeans Judaean (or Jews Jewish)." Among these characteristics, to be sure, are practices and beliefs that we would today call "religious," but these practices and beliefs are not the sole content of the term. Thus *Ioudaïsmos* should be translated not as "Judaism" but as Judaeanness.[[68]](#cite_note-68) The earliest instance in Europe where the term was used to mean "the profession or practice of the Jewish religion; the religious system or polity of the Jews"{cn} is Robert Fabyan's *The newe cronycles of Englande and of Fraunce a 1513*. "Judaism" as a direct translation of the Latin *Iudaismus* first occurred in a 1611 English translation of the [Apocrypha](/wiki/Apocrypha) ([Deuterocanon](/wiki/Deuterocanon) in [Catholic](/wiki/Catholic) and [Eastern Orthodoxy](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church)), 2 Macc. ii. 21: "Those that behaved themselues manfully to their honour for Iudaisme."[[69]](#cite_note-69)

### Distinction between Jews as a people and Judaism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

According to [Daniel Boyarin](/wiki/Daniel_Boyarin), the underlying distinction between religion and ethnicity is foreign to Judaism itself, and is one form of the dualism between spirit and flesh that has its origin in [Platonic](/wiki/Plato) philosophy and that permeated [Hellenistic Judaism](/wiki/Hellenistic_Judaism).[[70]](#cite_note-70) Consequently, in his view, Judaism does not fit easily into conventional Western categories, such as religion, ethnicity, or culture. Boyarin suggests that this in part reflects the fact that much of Judaism's more than 3,000-year history predates the rise of Western culture and occurred outside the West (that is, Europe, particularly medieval and modern Europe). During this time, Jews experienced slavery, anarchic and theocratic self-government, conquest, occupation, and exile. In the Diaspora, they were in contact with, and influenced by, ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenic cultures, as well as modern movements such as the Enlightenment (see [Haskalah](/wiki/Haskalah)) and the rise of nationalism, which would bear fruit in the form of a Jewish state in their ancient homeland, the [Land of Israel](/wiki/Land_of_Israel). They also saw an elite population convert to Judaism (the [Khazars](/wiki/Khazar)), only to disappear as the centers of power in the lands once occupied by that elite fell to the people of Rus and then the Mongols.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Thus, Boyarin has argued that "Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity, because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these, in dialectical tension."[[71]](#cite_note-71) In contrast to this point of view, practices such as [Humanistic Judaism](/wiki/Humanistic_Judaism) reject the religious aspects of Judaism, while retaining certain cultural traditions.

### Who is a Jew?[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

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According to [Rabbinic Judaism](/wiki/Rabbinic_Judaism), a Jew is anyone who was either born of a Jewish mother or who [converted to Judaism](/wiki/Conversion_to_Judaism) in accordance with Jewish Law. [Reconstructionist Judaism](/wiki/Reconstructionist_Judaism) and the larger denominations of worldwide [Progressive Judaism](/wiki/Reform_Judaism) (also known as Liberal or Reform Judaism) accept the child as Jewish if one of the parents is Jewish, if the parents raise the child with a Jewish identity, but not the smaller regional branches.[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify) All mainstream forms of Judaism today are open to sincere converts, although conversion has traditionally been discouraged since the time of the Talmud. The conversion process is evaluated by an authority, and the convert is examined on his or her sincerity and knowledge.[[72]](#cite_note-72) Converts are called "ben Abraham" or "bat Abraham", (son or daughter of Abraham). Conversions have on occasion been overturned. In 2008, Israel's highest religious court invalidated the conversion of 40,000 Jews, mostly from Russian immigrant families, even though they had been approved by an Orthodox rabbi.[[73]](#cite_note-73) Rabbinical Judaism maintains that a Jew, whether by birth or conversion, is a Jew forever. Thus a Jew who claims to be an atheist or converts to another religion is still considered by traditional Judaism to be Jewish. According to some sources, the Reform movement has maintained that a Jew who has converted to another religion is no longer a Jew,[[74]](#cite_note-74)[[75]](#cite_note-75) and the Israeli Government has also taken that stance after Supreme Court cases and statutes.[[76]](#cite_note-76) However, the Reform movement has indicated that this is not so cut and dried, and different situations call for consideration and differing actions. For example, Jews who have converted under duress may be permitted to return to Judaism "without any action on their part but their desire to rejoin the Jewish community" and "A proselyte who has become an apostate remains, nevertheless, a Jew". (p. 100–106).[[77]](#cite_note-77) [Karaite Judaism](/wiki/Karaite_Judaism) believes that Jewish identity can only be transmitted by patrilineal descent. Although a minority of modern Karaites believe that Jewish identity requires that both parents be Jewish, and not only the father. They argue that only patrilineal descent can transmit Jewish identity on the grounds that all descent in the Torah went according to the male line.[[78]](#cite_note-78) The question of what determines Jewish identity in the State of Israel was given new impetus when, in the 1950s, [David Ben-Gurion](/wiki/David_Ben-Gurion) requested opinions on *mihu Yehudi* ("Who is a Jew") from Jewish religious authorities and intellectuals worldwide in order to settle citizenship questions. This is still not settled, and occasionally resurfaces in [Israeli politics](/wiki/Politics_of_Israel).

### Jewish demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

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The total number of Jews worldwide is difficult to assess because the definition of "who is a Jew" is problematic; not all Jews identify themselves as Jewish, and some who identify as Jewish are not considered so by other Jews. According to the *Jewish Year Book* (1901), the global Jewish population in 1900 was around 11 million. The latest available data is from the World Jewish Population Survey of 2002 and the Jewish Year Calendar (2005). In 2002, according to the Jewish Population Survey, there were 13.3 million Jews around the world. The Jewish Year Calendar cites 14.6 million. Jewish population growth is currently near zero percent, with 0.3% growth from 2000 to 2001.

## Jewish religious movements[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

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

Rabbinic Judaism (or in some Christian traditions, Rabbinism) (Hebrew: "Yahadut Rabanit" – יהדות רבנית) has been the mainstream form of Judaism since the 6th century CE, after the codification of the [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud). It is characterised by the belief that the [Written Torah](/wiki/Written_Torah) (Written Law) cannot be correctly interpreted without reference to the [Oral Torah](/wiki/Oral_Torah) and the voluminous literature specifying what behavior is sanctioned by the [Law](/wiki/Halakha).

The [Jewish Enlightenment](/wiki/Jewish_Enlightenment) of the late 18th century resulted in the division of [Ashkenazi](/wiki/Ashkenazi) (Western) Jewry into religious movements or denominations, especially in North America and Anglophone countries. The main denominations today outside Israel (where the situation is rather different) are Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform.

* [Orthodox Judaism](/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism) holds that both the Written and [Oral Torah](/wiki/Oral_Torah) were divinely revealed to [Moses](/wiki/Moses), and that the laws within it are binding and unchanging. Orthodox Jews generally consider commentaries on the [*Shulchan Aruch*](/wiki/Shulchan_Aruch) (a condensed codification of halakha that largely favored Sephardic traditions) to be the definitive codification of Jewish law. Orthodoxy places a high importance on [Maimonides' 13 principles](/wiki/13_Principles_of_Faith) as a definition of Jewish faith.
* Orthodoxy is often divided into [Modern Orthodox Judaism](/wiki/Modern_Orthodox_Judaism) and [Haredi Judaism](/wiki/Haredi_Judaism). [Haredi Judaism](/wiki/Haredi_Judaism) is less accommodating to modernity and has less interest in non-Jewish disciplines, and it may be distinguished from [Modern Orthodox Judaism](/wiki/Modern_Orthodox_Judaism) in practice by its styles of dress and more stringent practices. Subsets of [Haredi Judaism](/wiki/Haredi_Judaism) include: [Hasidic Judaism](/wiki/Hasidic_Judaism), which is rooted in the [Kabbalah](/wiki/Kabbalah) and distinguished by reliance on a [Rebbe](/wiki/Rebbe) or religious teacher; and [Sephardic Haredi](/wiki/Sephardic_Haredi) Judaism, which emerged among [Sephardic](/wiki/Sephardic) (Asian and North African) Jews in Israel.
* [Conservative Judaism](/wiki/Conservative_Judaism) is characterized by a commitment to traditional Jewish laws and customs, including observance of [Shabbat](/wiki/Shabbat) and [kashrut](/wiki/Kashrut), a deliberately non-fundamentalist teaching of Jewish principles of faith, a positive attitude toward modern culture, and an acceptance of both traditional rabbinic and modern scholarship when considering Jewish religious texts. Conservative Judaism teaches that Jewish law is not static, but has always developed in response to changing conditions. It holds that the Torah is a divine document written by prophets inspired by God and reflecting his will, but rejects the Orthodox position that it was dictated by God to Moses.[[79]](#cite_note-79)[[80]](#cite_note-80) Conservative Judaism holds that the [Oral Law](/wiki/Oral_Torah) is divine and normative, but holds that both the Written and Oral Law may be interpreted by the rabbis to reflect modern sensibilities and suit modern conditions.
* [Reform Judaism](/wiki/Reform_Judaism), called Liberal or Progressive Judaism in many countries, defines Judaism in relatively universalist terms, rejects most of the ritual and ceremonial laws of the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) while observing moral laws, and emphasizes the ethical call of the [Prophets](/wiki/Nevi'im). Reform Judaism has developed an egalitarian prayer service in the vernacular (along with [Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrew_language) in many cases) and emphasizes personal connection to Jewish tradition.

[230px|thumb|right|A](/wiki/File:ReformJewishService.jpg) [Reform synagogue](/wiki/Reform_Judaism) with mixed seating and equal participation of men and women

* [Reconstructionist Judaism](/wiki/Reconstructionist_Judaism), like Reform Judaism, does not hold that Jewish law, as such, requires observance, but unlike Reform, Reconstructionist thought emphasizes the role of the community in deciding what observances to follow.
* [Jewish Renewal](/wiki/Jewish_Renewal) is a recent North American movement which focuses on spirituality and social justice, but does not address issues of Jewish law. Men and women participate equally in prayer.
* [Humanistic Judaism](/wiki/Humanistic_Judaism) is a small non-theistic movement centered in North America and Israel that emphasizes Jewish culture and history as the sources of Jewish identity.

#### Jewish movements in Israel[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Most Jewish Israelis classify themselves as "secular" (*hiloni*), ["traditional" (*masorti*)](/wiki/Masortim), "religious" (*dati*) or [*Haredi*](/wiki/Haredi_Judaism). The term "secular" is more popular as a self-description among Israeli families of western (European) origin, whose Jewish identity may be a very powerful force in their lives, but who see it as largely independent of traditional religious belief and practice. This portion of the population largely ignores organized religious life, be it of the official Israeli rabbinate (Orthodox) or of the liberal movements common to diaspora Judaism (Reform, Conservative).

The term "traditional" (*masorti*) is most common as a self-description among Israeli families of "eastern" origin (i.e., the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa). This term, as commonly used, has nothing to do with the [Conservative Judaism](/wiki/Conservative_Judaism), which also names itself "Masorti" outside North America. There is a great deal of ambiguity in the ways "secular" and "traditional" are used in Israel: they often overlap, and they cover an extremely wide range in terms of worldview and practical religious observance. The term "Orthodox" is not popular in Israeli discourse, although the percentage of Jews who come under that category is far greater than in the [diaspora](/wiki/Jewish_Diaspora). What would be called "Orthodox" in the diaspora includes what is commonly called *dati* (religious) or *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) in Israel. The former term includes what is called "[Religious Zionism](/wiki/Religious_Zionism)" or the "National Religious" community, as well as what has become known over the past decade or so as *haredi-leumi* ([nationalist](/wiki/Nationalism) *haredi*), or "Hardal", which combines a largely *haredi* lifestyle with nationalist ideology. (Some people, in [Yiddish](/wiki/Yiddish), also refer to observant Orthodox Jews as *frum*, as opposed to *frei* (more liberal Jews)).

*Haredi* applies to a populace that can be roughly divided into three separate groups along both ethnic and ideological lines: (1) "Lithuanian" (non-hasidic) *haredim* of [Ashkenazic](/wiki/Ashkenazim) origin; (2) Hasidic *haredim* of Ashkenazic origin; and (3) [Sephardic](/wiki/Sephardim) *haredim*.

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

[Karaite Judaism](/wiki/Karaite_Judaism) defines itself as the remnants of the non-Rabbinic Jewish sects of the [Second Temple](/wiki/Second_Temple) period, such as the [Sadducees](/wiki/Sadducees). The Karaites ("Scripturalists") accept only the Hebrew Bible and what they view as the [Peshat](/wiki/Peshat) ("simple" meaning); they do not accept non-biblical writings as authoritative. Some European Karaites do not see themselves as part of the Jewish community at all, although most do.

The [Samaritans](/wiki/Samaritan), a very small community located entirely around [Mount Gerizim](/wiki/Mount_Gerizim) in the [Nablus](/wiki/Nablus)/[Shechem](/wiki/Shechem) region of the [West Bank](/wiki/West_Bank) and in [Holon](/wiki/Holon), near [Tel Aviv](/wiki/Tel_Aviv) in Israel, regard themselves as the descendants of the Israelites of the Iron Age [kingdom of Israel](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(Samaria)). Their religious practices are based on the literal text of the written [Torah](/wiki/Torah) (Five Books of Moses), which they view as the only authoritative scripture (with a special regard also for the [Samaritan Book of Joshua](/wiki/Book_of_Joshua_(Samaritan))).

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

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

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Jewish ethics may be guided by [halakhic](/wiki/Halakhic) traditions, by other moral principles, or by central Jewish virtues. Jewish ethical practice is typically understood to be marked by values such as justice, truth, peace, loving-kindness ([chesed](/wiki/Chesed)), compassion, humility, and self-respect. Specific Jewish ethical practices include practices of charity ([tzedakah](/wiki/Tzedakah)) and refraining from negative speech ([lashon hara](/wiki/Lashon_hara)). Proper ethical practices regarding sexuality and many other issues are subjects of dispute among Jews.

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

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumbnail|200px|right|A Yemenite Jew at morning prayers, wearing a](/wiki/File:YemeniJew1914.jpg) [kippah](/wiki/Kippah) skullcap, prayer shawl and [tefillin](/wiki/Tefillin) Traditionally, Jews recite prayers three times daily, [Shacharit](/wiki/Shacharit), [Mincha](/wiki/Mincha), and [Ma'ariv](/wiki/Ma'ariv) with a fourth prayer, [Mussaf](/wiki/Mussaf) added on [Shabbat](/wiki/Shabbat) and [holidays](/wiki/Jewish_holiday). At the heart of each service is the [*Amidah*](/wiki/Amidah) or *Shemoneh Esrei*. Another key prayer in many services is the declaration of faith, the [*Shema Yisrael*](/wiki/Shema_Yisrael) (or *Shema*). The *Shema* is the recitation of a verse from the Torah ([Deuteronomy](/wiki/Deuteronomy) 6:4): *Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad*—"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God! The Lord is One!"

Most of the prayers in a traditional Jewish service can be recited in solitary prayer, although communal prayer is preferred. Communal prayer requires a [quorum](/wiki/Quorum) of ten adult Jews, called a [*minyan*](/wiki/Minyan). In nearly all Orthodox and a few Conservative circles, only male Jews are counted toward a *minyan*; most Conservative Jews and members of other Jewish denominations count female Jews as well.

In addition to prayer services, observant traditional Jews recite prayers and benedictions throughout the day when [performing various acts](/wiki/List_of_Jewish_prayers_and_blessings#Everyday_prayers_and_blessings). Prayers are recited upon [waking up in the morning](/wiki/Modeh_ani), before eating or drinking different foods, [after eating a meal](/wiki/Birkat_Hamazon), and so on.

The approach to prayer varies among the Jewish denominations. Differences can include the texts of prayers, the frequency of prayer, the number of prayers recited at various religious events, the use of musical instruments and choral music, and whether prayers are recited in the traditional liturgical languages or the vernacular. In general, Orthodox and Conservative congregations adhere most closely to tradition, and Reform and Reconstructionist synagogues are more likely to incorporate translations and contemporary writings in their services. Also, in most Conservative synagogues, and all Reform and Reconstructionist congregations, women participate in prayer services on an [equal basis](/wiki/Egalitarianism) with men, including roles traditionally filled only by men, such as [reading from the Torah](/wiki/Torah_reading). In addition, many Reform temples use musical accompaniment such as organs and mixed choirs.

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

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) A [*kippah*](/wiki/Kippah) (Hebrew: כִּפָּה, plural *kippot*; Yiddish: יאַרמלקע, *yarmulke*) is a slightly rounded brimless skullcap worn by many Jews while praying, eating, reciting blessings, or studying Jewish religious texts, and at all times by some Jewish men. In Orthodox communities, only men wear kippot; in non-Orthodox communities, some women also wear kippot. *Kippot* range in size from a small round beanie that covers only the back of the head, to a large, snug cap that covers the whole crown.

[*Tzitzit*](/wiki/Tzitzit) (Hebrew: צִיציִת) ([Ashkenazi pronunciation](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Hebrew): *tzitzis*) are special knotted "fringes" or "tassels" found on the four corners of the [*tallit*](/wiki/Tallit) (Hebrew: טַלִּית) (Ashkenazi pronunciation: *tallis*), or prayer [shawl](/wiki/Shawl). The *tallit* is worn by Jewish men and some Jewish women during the prayer service. Customs vary regarding when a Jew begins wearing a tallit. In the Sephardi community, boys wear a tallit from bar mitzvah age. In some Ashkenazi communities it is customary to wear one only after marriage. A *tallit katan* (small tallit) is a fringed garment worn under the clothing throughout the day. In some Orthodox circles, the fringes are allowed to hang freely outside the clothing.

[Tefillin](/wiki/Tefillin) (Hebrew: תְפִלִּין), known in English as phylacteries (from the Greek word φυλακτήριον, meaning *safeguard* or *amulet*), are two square leather boxes containing biblical verses, attached to the forehead and wound around the left arm by leather straps. They are worn during weekday morning prayer by observant Jewish men and some Jewish women.[[81]](#cite_note-81) A [*kittel*](/wiki/Kittel) (Yiddish: קיטל), a white knee-length overgarment, is worn by prayer leaders and some observant traditional Jews on the [High Holidays](/wiki/High_Holidays). It is traditional for the head of the household to wear a kittel at the Passover seder in some communities, and some grooms wear one under the wedding canopy. Jewish males are buried in a *tallit* and sometimes also a *kittel* which are part of the [*tachrichim*](/wiki/Tachrichim) (burial garments).

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

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Jewish holidays are special days in the Jewish calendar, which celebrate moments in Jewish history, as well as central themes in the relationship between God and the world, such as [creation](/wiki/Creation_myth), [revelation](/wiki/Revelation), and [redemption](/wiki/Salvation).

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

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

[250px|right|thumb|Two braided Shabbat](/wiki/File:Shabbat_Challos.jpg) [challahs](/wiki/Challah) placed under an embroidered [challah cover](/wiki/Challah_cover) at the start of the Shabbat meal [*Shabbat*](/wiki/Shabbat), the weekly day of rest lasting from shortly before sundown on Friday night to nightfall Saturday night, commemorates God's day of rest after six days of creation.[[82]](#cite_note-82) It plays a pivotal role in Jewish practice and is governed by a large corpus of religious law. At sundown on Friday, the woman of the house welcomes the Shabbat by lighting two or more candles and reciting a blessing. The evening meal begins with the Kiddush, a blessing recited aloud over a cup of wine, and the Mohtzi, a blessing recited over the bread. It is customary to have [challah](/wiki/Challah), two braided loaves of bread, on the table. During Shabbat Jews are forbidden to engage in any activity that falls under [39 categories of *melakhah*](/wiki/39_categories_of_activity_prohibited_on_Shabbat), translated literally as "work". In fact the activities banned on the Sabbath are not "work" in the usual sense: They include such actions as lighting a fire, writing, using money and carrying in the public domain. The prohibition of lighting a fire has been extended in the modern era to driving a car, which involves burning fuel, and using electricity.

#### Three pilgrimage festivals[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

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

[250px|right|thumb|Some](/wiki/File:Jerusalemsukkas.jpg) [sukkot](/wiki/Sukkah) in Jerusalem Jewish holy days (*chaggim*), celebrate landmark events in Jewish history, such as the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, and sometimes mark the change of seasons and transitions in the agricultural cycle. The three major festivals, Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot, are called "regalim" (derived from the Hebrew word "regel", or foot). On the three regalim, it was customary for the Israelites to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple.

* [Passover](/wiki/Passover) (*Pesach*) is a week-long holiday beginning on the evening of the 14th day of [Nisan](/wiki/Nisan) (the first month in the Hebrew calendar), that commemorates the [Exodus](/wiki/Book_of_Exodus) from Egypt. Outside Israel, Passover is celebrated for eight days. In ancient times, it coincided with the barley harvest. It is the only holiday that centers on home-service, the [Seder](/wiki/Passover_Seder). [Leavened](/wiki/Leavening_agent) products ([chametz](/wiki/Chametz)) are removed from the house prior to the holiday, and are not consumed throughout the week. Homes are thoroughly cleaned to ensure no bread or bread by-products remain, and a symbolic burning of the last vestiges of chametz is conducted on the morning of the Seder. [Matzo](/wiki/Matzo) is eaten instead of bread.
* [Shavuot](/wiki/Shavuot) ("Pentecost" or "Feast of Weeks") celebrates the revelation of the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) to the [Israelites](/wiki/Israelite) on Mount Sinai. Also known as the Festival of Bikurim, or first fruits, it coincided in biblical times with the wheat harvest. Shavuot customs include all-night study marathons known as Tikkun Leil Shavuot, eating dairy foods (cheesecake and blintzes are special favorites), reading the Book of Ruth, decorating homes and synagogues with greenery, and wearing white clothing, symbolizing purity.
* [Sukkot](/wiki/Sukkot) ("Tabernacles" or "The Festival of Booths") commemorates the Israelites' forty years of wandering through the desert on their way to the Promised Land. It is celebrated through the construction of temporary booths called *sukkot* (sing. [*sukkah*](/wiki/Sukkah)) that represent the temporary shelters of the Israelites during their wandering. It coincides with the fruit harvest, and marks the end of the agricultural cycle. Jews around the world eat in *sukkot* for seven days and nights. Sukkot concludes with [Shemini Atzeret](/wiki/Shemini_Atzeret), where Jews begin to pray for rain and [Simchat Torah](/wiki/Simchat_Torah), "Rejoicing of the Torah", a holiday which marks reaching the end of the Torah reading cycle and beginning all over again. The occasion is celebrated with singing and dancing with the Torah scrolls. Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are technically considered to be a separate holiday and not a part of Sukkot.

#### High Holy Days[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[thumb|200px|](/wiki/File:Gottlieb-Jews_Praying_in_the_Synagogue_on_Yom_Kippur.jpg)[*Yom Kippur*](/wiki/Yom_Kippur) by [Maurycy Gottlieb](/wiki/Maurycy_Gottlieb) (1878) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The High Holidays (*Yamim Noraim* or "Days of Awe") revolve around judgment and forgiveness.

* [Rosh Hashanah](/wiki/Rosh_Hashanah), (also *Yom Ha-Zikkaron* or "Day of Remembrance", and *Yom Teruah*, or "Day of the Sounding of the [Shofar](/wiki/Shofar)"). Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year (literally, "head of the year"), although it falls on the first day of the seventh month of the [Hebrew calendar](/wiki/Hebrew_calendar), [Tishri](/wiki/Tishri). Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the 10-day period of atonement leading up to Yom Kippur, during which Jews are commanded to search their souls and make amends for sins committed, intentionally or not, throughout the year. Holiday customs include blowing the shofar, or ram's horn, in the synagogue, eating apples and honey, and saying blessings over a variety of symbolic foods, such as pomegranates.
* [Yom Kippur](/wiki/Yom_Kippur), ("Day of Atonement") is the holiest day of the Jewish year. It is a day of communal fasting and praying for forgiveness for one's sins. Observant Jews spend the entire day in the synagogue, sometimes with a short break in the afternoon, reciting prayers from a special holiday prayerbook called a "Machzor". Many non-religious Jews make a point of attending synagogue services and fasting on Yom Kippur. On the eve of Yom Kippur, before candles are lit, a prefast meal, the "seuda mafseket", is eaten. Synagogue services on the eve of Yom Kippur begin with the Kol Nidre prayer. It is customary to wear white on Yom Kippur, especially for Kol Nidre, and leather shoes are not worn. The following day, prayers are held from morning to evening. The final prayer service, called "Ne'ilah", ends with a long blast of the shofar.

#### Purim[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [225px|right|thumb|Purim street scene in Jerusalem](/wiki/File:Jerusalem_Purim_street_scene.jpg) [thumb|200px|](/wiki/File:Présentation_de_la_Loi,_Edouard_Moyse_(1860)_-_Musée_d'art_et_d'histoire_du_Judaïsme.jpg)[Torah](/wiki/Torah) reading, France, 1860 [Museum of Jewish Art and History](/wiki/Musée_d'Art_et_d'Histoire_du_Judaïsme) [Purim](/wiki/Purim) ([Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrew_language): [Template:Audio](/wiki/Template:Audio) *Pûrîm* "[lots](/wiki/Cleromancy)") is a joyous Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the [Persian Jews](/wiki/Persian_Jews) from the plot of the evil [Haman](/wiki/Haman_(Bible)), who sought to [exterminate](/wiki/Genocide) them, as recorded in the biblical [Book of Esther](/wiki/Book_of_Esther). It is characterized by public recitation of the Book of Esther, mutual gifts of food and drink, [charity](/wiki/Alms) to the poor, and a celebratory meal (Esther 9:22). Other customs include drinking wine, eating special pastries called [hamantashen](/wiki/Hamantash), dressing up in masks and costumes, and organizing carnivals and parties.

Purim is celebrated annually on the 14th of the Hebrew month of [Adar](/wiki/Adar), which occurs in February or March of the Gregorian calendar.

#### Hanukkah[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

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

[Hanukkah](/wiki/Hanukkah) ([Template:Lang-he](/wiki/Template:Lang-he), "dedication") also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight-day Jewish holiday that starts on the 25th day of [Kislev](/wiki/Kislev) ([Hebrew calendar](/wiki/Hebrew_calendar)). The festival is observed in Jewish homes by the kindling of lights on each of the festival's eight nights, one on the first night, two on the second night and so on.

The holiday was called Hanukkah (meaning "dedication") because it marks the re-dedication of the Temple after its desecration by [Antiochus IV Epiphanes](/wiki/Antiochus_IV_Epiphanes). Spiritually, Hanukkah commemorates the "Miracle of the Oil". According to the Talmud, at the re-dedication of the [Temple in Jerusalem](/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem) following the victory of the [Maccabees](/wiki/Maccabees) over the [Seleucid Empire](/wiki/Seleucid_Empire), there was only enough consecrated [oil](/wiki/Oil) to fuel the eternal flame in the Temple for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days – which was the length of time it took to press, prepare and consecrate new oil.

Hanukkah is not mentioned in the Bible and was never considered a major holiday in Judaism, but it has become much more visible and widely celebrated in modern times, mainly because it falls around the same time as Christmas and has national Jewish overtones that have been emphasized since the establishment of the State of Israel.

#### Other days[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Tisha B'Av](/wiki/Tisha_B'Av) ([Template:Lang-he](/wiki/Template:Lang-he) or [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), "the Ninth of [Av](/wiki/Av_(month))") is a day of mourning and fasting commemorating the destruction of the [First](/wiki/First_Temple) and [Second Temples](/wiki/Second_Temple), and in later times, the [expulsion of the Jews from Spain](/wiki/Alhambra_Decree).

The modern holidays of [Yom Ha-shoah](/wiki/Yom_Ha-shoah) (Holocaust Remembrance Day) and [Yom Ha'atzmaut](/wiki/Yom_Ha'atzmaut) (Israeli Independence Day) commemorate the horrors of the [Holocaust](/wiki/Holocaust) and the achievement of Israel independence, respectively.

### Torah readings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The core of festival and [Shabbat](/wiki/Shabbat) prayer services is the public reading of the [Torah](/wiki/Torah), along with connected readings from the other books of the [Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh), called [Haftarah](/wiki/Haftarah). Over the course of a year, the whole Torah is read, with the cycle starting over in the autumn, on [Simchat Torah](/wiki/Simchat_Torah).

### Synagogues and religious buildings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [right|thumb|Interior of the](/wiki/File:Belz_World_Center_Inside.jpg) [Belz Great Synagogue](/wiki/Belz_Great_Synagogue) in Jerusalem.

Synagogues are Jewish houses of prayer and study. They usually contain separate rooms for prayer (the main sanctuary), smaller rooms for study, and often an area for community or educational use. There is no set blueprint for synagogues and the architectural shapes and interior designs of synagogues vary greatly. The Reform movement mostly refer to their synagogues as temples. Some traditional features of a synagogue are:

* The [ark](/wiki/Ark_(synagogue)) (called *aron ha-kodesh* by [Ashkenazim](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) and *hekhal* by [Sephardim](/wiki/Sephardi_Jews)) where the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) scrolls are kept (the ark is often closed with an ornate curtain ([*parochet*](/wiki/Parochet)) outside or inside the ark doors);
* The elevated reader's platform (called [*bimah*](/wiki/Bimah) by Ashkenazim and *tebah* by Sephardim), where the Torah is read (and services are conducted in Sephardi synagogues);
* The [eternal light](/wiki/Sanctuary_lamp) (*ner tamid*), a continually lit lamp or lantern used as a reminder of the constantly lit [menorah](/wiki/Menorah_(Temple)) of the [Temple in Jerusalem](/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem)
* The pulpit, or *amud*, a lectern facing the Ark where the [hazzan](/wiki/Hazzan) or prayer leader stands while praying.

In addition to synagogues, other buildings of significance in Judaism include [yeshivas](/wiki/Yeshiva), or institutions of Jewish learning, and [mikvahs](/wiki/Mikvah), which are ritual baths.

### Dietary laws: ''kashrut''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

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

The Jewish dietary laws are known as [*kashrut*](/wiki/Kashrut). Food prepared in accordance with them is termed [kosher](/wiki/Kosher_foods), and food that is not kosher is also known as *treifah* or *treif*. People who observe these laws are colloquially said to be "keeping kosher".[[83]](#cite_note-83) Many of the laws apply to animal-based foods. For example, in order to be considered kosher, [mammals](/wiki/Mammals) must have split [hooves](/wiki/Hooves) and [chew their cud](/wiki/Ruminants). The [pig](/wiki/Pig) is arguably the most well-known example of a non-kosher animal.[[84]](#cite_note-84) Although it has split hooves, it does not chew its cud.[[85]](#cite_note-85) For [seafood](/wiki/Seafood) to be kosher, the animal must have [fins](/wiki/Fins) and [scales](/wiki/Scale_(zoology)). Certain types of seafood, such as [shellfish](/wiki/Shellfish), [crustaceans](/wiki/Crustaceans), and [eels](/wiki/Eel), are therefore considered non-kosher. Concerning birds, a list of non-kosher species is given in the [Torah](/wiki/Torah). The exact [translations](/wiki/Translations) of many of the species have not survived, and some non-kosher birds' identities are no longer certain. However, [traditions](/wiki/Traditions) exist about the *kashrut* status of a few birds. For example, both [chickens](/wiki/Chickens) and [turkeys](/wiki/Turkeys) are permitted in most communities. Other types of animals, such as [amphibians](/wiki/Amphibians), [reptiles](/wiki/Reptiles), and most [insects](/wiki/Insects), are prohibited altogether.[[83]](#cite_note-83) In addition to the requirement that the species be considered kosher, meat and poultry (but not fish) must come from a healthy animal slaughtered in a process known as [*shechitah*](/wiki/Shechitah). Without the proper [slaughtering](/wiki/Animal_slaughter) practices even an otherwise kosher animal will be rendered *treif*. The slaughtering process is intended to be quick and relatively painless to the animal. Forbidden parts of animals include the [blood](/wiki/Blood), some [fats](/wiki/Fat), and the area in and around the [sciatic nerve](/wiki/Sciatic_nerve).[[83]](#cite_note-83) Jewish law also forbids the consumption of meat and dairy products together. The waiting period between eating meat and eating dairy varies by the order in which they are consumed and by community, and can extend for up to six hours. Based on the Biblical injunction against cooking a kid in its mother's milk, this rule is mostly derived from the [Oral Torah](/wiki/Oral_Torah), the [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud) and [Rabbinic law](/wiki/Rabbinic_law).[[83]](#cite_note-83) Chicken and other kosher birds are considered the same as meat under the laws of *kashrut*, but the prohibition is Rabbinic, not Biblical.[[86]](#cite_note-86) The use of [dishes](/wiki/Dishes), serving utensils, and [ovens](/wiki/Oven) may make food *treif* that would otherwise be kosher. Utensils that have been used to prepare non-kosher food, or dishes that have held meat and are now used for dairy products, render the food *treif* under certain conditions.[[83]](#cite_note-83) Furthermore, all [Orthodox](/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism) and some [Conservative](/wiki/Conservative_Judaism) authorities forbid the consumption of processed [grape](/wiki/Grape) products made by non-Jews, due to ancient [pagan](/wiki/Pagan) practices of using wine in rituals.[[83]](#cite_note-83) Some Conservative authorities permit wine and grape juice made without rabbinic supervision.[[87]](#cite_note-87) The [Torah](/wiki/Torah) does not give specific reasons for most of the laws of *kashrut*.[[83]](#cite_note-83) However, a number of explanations have been offered, including maintaining ritual purity, teaching impulse control, encouraging obedience to God, improving health, reducing [cruelty to animals](/wiki/Cruelty_to_animals) and preserving the distinctness of the Jewish community.[[88]](#cite_note-88) The various categories of dietary laws may have developed for different reasons, and some may exist for multiple reasons. For example, people are forbidden from consuming the blood of birds and mammals because, according to the Torah, this is where animal souls are contained.[[89]](#cite_note-89) In contrast, the Torah forbids Israelites from eating non-kosher species because "they are unclean".[[90]](#cite_note-90) The [Kabbalah](/wiki/Kabbalah) describes sparks of holiness that are released by the act of eating kosher foods, but are too tightly bound in non-kosher foods to be released by eating.[[91]](#cite_note-91) Survival concerns supersede all the laws of *kashrut*, as they do for most [halakhot](/wiki/Halakha).[[92]](#cite_note-92)[[93]](#cite_note-93)

### Laws of ritual purity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [right|thumb|250px|A silver matchbox holder for ritual use on](/wiki/File:Шабатна_кибритна_кутија_-_Shabbat_matchbox_holder.jpg) [Shabbat](/wiki/Shabbat) with inscription in [Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrew_language) The [Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh) describes circumstances in which a person who is *tahor* or ritually pure may become *tamei* or ritually impure. Some of these circumstances are contact with human [corpses](/wiki/Corpses) or [graves](/wiki/Grave_(burial)), seminal flux, vaginal flux, [menstruation](/wiki/Menstruation), and contact with people who have become impure from any of these.[[94]](#cite_note-94)[[95]](#cite_note-95) In Rabbinic Judaism, [Kohanim](/wiki/Kohanim), members of the hereditary [caste](/wiki/Caste) that served as [priests](/wiki/Priests) in the time of the Temple, are mostly restricted from entering grave sites and touching dead bodies.[[96]](#cite_note-96) During the Temple period, such priests ([Kohanim](/wiki/Kohanim)) were required to eat their bread offering ([Terumah](/wiki/Terumah)) in a state of ritual purity, which laws eventually led to more rigid laws being enacted, such as [hand-washing](/wiki/Handwashing_in_Judaism) which became a requisite of all Jews before consuming ordinary bread.

#### Family purity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[thumb|200px|18th century circumcision chair](/wiki/File:Fauteuil_de_circoncision_(%22Fauteuil_d'Elie%22).jpg) [Museum of Jewish Art and History](/wiki/Musée_d'Art_et_d'Histoire_du_Judaïsme) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

An important subcategory of the ritual purity laws relates to the segregation of menstruating [women](/wiki/Women). These laws are also known as [*niddah*](/wiki/Niddah), literally "separation", or family purity. Vital aspects of halakha for traditionally observant Jews, they are not usually followed by Jews in liberal denominations.[[97]](#cite_note-97) Especially in [Orthodox Judaism](/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism), the Biblical laws are augmented by Rabbinical injunctions. For example, the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) mandates that a woman in her normal menstrual period must abstain from [sexual intercourse](/wiki/Sexual_intercourse) for seven days. A woman whose menstruation is prolonged must continue to abstain for seven more days after bleeding has stopped.[[94]](#cite_note-94) The Rabbis conflated ordinary *niddah* with this extended menstrual period, known in the Torah as [*zavah*](/wiki/Zavah), and mandated that a woman may not have sexual intercourse with her [husband](/wiki/Husband) from the time she begins her [menstrual](/wiki/Menstrual_cycle) flow until seven days after it ends. In addition, [Rabbinical law](/wiki/Rabbinical_law) forbids the [husband](/wiki/Husband) from touching or sharing a bed with his wife during this period. Afterwards, purification can occur in a ritual bath called a [mikveh](/wiki/Mikveh).[[97]](#cite_note-97) Traditional [Ethiopian Jews](/wiki/Ethiopian_Jews) keep menstruating women in separate [huts](/wiki/Huts) and, similar to [Karaite practice](/wiki/Karaite_Judaism), do not allow menstruating women into their [temples](/wiki/Temples) because of a temple's special sanctity. Emigration to [Israel](/wiki/Israel) and the influence of other Jewish denominations have led to Ethiopian Jews adopting more normative Jewish practices.[[98]](#cite_note-98)[[99]](#cite_note-99)

### Life-cycle events[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

Life-cycle events, or [rites of passage](/wiki/Rites_of_passage), occur throughout a Jew's life that serve to strengthen Jewish identity and bind him/her to the entire community.

* [Brit milah](/wiki/Brit_milah) – Welcoming male babies into the covenant through the rite of [circumcision](/wiki/Circumcision) on their eighth day of life. The baby boy is also given his Hebrew name in the ceremony. A naming ceremony intended as a parallel ritual for girls, named [*zeved habat*](/wiki/Zeved_habat) or brit bat, enjoys limited popularity.
* [Bar mitzvah and Bat mitzvah](/wiki/Bar_Mitzvah_/_Bat_Mitzvah) – This passage from childhood to adulthood takes place when a female Jew is twelve and a male Jew is thirteen years old among Orthodox and some Conservative congregations. In the Reform movement, both girls and boys have their bat/bar mitzvah at age thirteen. This is often commemorated by having the new adults, male only in the Orthodox tradition, lead the congregation in prayer and publicly read a "portion" of the Torah.
* [Marriage](/wiki/Jewish_views_of_marriage) – Marriage is an extremely important lifecycle event. A wedding takes place under a [*chuppah*](/wiki/Chuppah), or wedding canopy, which symbolizes a happy house. At the end of the ceremony, the groom breaks a glass with his foot, symbolizing the continuous mourning for the destruction of the Temple, and the scattering of the Jewish people.
* [Death and Mourning](/wiki/Bereavement_in_Judaism) – Judaism has a multi-staged [mourning](/wiki/Mourning) practice. The first stage is called the [shiva](/wiki/Shiva_(Judaism)) (literally "seven", observed for one week) during which it is traditional to sit at home and be comforted by friends and family, the second is the *shloshim* (observed for one month) and for those who have lost one of their parents, there is a third stage, *avelut yud bet chodesh*, which is observed for eleven months.

## Community leadership[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

### Classical priesthood[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[thumb|Jewish students with their teacher in](/wiki/File:Jewish_Children_with_their_Teacher_in_Samarkand.jpg) [Samarkand](/wiki/Samarkand), [Uzbekistan](/wiki/Uzbekistan) c. 1910. The role of the priesthood in Judaism has significantly diminished since the destruction of the [Second Temple](/wiki/Second_Temple) in 70 CE, when priests attended to the Temple and sacrifices. The priesthood is an inherited position, and although priests no longer have any but ceremonial duties, they are still honored in many Jewish communities. Many Orthodox Jewish communities believe that they will be needed again for a future [Third Temple](/wiki/Third_Temple) and need to remain in readiness for future duty.

* [Kohen](/wiki/Kohen) (priest) – patrilineal descendant of [Aaron](/wiki/Aaron), brother of [Moses](/wiki/Moses). In the Temple, the *kohanim* were charged with performing the sacrifices. Today, a Kohen is the first one called up at the reading of the Torah, performs the [Priestly Blessing](/wiki/Priestly_Blessing), as well as complying with other unique laws and ceremonies, including the ceremony of redemption of the first-born.
* Levi ([Levite](/wiki/Levite)) – Patrilineal descendant of [Levi](/wiki/Levi) the son of [Jacob](/wiki/Jacob). In the [Temple in Jerusalem](/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem), the levites sang [Psalms](/wiki/Psalms), performed construction, maintenance, janitorial, and guard duties, assisted the priests, and sometimes interpreted the law and Temple ritual to the public. Today, a Levite is called up second to the reading of the Torah.

### Prayer leaders[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

From the time of the [Mishnah](/wiki/Mishnah) and [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud) to the present, Judaism has required specialists or authorities for the practice of very few rituals or ceremonies. A Jew can fulfill most requirements for prayer by himself. Some activities—reading the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) and *haftarah* (a supplementary portion from the Prophets or Writings), the prayer for mourners, the blessings for bridegroom and bride, the complete grace after meals—require a [*minyan*](/wiki/Minyan), the presence of ten Jews.

The most common professional clergy in a [synagogue](/wiki/Synagogue) are:

* [Rabbi](/wiki/Rabbi) of a congregation – Jewish scholar who is charged with answering the legal questions of a congregation. This role requires ordination by the congregation's preferred authority (i.e., from a respected Orthodox rabbi or, if the congregation is Conservative or Reform, from academic seminaries). A congregation does not necessarily require a rabbi. Some congregations have a rabbi but also allow members of the congregation to act as *shatz* or *baal kriyah* (see below).
  + Hassidic [*Rebbe*](/wiki/Rebbe) – rabbi who is the head of a [Hasidic](/wiki/Hasidic_Judaism) dynasty.
* [Hazzan](/wiki/Hazzan) (note: the "h" denotes [voiceless pharyngeal fricative](/wiki/Voiceless_pharyngeal_fricative)) (cantor) – a trained vocalist who acts as *shatz*. Chosen for a good voice, knowledge of traditional tunes, understanding of the meaning of the prayers and sincerity in reciting them. A congregation does not need to have a dedicated hazzan.

Jewish prayer services do involve two specified roles, which are sometimes, but not always, filled by a rabbi or hazzan in many congregations. In other congregations these roles are filled on an ad-hoc basis by members of the congregation who lead portions of services on a rotating basis:

* Shaliach tzibur or *Shatz* (leader—literally "agent" or "representative"—of the congregation) leads those assembled in prayer, and sometimes prays on behalf of the community. When a *shatz* recites a prayer on behalf of the congregation, he is *not* acting as an intermediary but rather as a facilitator. The entire congregation participates in the recital of such prayers by saying *amen* at their conclusion; it is with this act that the *shatz's* prayer becomes the prayer of the congregation. Any adult capable of reciting the prayers clearly may act as *shatz*. In Orthodox congregations and some Conservative congregations, only men can be prayer leaders, but all [Progressive](/wiki/Progressive_Judaism) communities now allow women to serve in this function.
* The Baal kriyah or *baal koreh* (master of the reading) reads the weekly [Torah](/wiki/Torah) portion. The requirements for being the *baal kriyah* are the same as those for the *shatz*. These roles are not mutually exclusive. The same person is often qualified to fill more than one role, and often does. Often there are several people capable of filling these roles and different services (or parts of services) will be led by each.

Many congregations, especially larger ones, also rely on a:

* [Gabbai](/wiki/Gabbai) (sexton) – Calls people up to the Torah, appoints the *shatz* for each prayer session if there is no standard *shatz*, and makes certain that the synagogue is kept clean and supplied.

The three preceding positions are usually voluntary and considered an honor. Since the [Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) large synagogues have often adopted the practice of hiring rabbis and hazzans to act as *shatz* and *baal kriyah*, and this is still typically the case in many Conservative and Reform congregations. However, in most Orthodox synagogues these positions are filled by laypeople on a rotating or ad-hoc basis. Although most congregations hire one or more Rabbis, the use of a professional hazzan is generally declining in American congregations, and the use of professionals for other offices is rarer still.

### Specialized religious roles[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

* [*Dayan*](/wiki/Beth_din#Officers_of_a_beth_din) (judge) – An ordained rabbi with special legal training who belongs to a [*beth din*](/wiki/Beth_din) (rabbinical court). In Israel, religious courts handle marriage and divorce cases, conversion and financial disputes in the Jewish community.
* [Mohel](/wiki/Mohel) (circumciser) – An expert in the laws of circumcision who has received training from a previously qualified *mohel* and performs the [*brit milah*](/wiki/Brit_milah) (circumcision).
* [Shochet](/wiki/Shechita) (ritual slaughterer) – In order for meat to be kosher, it must be slaughtered by a *shochet* who is an expert in the laws of kashrut and has been trained by another *shochet.*
* [Sofer](/wiki/Sofer_(scribe)) (scribe) – [Torah](/wiki/Torah) scrolls, [*tefillin*](/wiki/Tefillin) (phylacteries), [*mezuzot*](/wiki/Mezuzah) (scrolls put on doorposts), and *gittin* (bills of divorce) must be written by a *sofer* who is an expert in Hebrew calligraphy and has undergone rigorous training in the laws of writing sacred texts.
* [Rosh yeshiva](/wiki/Rosh_yeshiva) – A Torah scholar who runs a [yeshiva](/wiki/Yeshiva).
* [Mashgiach](/wiki/Mashgiach_ruchani) of a yeshiva – Depending on which yeshiva, might either be the person responsible for ensuring attendance and proper conduct, or even supervise the emotional and spiritual welfare of the students and give lectures on [mussar](/wiki/Mussar_movement) (Jewish ethics).
* [Mashgiach](/wiki/Mashgiach) – Supervises manufacturers of kosher food, importers, caterers and restaurants to ensure that the food is kosher. Must be an expert in the laws of [kashrut](/wiki/Kashrut) and trained by a rabbi, if not a rabbi himself.

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

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### Origins[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) [thumb|left|Scenes from the](/wiki/File:Duraeuropa-1-.gif) [Book of Esther](/wiki/Book_of_Esther) decorate the [Dura-Europos synagogue](/wiki/Dura-Europos_synagogue) dating from 244 CE At its core, the Tanakh is an account of the [Israelites'](/wiki/Israelite) relationship with [God](/wiki/God) from their earliest history until the building of the [Second Temple](/wiki/Second_Temple) (c. 535 BCE). [Abraham](/wiki/Abraham) is hailed as the first [Hebrew](/wiki/Hebrews) and the father of the Jewish people. As a reward for his act of faith in one God, he was promised that [Isaac](/wiki/Isaac), his second son, would inherit the [Land of Israel](/wiki/Land_of_Israel) (then called [Canaan](/wiki/Canaan)). Later, the descendants of Isaac's son [Jacob](/wiki/Jacob) were enslaved in [Egypt](/wiki/Ancient_Egypt), and God commanded [Moses](/wiki/Moses) to lead [the Exodus](/wiki/The_Exodus) from Egypt. At [Mount Sinai](/wiki/Biblical_Mount_Sinai) they received the [Torah](/wiki/Torah)—the five books of Moses. These books, together with [Nevi'im](/wiki/Nevi'im) and [Ketuvim](/wiki/Ketuvim) are known as *Torah Shebikhtav* as opposed to the [Oral Torah](/wiki/Oral_Torah), which refers to the Mishnah and the Talmud. Eventually, God led them to the [land of Israel](/wiki/Land_of_Israel) where the [tabernacle](/wiki/Tabernacle) was planted in the city of [Shiloh](/wiki/Shiloh_(Biblical)) for over 300 years to rally the nation against attacking enemies. As time went on, the spiritual level of the nation declined to the point that God allowed the [Philistines](/wiki/Philistines) to capture the tabernacle. The people of Israel then told [Samuel](/wiki/Samuel_(Bible)) the [prophet](/wiki/Prophet) that they needed to be governed by a permanent king, and Samuel appointed [Saul](/wiki/Saul_the_King) to be their King. When the people pressured Saul into going against a command conveyed to him by Samuel, God told Samuel to appoint [David](/wiki/David) in his stead.

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Western_wall_jerusalem_night.jpg) [Western Wall](/wiki/Western_Wall) in [Jerusalem](/wiki/Jerusalem) is a remnant of the wall encircling the [Second Temple](/wiki/Second_Temple). The [Temple Mount](/wiki/Temple_Mount) is the holiest site in Judaism.

Once King David was established, he told the prophet [Nathan](/wiki/Nathan_(prophet)) that he would like to build a permanent temple, and as a reward for his actions, God promised David that he would allow his son, [Solomon](/wiki/Solomon), to build the [First Temple](/wiki/Solomon's_Temple) and the throne would never depart from his children.

Rabbinic tradition holds that the details and interpretation of the law, which are called the [*Oral Torah*](/wiki/Oral_Torah) or [*oral law*](/wiki/Oral_law#Oral_law_in_Judaism), were originally an unwritten tradition based upon what God told Moses on Mount Sinai. However, as the persecutions of the Jews increased and the details were in danger of being forgotten, these oral laws were recorded by [Rabbi](/wiki/Rabbi) [Judah HaNasi](/wiki/Judah_HaNasi) (Judah the Prince) in the [Mishnah](/wiki/Mishnah), redacted *circa* 200 CE. The [Talmud](/wiki/Talmud) was a compilation of both the Mishnah and the [Gemara](/wiki/Gemara), rabbinic commentaries redacted over the next three centuries. The Gemara originated in two major centers of Jewish scholarship, [Palestine](/wiki/Talmudic_Academies_in_Syria_Palaestina) and [Babylonia](/wiki/Talmudic_Academies_in_Babylonia).[[100]](#cite_note-100) Correspondingly, two bodies of analysis developed, and two works of Talmud were created. The older compilation is called the [Jerusalem Talmud](/wiki/Jerusalem_Talmud). It was compiled sometime during the 4th century in [Palestine](/wiki/Talmudic_Academies_in_Syria_Palaestina).[[100]](#cite_note-100) The Babylonian Talmud was compiled from discussions in the houses of study by the scholars [Ravina I](/wiki/Ravina_I), [Ravina II](/wiki/Ravina_II), and [Rav Ashi](/wiki/Rav_Ashi) by 500 CE, although it continued to be edited later.

Some critical scholars oppose the view that the sacred texts, including the [Hebrew Bible](/wiki/Tanakh), were divinely inspired. Many of these scholars accept the general principles of the [documentary hypothesis](/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis) and suggest that the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) consists of inconsistent texts edited together in a way that calls attention to divergent accounts.[[101]](#cite_note-101)[[102]](#cite_note-102)[[103]](#cite_note-103) Many suggest that during the First Temple period, the people of Israel believed that each nation had its own god, but that their god was superior to other gods.[[104]](#cite_note-104)[[105]](#cite_note-105) Some suggest that strict monotheism developed during the Babylonian Exile, perhaps in reaction to [Zoroastrian](/wiki/Zoroastrian) dualism.[[106]](#cite_note-106) In this view, it was only by the [Hellenic period](/wiki/Hellenic_period) that most Jews came to believe that their god was the only god, and that the notion of a clearly bounded Jewish nation identical with the Jewish religion formed.[[107]](#cite_note-107) [John Day](/wiki/John_Day_(Old_Testament_scholar)) argues that the origins of biblical [Yahweh](/wiki/Yahweh), [El](/wiki/El_(deity)), [Asherah](/wiki/Asherah), and [Ba'al](/wiki/Ba'al), may be rooted in earlier [Canaanite religion](/wiki/Canaanite_religion), which was centered on a pantheon of gods much like the [Greek pantheon](/wiki/Greek_pantheon).[[108]](#cite_note-108)

### Antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

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According to the [Hebrew Bible](/wiki/Hebrew_Bible), the [United Monarchy](/wiki/United_Monarchy) was established under [Saul](/wiki/Saul_the_King) and continued under [King David](/wiki/King_David) and [Solomon](/wiki/Solomon) with its capital in [Jerusalem](/wiki/Jerusalem). After Solomon's reign the nation split into two kingdoms, the [Kingdom of Israel](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(Samaria)) (in the north) and the [Kingdom of Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah) (in the south). The Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the [Assyrian](/wiki/Assyria) ruler [Sargon II](/wiki/Sargon_II) in the late 8th century BCE with many people from the capital Samaria being taken captive to Media and the [Khabur River](/wiki/Khabur_River) valley. The [Kingdom of Judah](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah) continued as an independent state until it was conquered by a Babylonian army in the early 6th century BCE, destroying the [First Temple](/wiki/First_Temple) that was at the center of ancient Jewish worship. The Judean elite were exiled to [Babylonia](/wiki/Babylonia) and this is regarded as the first Jewish Diaspora. Later many of them returned to their homeland after the subsequent conquest of Babylonia by the [Persians](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire) seventy years later, a period known as the [Babylonian Captivity](/wiki/Babylonian_Captivity). A new [Second Temple](/wiki/Second_Temple) was constructed, and old religious practices were resumed.

During the early years of the Second Temple, the highest religious authority was a council known as the Great Assembly, led by Ezra of the Book of Ezra. Among other accomplishments of the Great Assembly, the last books of the Bible were written at this time and the canon sealed.

[Hellenistic Judaism](/wiki/Hellenistic_Judaism) spread to [Ptolemaic Egypt](/wiki/Ptolemaic_Egypt) from the 3rd century BCE. After [the Great Revolt](/wiki/First_Jewish–Roman_War) (66–73 CE), the Romans destroyed the Temple. [Hadrian](/wiki/Hadrian) built a pagan idol on the Temple grounds and prohibited circumcision; these acts of ethnocide provoked the [Bar Kokhba revolt](/wiki/Bar_Kokhba_revolt) 132–136 CE after which the Romans banned the study of the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) and the celebration of Jewish holidays, and forcibly removed virtually all Jews from Judea. In 200 CE, however, Jews were granted Roman citizenship and Judaism was recognized as a [*religio licita*](/wiki/Religio_licita) ("legitimate religion"), until the rise of [Gnosticism](/wiki/Gnosticism) and [Early Christianity](/wiki/Early_Christianity) in the fourth century.

Following the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Jews, Jewish worship stopped being centrally organized around the Temple, prayer took the place of sacrifice, and worship was rebuilt around the community (represented by a minimum of ten adult men) and the establishment of the authority of rabbis who acted as teachers and leaders of individual communities (see [Jewish diaspora](/wiki/Jewish_diaspora)).

### Historical Jewish groupings (to 1700)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Parochet_of_Beth_Jakov_Macedonia.jpg) [Torah Ark](/wiki/Torah_Ark) of the Beth Jakov synagogue in [Macedonia](/wiki/Republic_of_Macedonia) Around the 1st century CE there were several small Jewish sects: the [Pharisees](/wiki/Pharisees), [Sadducees](/wiki/Sadducees), [Zealots](/wiki/Zealots), [Essenes](/wiki/Essenes), and [Christians](/wiki/Early_Christianity). After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, these sects vanished. [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) survived, but by breaking with Judaism and [becoming a separate religion](/wiki/Schism_(religion)); the [Pharisees](/wiki/Pharisees) survived but in the form of [Rabbinic Judaism](/wiki/Rabbinic_Judaism) (today, known simply as "Judaism"). The [Sadducees](/wiki/Sadducees) rejected the [divine inspiration](/wiki/Revelation) of the [Prophets](/wiki/Nevi'im) and the [Writings](/wiki/Ketuvim), relying only on the [Torah](/wiki/Torah) as divinely inspired. Consequently, a number of other core tenets of the Pharisees' belief system (which became the basis for modern Judaism), were also dismissed by the Sadducees. (The [Samaritans](/wiki/Samaritans) practiced a similar religion, which is traditionally considered separate from Judaism.)

Like the Sadducees who relied only on the Torah, some Jews in the 8th and 9th centuries rejected the authority and divine inspiration of the [oral law](/wiki/Oral_law) as recorded in the [Mishnah](/wiki/Mishnah) (and developed by later rabbis in the two [Talmuds](/wiki/Talmud)), relying instead only upon the [Tanakh](/wiki/Tanakh). These included the Isunians, the Yudganites, the [Malikites](/wiki/Malikites), and others. They soon developed oral traditions of their own, which differed from the rabbinic traditions, and eventually formed the [Karaite](/wiki/Karaism) sect. Karaites exist in small numbers today, mostly living in Israel. Rabbinical and Karaite Jews each hold that the others are Jews, but that the other faith is erroneous.

Over a long time, Jews formed distinct ethnic groups in several different geographic areas — amongst others, the [Ashkenazi Jews](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) (of [central](/wiki/Central_Europe) and [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe)), the [Sephardi Jews](/wiki/Sephardi_Jews) (of Spain, [Portugal](/wiki/Portugal), and [North Africa](/wiki/North_Africa)), the [Beta Israel](/wiki/Beta_Israel) of [Ethiopia](/wiki/Ethiopia), and the [Yemenite Jews](/wiki/Yemenite_Jews) from the southern tip of the [Arabian Peninsula](/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula). Many of these groups have developed differences in their prayers, traditions and accepted canons; however these distinctions are mainly the result of their being formed at some cultural distance from normative (rabbinic) Judaism, rather than based on any doctrinal dispute.

### Persecutions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Antisemitism](/wiki/Antisemitism) arose during the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages), in the form of persecutions, [pogroms](/wiki/Pogrom), [forced conversion](/wiki/Forced_conversion), expulsions, social restrictions and [ghettoization](/wiki/Ghetto).

This was different in quality to any repressions of Jews in ancient times. Ancient repression was politically motivated and Jews were treated the same way as any other ethnic group would have been. With the rise of the Churches, attacks on Jews became motivated instead by theological considerations specifically deriving from Christian views about Jews and Judaism.[[109]](#cite_note-109) During the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages), Jewish people under Muslim rule generally experienced tolerance and integration,[[110]](#cite_note-110) but there were occasional outbreaks of violence like [Almohad's persecutions](/wiki/Almohads#Status_of_non-Muslims).[[111]](#cite_note-111)

### Hasidism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

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Hasidic Judaism was founded by [Yisroel ben Eliezer](/wiki/Yisroel_ben_Eliezer_(The_Baal_Shem_Tov)) (1700–1760), also known as the *Ba'al Shem Tov* (or *Besht*). It originated in a time of persecution of the Jewish people, when European Jews had turned inward to Talmud study; many felt that most expressions of Jewish life had become too "academic", and that they no longer had any emphasis on spirituality or joy. His disciples attracted many followers; they themselves established numerous Hasidic sects across Europe. Hasidic Judaism eventually became the way of life for many Jews in Europe. Waves of Jewish immigration in the 1880s carried it to the United States. The movement itself claims to be nothing new, but a *refreshment* of original Judaism. Or as some have put it: *"they merely re-emphasized that which the generations had lost"*.[[112]](#cite_note-112) Nevertheless, early on there was a serious schism between Hasidic and non-Hasidic Jews. European Jews who rejected the Hasidic movement were dubbed by the Hasidim as [Misnagdim](/wiki/Misnagdim), (lit. "opponents"). Some of the reasons for the rejection of Hasidic Judaism were the overwhelming exuberance of Hasidic worship, its untraditional ascriptions of infallibility and alleged miracle-working to their leaders, and the concern that it might become a messianic sect. Since then differences between the Hasidim and their opponents have slowly diminished and both groups are now considered part of [Haredi Judaism](/wiki/Haredi_Judaism).

### The Enlightenment and new religious movements[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

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In the late 18th century CE, Europe was swept by a group of intellectual, social and political movements known as the [Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment). The Enlightenment led to reductions in the European laws that prohibited Jews to interact with the wider secular world, thus allowing Jews access to secular education and experience. A parallel Jewish movement, [Haskalah](/wiki/Haskalah) or the "Jewish Enlightenment", began, especially in [Central Europe](/wiki/Central_Europe) and [Western Europe](/wiki/Western_Europe), in response to both the Enlightenment and these new freedoms. It placed an emphasis on integration with secular society and a pursuit of non-religious knowledge through reason. With the promise of political emancipation many Jews saw no reason to continue to observe Jewish law and increasing numbers of Jews assimilated into Christian Europe. Modern religious movements of Judaism all formed in reaction to this trend.

In [Central Europe](/wiki/Central_Europe), followed by [Great Britain](/wiki/Great_Britain) and the United States, [Reform (or Liberal) Judaism](/wiki/Reform_Judaism) developed, relaxing legal obligations (especially those that limited Jewish relations with non-Jews), emulating [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant) decorum in prayer, and emphasizing the ethical values of Judaism's Prophetic tradition. [Modern Orthodox Judaism](/wiki/Modern_Orthodox_Judaism) developed in reaction to Reform Judaism, by leaders who argued that Jews could participate in public life as citizens equal to Christians, while maintaining the observance of Jewish law. Meanwhile, in the United States, wealthy Reform Jews helped European scholars, who were Orthodox in practice but critical (and skeptical) in their study of the Bible and Talmud, to establish a seminary to train rabbis for immigrants from Eastern Europe. These left-wing Orthodox rabbis were joined by right-wing Reform rabbis who felt that Jewish law should not be entirely abandoned, to form the [Conservative movement](/wiki/Conservative_Judaism). Orthodox Jews who opposed the Haskalah formed [Haredi Orthodox Judaism](/wiki/Haredi_Orthodox_Judaism). After massive movements of Jews following [The Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust) and the creation of [the state of Israel](/wiki/Israel), these movements have competed for followers from among traditional Jews in or from other countries.

### Spectrum of observance[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=45)]

[thumb|Judaism is practised in all parts of the world, for example in a synagogue in downtown](/wiki/File:KnesetEliyahooSynagogue.JPG) [Mumbai](/wiki/Mumbai). Countries such as the [United States](/wiki/United_States), [Israel](/wiki/Israel), [Canada](/wiki/Canada), [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom), [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina) and [South Africa](/wiki/South_Africa) contain large Jewish populations. Jewish religious practice varies widely through all levels of observance. According to the [2001 edition](http://www.ujc.org/page.aspx?id=46184) of the [National Jewish Population Survey](/wiki/National_Jewish_Population_Survey), in the United States' Jewish community—the world's second largest—4.3 million Jews out of 5.1 million had some sort of connection to the religion. Of that population of connected Jews, 80% participated in some sort of Jewish religious observance, but only 48% belonged to a synagogue, and fewer than 16% attend regularly.[[113]](#cite_note-113) Birth rates for American Jews have dropped from 2.0 to 1.7.[[114]](#cite_note-114) (Replacement rate is 2.1.) Intermarriage rates range from 40-50% in the US, and only about a third of children of intermarried couples are raised as Jews. Due to intermarriage and low birth rates, the Jewish population in the US shrank from 5.5 million in 1990 to 5.1 million in 2001. This is indicative of the general population trends among the Jewish community in the [Diaspora](/wiki/Diaspora), but a focus on total population obscures growth trends in some denominations and communities, such as [Haredi Judaism](/wiki/Haredi_Judaism). The [Baal teshuva](/wiki/Baal_teshuva) movement is a movement of Jews who have "returned" to religion or become more observant.

## Judaism and other religions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=46)]

### Christianity and Judaism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=47)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) was originally a sect of [Second Temple Judaism](/wiki/Second_Temple_Judaism), but the two religions [diverged in the first century](/wiki/Split_of_early_Christianity_and_Judaism). The differences between Christianity and Judaism originally centered on whether Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, but eventually became irreconcilable. Major differences between the two faiths include the nature of the Messiah, of [atonement](/wiki/Atonement_in_Judaism) and [sin](/wiki/Jewish_views_on_sin), the status of God's commandments to Israel, and perhaps most significantly of the [nature of God](/wiki/God_in_Judaism) himself. Due to these differences, Judaism traditionally regards Christianity as [Shituf](/wiki/Shituf), or worship of the God of Israel which is not monotheistic. Christianity has traditionally regarded Judaism as obsolete with the invention of Christianity and Jews as a people replaced by the Church, though a Christian belief in [dual-covenant theology](/wiki/Dual-covenant_theology) emerged as a phenomenon following Christian reflection on how their theology influenced the Nazi [Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust).[[115]](#cite_note-115) Until [their emancipation](/wiki/Jewish_emancipation) in the late 18th and the 19th century, Jews in Christian lands were subject to humiliating legal restrictions and limitations. They included provisions requiring Jews to wear specific and identifying clothing such as the [Jewish hat](/wiki/Jewish_hat) and the [yellow badge](/wiki/Yellow_badge), restricting Jews to certain cities and towns or in certain parts of towns ([ghettos](/wiki/Jewish_ghettos_in_Europe)), and forbidding Jews to enter certain trades (for example selling new clothes in medieval [Sweden](/wiki/Sweden)). Disabilities also included special taxes levied on Jews, exclusion from public life, restraints on the performance of religious ceremonies, and linguistic censorship. Some countries went even further and completely expelled Jews, for example [England](/wiki/Edict_of_Expulsion) in 1290 (Jews were readmitted in 1655) and [Spain](/wiki/Expulsion_of_the_Jews_from_Spain) in 1492 (readmitted in 1868). The first Jewish settlers in North America arrived in the Dutch colony of [New Amsterdam](/wiki/New_Amsterdam) in 1654; they were forbidden to hold public office, open a retail shop, or establish a synagogue. When the colony was seized by the British in 1664 Jewish rights remained unchanged, but by 1671 [Asser Levy](/wiki/Asser_Levy) was the first Jew to serve on a jury in North America.[[116]](#cite_note-116)In 1791, [Revolutionary France](/wiki/French_Revolution) was the first country to abolish disabilities altogether, followed by [Prussia](/wiki/Prussia) in 1848. [Emancipation of the Jews in the United Kingdom](/wiki/Emancipation_of_the_Jews_in_the_United_Kingdom) was achieved in 1858 after an almost 30-year struggle championed by [Isaac Lyon Goldsmid](/wiki/Isaac_Lyon_Goldsmid)[[117]](#cite_note-117) with the ability of Jews to sit in parliament with the passing of the [Jews Relief Act 1858](/wiki/Jews_Relief_Act_1858). The newly united [German Empire](/wiki/German_Empire) in 1871 abolished Jewish disabilities in Germany, which were reinstated in the [Nuremberg Laws](/wiki/Nuremberg_Laws) in 1935.

Jewish life in Christian lands was marked by frequent [blood libels](/wiki/Blood_libel), expulsions, [forced conversions](/wiki/Forced_conversion) and [massacres](/wiki/Massacre). An underlying source of prejudice against Jews in Europe was religious. Christian rhetoric and antipathy towards Jews developed in the [early years of Christianity](/wiki/Apostolic_Age) and was reinforced by ever increasing anti-Jewish measures over the [ensuing centuries](/wiki/Early_Christianity). The action taken by Christians against Jews included acts of violence, and murder culminating in the [Holocaust](/wiki/Holocaust).[[118]](#cite_note-118)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)[[119]](#cite_note-119)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)[[120]](#cite_note-120) These attitudes were reinforced in Christian preaching, art and popular teaching for two millennia, containing contempt for Jews,<ref name=JCPSHorst>Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. May 5, 2009. [The Origins of Christian Anti-Semitism: Interview with Pieter van der Horst](http://jcpa.org/article/the-origins-of-christian-anti-semitism/)</ref> as well as statutes which were designed to humiliate and stigmatise Jews.

### Islam and Judaism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=48)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Both Judaism and Islamic religion arose from the patriarch [Abraham](/wiki/Abraham), and are therefore considered [Abrahamic religions](/wiki/Abrahamic_religions). In both Jewish and Muslim tradition, the Jewish and Arab peoples are descended from the two sons of Abraham—Isaac and Ishmael, respectively. While both religions are [monotheistic](/wiki/Monotheism) and share many commonalities, they differ in that Jews do not consider [Jesus](/wiki/Jesus_in_Islam) or [Muhammad](/wiki/Muhammad) to be prophets. The religions' adherents have interacted with each other since the 7th century, when [Islam](/wiki/Islam) originated and spread in the [Arabian peninsula](/wiki/Arabian_peninsula). Indeed, the years 712 to 1066 CE under the [Ummayad](/wiki/Ummayad) and the [Abbasid](/wiki/Abbasid) rulers have been called the [Golden age of Jewish culture in Spain](/wiki/Golden_age_of_Jewish_culture_in_Spain). Non-Muslim monotheists living in these countries, including Jews, were known as [dhimmis](/wiki/Dhimmis). Dhimmis were allowed to practice their religion and to administer their internal affairs, but they were subject to certain restrictions that were not imposed on Muslims.[[121]](#cite_note-121) For example, they had to pay the [jizya](/wiki/Jizya), a per capita tax imposed on free adult non-Muslim males,[[121]](#cite_note-121) and they were also forbidden to bear arms or testify in court cases involving Muslims.[[122]](#cite_note-122) Many of the laws regarding dhimmis were highly symbolic. For example, dhimmis in some countries were required to wear [distinctive clothing](/wiki/Yellow_badge), a practice not found in either the [Qur'an](/wiki/Qur'an) or [hadiths](/wiki/Hadiths) but invented in [early medieval](/wiki/Early_Middle_Ages) [Baghdad](/wiki/Baghdad) and inconsistently enforced.[[123]](#cite_note-123) Jews in Muslim countries were not entirely free from persecution—for example, many were killed, exiled or forcibly converted in the 12th century, in [Persia](/wiki/Persia), and by the rulers of the [Almohad](/wiki/Almohad) dynasty in North Africa and [Al-Andalus](/wiki/Al-Andalus),[[124]](#cite_note-124) as well as by the Zaydi imams of Yemen in the 17th century (see: [Mawza Exile](/wiki/Mawza_Exile)). At times, Jews were also restricted in their choice of residence—in [Morocco](/wiki/Morocco), for example, Jews were confined to walled quarters ([mellahs](/wiki/Mellah)) beginning in the 15th century and increasingly since the early 19th century.[[125]](#cite_note-125) In the mid-20th century, Jews were expelled from nearly all of the Arab countries.[[126]](#cite_note-126)[[127]](#cite_note-127)[[128]](#cite_note-128) Most have chosen to live in [Israel](/wiki/Israel). Today, antisemitic themes including [Holocaust denial](/wiki/Holocaust_denial) have become commonplace in the propaganda of Islamic movements such as [Hizbullah](/wiki/Hizbullah) and [Hamas](/wiki/Hamas), in the pronouncements of various agencies of the [Islamic Republic of Iran](/wiki/Islamic_Republic_of_Iran), and even in the newspapers and other publications of [Refah Partisi](/wiki/Refah_Partisi).[[129]](#cite_note-129)

### Syncretic movements incorporating Judaism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=49)]

There are some movements that combine elements of Judaism with those of other religions. The most well-known of these is [Messianic Judaism](/wiki/Messianic_Judaism), a religious movement, which arose in the 1960s,[[130]](#cite_note-130)[[131]](#cite_note-131)[[132]](#cite_note-132)[[133]](#cite_note-133) that incorporates elements of Judaism with the [tenets of Christianity](/wiki/Christianity#Beliefs).[[133]](#cite_note-133)[[134]](#cite_note-134)[[135]](#cite_note-135)[[136]](#cite_note-136)[[137]](#cite_note-137) The movement states that [Jesus](/wiki/Jesus) is the Jewish Messiah, and generally that he is part of the [Trinity](/wiki/Trinity),[[138]](#cite_note-138)[[139]](#cite_note-139) and [salvation](/wiki/Salvation_(Christianity)) is only achieved through acceptance of Jesus as one's savior.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Some members argue that Messianic Judaism is a sect of Judaism.[[141]](#cite_note-141) Jewish organizations of every denomination reject this, stating that Messianic Judaism is a Christian sect, as it harbors identical creeds to that of [Pauline Christianity](/wiki/Pauline_Christianity).[[142]](#cite_note-142) Other examples of [syncretism](/wiki/Syncretism) include [Semitic neopaganism](/wiki/Semitic_neopaganism), a loosely organized sect which incorporates pagan or [Wiccan](/wiki/Wicca) beliefs with some Jewish religious practices; [Jewish Buddhists](/wiki/Jewish_Buddhists), another loosely organized group that incorporates elements of Asian spirituality in their faith; and some [Renewal Jews](/wiki/Jewish_Renewal) who borrow freely and openly from [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism), [Sufism](/wiki/Sufism), [Native American](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples_of_the_Americas) religion, and other faiths.

The [Kabbalah Centre](/wiki/Kabbalah_Centre), which employs teachers from multiple religions, is a [New Age](/wiki/New_Age) movement that claims to popularize the [kabbalah](/wiki/Kabbalah), part of the [Jewish esoteric tradition](/wiki/Jewish_mysticism).

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=50)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal) [Template:Wikipedia books](/wiki/Template:Wikipedia_books) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

* [Anti-Judaism](/wiki/Anti-Judaism)
* [Frankism](/wiki/Frankism)
* [Jewish views of religious pluralism](/wiki/Jewish_views_of_religious_pluralism)
* [Judaism by country](/wiki/Judaism_by_country)
* [List of converts to Judaism](/wiki/List_of_converts_to_Judaism)
* [Sabbateanism](/wiki/Sabbateanism)
* [Secular Jewish culture](/wiki/Secular_Jewish_culture)
* [Criticism of Judaism](/wiki/Criticism_of_Judaism)
* [United States military chaplain symbols](/wiki/United_States_military_chaplain_symbols)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=51)]

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

## Bibliography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=52)]

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=53)]

[Template:Sisterlinks](/wiki/Template:Sisterlinks) [Template:Wikivoyage](/wiki/Template:Wikivoyage)

General

* [Judaism 101](http://www.jewfaq.org/), an extensive FAQ written by a librarian.
* [Judaism article from the 1901–1906 *Jewish Encyclopedia*](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=666&letter=J&search=Judaism)
* [Shamash's Judaism resource page](http://shamash.org/trb/judaism.html)

Orthodox/Haredi

* [Orthodox Judaism – The Orthodox Union: Official website](http://www.ou.org/)
* [Chabad-Lubavitch: Official website](http://www.chabad.org/)
* [Rohr Jewish Learning Institute: Official website](http://www.myjli.com/index.html)
* [The Various Types of Orthodox Judaism](http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/363_Transp/08_Orthodoxy.html)
* [Aish HaTorah](http://www.aish.com/)
* [Ohr Somayach](http://ohr.edu/)

Traditional/Conservadox

* [Union for Traditional Judaism](http://www.utj.org/)

Conservative

* [The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism: Official website](http://www.uscj.org/index1.html)
* [Masorti (Conservative) Movement in Israel](http://www.masorti.org/)
* [United Synagogue Youth](http://www.usy.org/)

Reform/Progressive

* [The Union for Reform Judaism (USA)](http://www.urj.org/)
* [Reform Judaism (UK): Official website](http://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/)
* [Liberal Judaism (UK): Official website](http://www.liberaljudaism.org/)
* [World Union for Progressive Judaism (Israel): Official website](http://wupj.org/)

Reconstructionist

* [Jewish Reconstructionist Federation: Official website](http://www.jrf.org/)

Renewal

* [ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal: Official website](https://www.aleph.org/)
* [OHALAH Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal: Official website](http://ohalah.org/)

Humanistic

* [Society for Humanistic Judaism: Official website](http://www.shj.org/)

Karaite

* [World Movement for Karaite Judaism](http://www.karaite-korner.org/)

Jewish religious literature and texts

* [Complete Tanakh](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/i/t/t0.htm) (in Hebrew, with vowels).
* [Parallel Hebrew-English Tanakh](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0.htm)
* [English Tanakh](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/e/et/et0.htm) from the 1917 Jewish Publication Society version.
* [The Judaica Press Complete Tanach with Rashi in English](http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/63255/jewish/The-Bible-with-Rashi.htm)
* [Torah.org](http://www.torah.org/). (also known as *Project Genesis*) Contains Torah commentaries and studies of Tanakh, along with Jewish ethics, philosophy, holidays and other classes.
* [The complete formatted Talmud online](http://www.e-daf.com/). Audio files of lectures for each page from an Orthodox viewpoint are provided in French, English, Yiddish and Hebrew. Reload the page for an image of a page of the Talmud.

See also [Torah database](/wiki/Torah_database) for links to more Judaism e-texts.

Wikimedia Torah study projects

[Template:Wikisourcelang](/wiki/Template:Wikisourcelang) Text study projects at [Wikisource](/wiki/S:Wikisource). In many instances, the Hebrew versions of these projects are more fully developed than the English.

* [Mikraot Gedolot](/wiki/Mikraot_Gedolot) (Rabbinic Bible) in [Hebrew](/wiki/S:he:מקראות_גדולות) [(sample)](/wiki/S:he:מ%22ג_איכה_א_א) and [English](/wiki/S:Mikraot_Gedolot) [(sample)](/wiki/S:MG_Numbers_1:1).
* [Cantillation](/wiki/Cantillation) at the "Vayavinu Bamikra" Project in [Hebrew](/wiki/S:he:ויבינו_במקרא) (lists nearly 200 recordings) and [English](/wiki/S:Vayavinu_Bamikra).
* [Mishnah](/wiki/Mishnah) in [Hebrew](/wiki/S:he:משנה) [(sample)](/wiki/S:he:ברכות_פרק_א_משנה_א) and [English](/wiki/S:Mishnah) [(sample)](/wiki/S:Mishnah_Berakhot_1:1).
* [Shulchan Aruch](/wiki/Shulchan_Aruch) in [Hebrew](/wiki/S:he:שולחן_ערוך) and [English](/wiki/S:Shulchan_Aruch) (Hebrew text with English translation).

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[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

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