JUDAISM

A Supplemental Resource for **GRADE 12**

World of Religions

A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

Manitoba

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2019

Manitoba Education

Manitoba Education Cataloguing in Publication Data
Judaism : Grade 12 world of religions : a Canadian perspective

Includes bibliographical references.
This resource is available in print and electronic formats.
ISBN: 978-0-7711-7933-4 (pdf)
ISBN: 978-0-7711-7935-8 (print)

1. Judaism—Study and teaching (Secondary)—Manitoba.
2. Religion—Study and teaching (Secondary)—Manitoba.
3. Multiculturalism—Study and teaching (Secondary) --Manitoba.
4. Spirituality – Study and teaching (Secondary) – Manitoba.
5. Religion and culture – Study and teaching (Secondary) -- Manitoba.
I. Manitoba. Manitoba Education.
379.28

Manitoba Education
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Print copies of this resource (stock number 80750) can be purchased from the Manitoba Learning Resource Centre. Order online at www.manitobalrc.ca.

This resource is available on the Manitoba Education website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/.

Available in alternate formats upon request.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Manitoba Education gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following individuals in the development of *Judaism: A Supplemental Resource for Grade 12 World of Religions: A Canadian Perspective*.

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Acknowledgements

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Preface

How to Read these Profiles

These profiles are intended to provide an overview of a number of religious traditions and faith groups. Each profile focuses on a specific religious tradition and emphasises

- the origins and development of each religious tradition or faith group
- the continued evolution and change of each religious tradition or faith group
- the internal diversity (or intra-religious diversity) of each religious tradition or faith group

While we hope these profiles provide helpful and useful introductions to each religious tradition or faith group, we caution teachers and students to keep in mind the following:

- The profiles provide only an overview and not a detailed or in-depth review of each religious tradition or faith group. They also do not capture the totality of diversity within each religious tradition or faith group.
- Religions do not develop and grow in isolation from political, economic, social, and historical factors, including other religious traditions and faith groups. This knowledge is critical to understanding religious influences in specific social and historical contexts.
- Religious expression will reflect national, cultural, geographical, and other factors.
- While the authors of the backgrounders have taken efforts to present the information in a balanced and unbiased form, there may exist differing points of view and interpretations of historical developments and other aspects of the religious traditions or faith groups.

Text and audio glossaries of terms can be found in the Glossaries section of this document.

Introduction

What Is Judaism? A Brief Summary

Judaism originated in the Middle East over 3500 years ago and is the original, or first, of the three Abrahamic faiths, which also include **Christianity** and **Islam**. The three share a common origin that flows from a biblical figure known as **Abraham**, the worship of the God of Abraham, and the practices of the ancient Israelites. However, Abraham's role and place in each faith is different. In Judaism, he is the founder of the Covenant, the special relationship between the Jewish people and God. In Christianity, he is the model for all believers, Jewish or not. In Islam, he is seen as being one link in a chain of prophets that began with Adam and culminated in Muhammad.

Jews believe that Abraham discovered that there was one God, thus introducing the concept of monotheism. This established an individual covenant (bond, special relationship) with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their families to further spiritual teachings that would be later identified with Jewish religious tradition.

This individual covenant became a national covenant, when the Jewish collectively received the *Torah* at Mount Sinai. According to Jewish tradition and history, this occurred after Moses led the Jewish people to freedom from slavery in Egypt. (Source: Multifaith Information Manual)

Some key aspects of Jewish faith include the following:

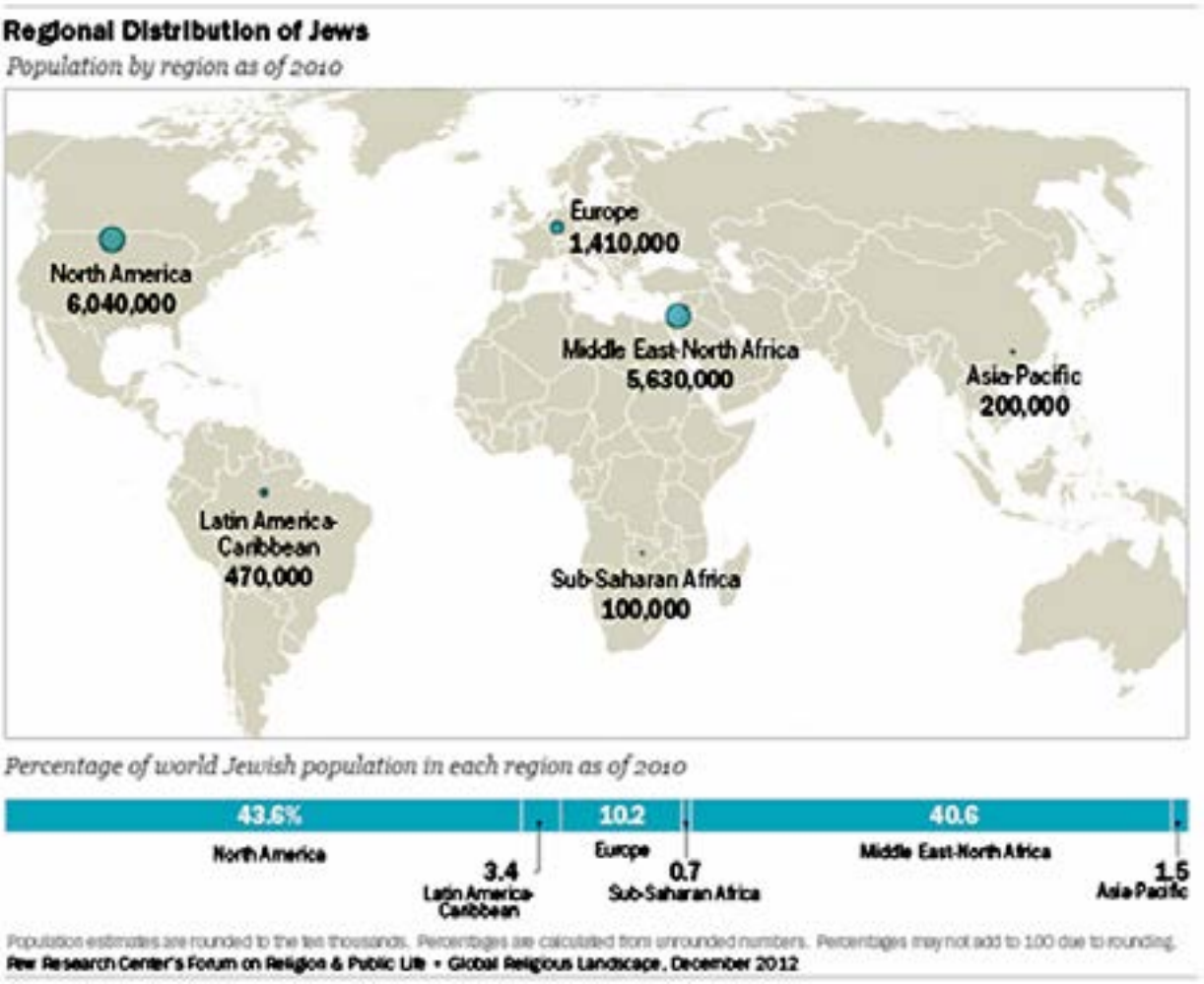
- Jews believe that there is only one God, with whom they have a covenant.
- As God chose to reveal the *Torah* and righteous values and practices, Jewish people choose to keep God's laws and try to bring holiness into every aspect of their lives.
- Judaism has a rich history of religious texts, but the central and most important religious document is the *Torah* which is also called the *Pentateuch* or the Five Books of Moses.
- *Halakhah* is all of Jewish law and derives from three sources: the *Written Torah* which is the interpretations/discussions of the scholars/*rabbis* (*Gemara*); the oral laws or traditions (*Mishnah*); and, together, the *Gemara* and the *Mishnah* which comprise the *Talmud*.

- The original name for the people we now call Jews was Hebrews. The word Hebrew is first used in the Bible to describe Abraham (Gen. 14:13). Another name used for the people is Children of Israel or Israelites, which refers to the fact that the people are descendants of Jacob, who was also called Israel.
- The word Jew comes from the name of an ancient kingdom centered in Jerusalem, in the 2nd century BCE called *Judah* or *Yehudah* (its Hebrew name). The name of the kingdom derived from the name of Jacob's fourth son, Judah. Judah was the ancestor of one of the tribes of Israel, which was named after him. Likewise, the word Judaism literally means Judah-ism.
- In common speech, the word Jew is used to refer to all of the descendants of Jacob/Israel, as well as to the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and their wives, and to adherents of Judaism, the religion. Judaism is used to refer to their beliefs or religious tradition.
- Judaism is considered to be a religion, as well as a nation and culture.
- Some people may identify as being a Jew (descendants of Jews) because of a sense of shared ethnicity and historical experience, but may not follow the Jewish faith.
- Spiritual leaders are called *rabbis*.
- Jews pray three times per day (morning, afternoon, and evening) and may pray anywhere.
- Jews gather for communal religious worship and instruction in buildings usually called synagogues (some use the term temple).
- The Jewish people are diverse in ethnicities and nationalities. The historical home of the Jews is situated at the geographic crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe. Modern Jews are a composite of many peoples and Jewish origins include a multitude of languages, nations, tribes, and physical characteristics such as skin tone. Throughout time, Hebrew peoples have had long and deep connections with Mediterranean, European, Asian, and African cultures. That history, along with more recent immigration to Israel, has made Israel one of the most racially, ethnically, and nationally diverse countries in the world, with immigrants from over 70 countries. **Ashkenazi** Jews are those who live or are descendants of Jews who lived in Eastern Europe. **Sephardic** Jews are descended from the Jews who lived in the Iberian Peninsula in the late 15th century. **Mizrahi** Jews are those that live or lived in the Arab world.

Figure 1: Star of David

- The practices and beliefs held by Jews are diverse and range from those who openly identify as Orthodox and strictly observe ancient precepts to those that are secular or unaffiliated Jews.
- Contemporary Judaism may be categorized as having evolved from four major movements: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. These Jewish movements have different interpretations of the *Torah*, which have led to different rituals, spiritual practices, and beliefs. The Conservative and Reform movements are particularly strong in North America, but have yet to make significant inroads in Israel, where orthodoxy remains the strongest movement.
- This diversity of beliefs and practices has led to different definitions and interpretations when asking, "Who is a Jew?". This question is not just philosophical; it has political and legal ramifications. In Israel, questions of Jewish status have implications for immigration, conversion, marriage, divorce, and the allocation of government programs and supports.
- According to Jewish law, a child born to a Jewish mother or an adult who has converted to Judaism is to be considered a Jew. However, according to Reform Judaism, a person is a Jew if they were born to either a Jewish mother or a Jewish father. As well, Reform Judaism stresses the importance of being raised Jewish. According to the Orthodox movement, the father's religion and whether the person practices is not relevant: as long as the mother was Jewish, the person will be considered to be a Jew.
- The concept and importance of, and the connection to a Jewish 'homeland', the land of Israel, is deeply embedded in the history, religion, and culture of the Jewish peoples. It begins with Abraham and with God asking Abraham to leave his homeland at that time and promising him and his descendants a new home in the land of Canaan. It also includes the forced exile and dispersal of Jews from Israel and Judah shortly after the war with Rome in 135 CE and the centuries of persecution, mass killings, and genocide that followed in Europe and other places where they sought asylum. It continues with the re-establishment of Israel in 1948 and the modern State of Israel today.
- Many Israelis are often described as secular, but the majority observe Jewish holidays and are very knowledgeable about Jewish history and culture, which is taught in public schools.
- Worldwide, approximately 13.6 million people identify as Jewish, with the vast majority living in either the United States or Israel. Judaism is flourishing in Israel and throughout the world. Canada has the 4th largest Jewish population. (Landau)

Judaism in Canada and the World



Map 1: Jewish Population by Country

"Unlike most immigrants to Canada, Jews did not come from a place where they were the majority cultural group. Jews were internationally dispersed at the time of the ancient Roman Empire and after unsuccessful revolts against it lost their sovereignty in their ancient homeland. Subsequently Jews lived, sometimes for many centuries, as minorities in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe."

Canadian Encyclopedia
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jewish-canadians/

Judaism in Canada

As with many other settler groups, Jews came to the Americas seeking a better life and better economic opportunities, as well as freedom from the religious discrimination and persecution that they faced in Europe. Jews from Western Europe were part of the early settlers that migrated to the Americas and participated in the settlement. The exception was New France where Jews were barred from residing as immigration was restricted to Catholics. Jews did settle in the British colonies to the south and, later, with New France becoming part of the British Empire, they also began to settle in Lower Canada.

Figure 2: Star of David *Hanukkah* menorah

The first Jewish community in Canada was established in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1749. It was made possible by the treaty of Utrecht (Holland) which settled territorial disputes. Britain received the territories of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and an area around the Hudson Bay which became the centre of the Hudson Bay Company in 1670. Halifax was a military outpost at that time, but immediately attracted Jewish merchants from Newport and Plymouth in the English colonies on the north-east Atlantic seaboard. In 1752, there were thirty Jews among a population of two thousand; however, by 1777, economic problems forced most of the Jews in Halifax to return to the American colonies or to England.

The start of a permanent Jewish presence in Canada is connected to the British conquest of New France. In 1759, the British rulers abolished the ban on settlement of non-Catholics in the colony. The first Jews to settle were members of the British army which had defeated the French under General Jeffrey Amherst. After occupying Montreal, Amherst asked the merchants in his army to stay in Canada in order to help develop the country. Twelve Jews agreed to do so and are considered the pioneers of the Jewish community in Canada.

Canada's first synagogue, Shearith Israel, opened in 1768 in Montreal. By this time, the Jewish community in Montreal had grown such that it was able to build the synagogue. By the late 1700s, Jews had also settled in Quebec City and other parts of Lower Canada. The Hart family was particularly prominent in the area of Trois-Rivieres. A member of the family, Ezekiel Hart, was elected to the legislature of Lower Canada in 1807 but was denied his seat because of religious discrimination. A census in 1831 listed 107 Jews living chiefly in and around Montreal.

Immigration and settlement in Western Canada came much later in the 1800s, following the gold rush on the Pacific Coast. Migration to the Prairie provinces followed the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway which was completed in 1885. According to a census taken in 1881, 33 Jewish families were living in Manitoba at the time—21 of them in Winnipeg—with about 100 individuals in all.

MASS MIGRATION AND THE GROWTH OF THE CANADIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY (1850–1939)

In 1881, there were still only 2393 Jews in Canada. By 1891, their numbers had risen to 6414 and, by the early 1900s, they reached 16,000. Eventually, by 1930, the Jewish population of Canada grew to over 155,000 people.

By the end of the 19th century, 80% of the world's estimated 10 million Jews lived in the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German empires. Jewish immigration to other lands was stimulated by the possibility of better economic conditions and the desire to escape the prejudice, legal discrimination, and violence they experienced in Europe. *Pogroms* (violent mob attacks on Jewish neighbourhoods involving rape, injury, murder, looting, and destruction) in the Russian Empire began in 1881. Jews fled Eastern Europe to many lands, including Canada, in the period from the 1880s to the beginning of WWI. Some also migrated north from the United States, an aspect of cross-border migration common in much of Canadian history that continues to this day.

Jewish Canadians from Western Europe urged their governments to receive the Jews fleeing from Russia and other parts of Europe. As a result of such pressure, the Governor General of Canada put forward a proposal to accept Jewish refugees, with the intention of settling them in the sparsely populated west.

By the time the onset of WWI curbed immigration, there were about 150,000 Jewish Canadians. Montreal and Toronto combined accounted for about three-quarters of the Canadian Jewish

Figure 3: Russian Jewish Immigrants 1911

population, but Jews could be found in every major city and in dozens of smaller places.

Figure 4: Stub from French Cleaners, 1938, with Logo "We Are Not Jewish"

Jews worked as retailers and wholesalers, many beginning as peddlers and working their way up to established businesses. Jews also provided much of the labour for the urban sweatshops of the new ready-to-wear clothing industry. Jewish merchants spread out to small towns, adding synagogues to the places of worship found in rural Canada.

Jews in Canada found that they were not free from discrimination in their new land. Religious intolerance at this time was a common feature of Canadian society. Anti-Semitism was prevalent among Canada's cultural and political leaders. Jews in Canada faced discrimination and limitations on their freedom similar to Jews in Europe.

During the period between World War I and World War II immigration was significantly restricted by the government. In 1930, the Canadian government responded to the unemployment caused by the beginning of the Depression by imposing severe restrictions on immigration. Although the cabinet could, and did, approve entry into Canada for certain immigrants, permission for Jews to enter was almost never given.

Jewish Settlement in the West

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, there were efforts to free Jews from the persecution and the restrictions on owning farmland that they experienced in Russia and other Eastern European countries. The Jewish Colonization Association was one such effort—it sponsored fifteen Jewish farm colonies which were established on the Canadian prairies.

Figure 5: Israel Hoffer and Jewish farm boys clearing stones from the land, Sonnenfeld Colony, 1926, Saskatchewan

Despite these efforts, few of the colonies did very well. This was partly due to the lack of farm experience that Jews of Eastern European origin had as a result of not being allowed to own farms in their former countries. One exception was the Yid'n Bridge settlement in Saskatchewan, started by South African farmers.

This settlement grew and eventually became a town, whose name was later changed to the anglicized name of Edenbridge. The Yid'n Bridge Jewish settlement did not extend to a second generation as community members sought better opportunities elsewhere. Beth Israel Synagogue in Edenbridge is now a designated heritage site. In Alberta, the Little Synagogue on the Prairie is now in the collection of a museum.

During this period, most of the Western Jewish Canadians tended to be storekeepers or trades people. Many established businesses on the new rail lines, selling goods and supplies to the construction workers, many of whom were also Jewish. Later, because of the impact of the railways, some of these small settlements grew to be prosperous towns.

Also during this period, Canadian Jews played important roles in developing the west coast fishing industry, while others worked on building telegraph lines. Some, who were descended from the earliest Canadian Jews, continued their ancestors work as fur trappers. The first major Jewish organization to appear during this period was B'nai B'rith which, to this day, remains the Jewish community's independent advocacy and social service organization.

World War II (1939–1945)

The Jewish community in Canada lobbied the Canadian Government to increase immigration and give asylum to Jews fleeing Nazi and European persecution; however, as described in the book *None is Too Many*, anti-Semitism in Canada led to these pleas being ignored. Only 5,000 Jewish families were allowed to enter Canada during the 12-year period of Nazi rule in Germany. Most other allied countries admitted tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants in an attempt to save them from the Holocaust. It was not until after the war that the Canadian immigration policy regarding Jews began to change. In 1939, Canada was one of the countries that turned away the MS St. Louis with 908 Jewish refugees aboard. Eventually, it was forced to go back to Europe where 254 of them died in concentration camps.

Figure 6: Jewish personnel of the 1st Canadian Army celebrating a Passover Seder meal, Brussels, Belgium, 29 March 1945

In spite of widespread anti-Semitism, almost 20,000 Jewish Canadians volunteered to fight for Canada during World War II.

The Holocaust had a deep and significant impact on Canadian Jews. Although, one in seven Canadian Jews in the 1950s were survivors or the children of survivors, most Canadian Jews, during the post-Holocaust period, seldom discussed the events and experiences. The Holocaust was simply incomprehensible for many and too painful for most. Growing awareness in the 1960s of the need to study, discuss, and remember the Holocaust and the reality that anti-Semitism had not disappeared led to initiatives related to keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive and brought the importance of Holocaust education to the forefront.

Post World War II (1945–2000)

Shortly after World War II, in response to a growing economy in need of workers and a change in policies and attitudes, Canada liberalized its immigration policies. Approximately 40 000 survivors of the Holocaust immigrated to Canada in the late 1940s. In the 1950s, Many Jews fled hostilities in the newly independent countries of North Africa and immigrated to Canada, settling mostly in Montreal, where their French language skills were an asset.

After World War II, the immigration figures increased. Of the one and a half million newcomers who settled in Canada between 1945 and 1975, about 100,000 were Jews. In 2011, 1.0% or 329,495 of respondents to the National Household Survey reported being affiliated with the Jewish religion (Statistics Canada). This included 11,110 Manitobans.

From the 1960s onwards, there were new waves of Jewish immigration. Some South African Jews decided to emigrate to Canada after South Africa became a republic. This was followed by another wave of emigration in the late 1970s, which was precipitated by anti-apartheid rioting and civil unrest.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, immigration from North Africa, especially Morocco, was substantial. Political and economic developments throughout the world have continued to influence trends in Jewish immigration to Canada. Since the 1990s, new immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union and Argentina, among others, have significantly changed the face of the Canadian Jewish community.

The Jewish presence in Canada is strong, with the largest populations in Ontario and Quebec, followed by British Columbia, Manitoba, and Alberta. While today Toronto has the largest Jewish population in Canada, historically Montreal had the largest Jewish population until many English-speaking Jewish Canadians left for Toronto during the 1970s because of nationalist political parties in Quebec, as well as Quebec's language laws.

Jewish Presence in Manitoba

Jewish settlement in Winnipeg is considered to have started with the arrival of 24 Russian Jews on May 26, 1882. They were followed on June 1 of the same year by an additional 247 persons (Herstein). They found themselves in a small town with a total population of 7,000, including a small number of Jews. Eleven Jewish farm colonies were founded in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, assisted by the Jewish Colonization Society.

For some of these Jews, the farmland which had been promised was slow to materialize and the government had made no other provision for their employment or maintenance. Most of the Jews who reached western Canada in the last two decades of the 19th century were concentrated in Winnipeg which,

with the completion of the railway, became an important centre of commerce and light industry.

By 1935, 17,000 Jews were estimated to live in Winnipeg, of which 90% lived in the working-class North End (Trachtenberg). At that time, the Winnipeg Jewish community was composed largely of immigrants from Europe and their children. Prevalent religious discrimination and intolerance towards Jews marginalized the community. They were "barely tolerated by the host society" (Trachtenberg). Nonetheless, it was an extremely organized and self-supporting community. The community had more than twenty institutional buildings and fifty *landsmanshaften* (mutual benefit organizations composed of people from the same places in Europe), as well as several women's groups.

Winnipeg Area

The small Jewish community in Winnipeg was composed of Reformed and Orthodox Jews—each group eventually founding its own synagogue.

Figure 7: Rosh Pina Synagogue, Martha Street and Henry Avenue, Winnipeg, 1969

Several moderate groups of Sephardic and Ashkenazic backgrounds combined and founded the Shaarey Zedek congregation in 1880. In 1890, the Shaarey Zedek synagogue was built on King Street. This Conservative synagogue, with its own cemetery, also ran a Hebrew school for several years. In 1913, a new building was to be erected; however, the congregation amalgamated with the Shaarey Shomayim instead and the King Street building was expanded. A new building was eventually erected in 1950 on Wellington Crescent and is still in existence today.

The Sephardic minority in 1893 formed the Rosh Pina congregation and synagogue located on Henry Street. Rosh Pina tended to appeal to the traditional and Orthodox members of Winnipeg's Jewish community, especially to the new immigrants. Both of these synagogues exist today.

Later in 1904, a Reform congregation—the Holy Blossom Congregation—was formed. The congregation soon changed its name and became Shaarey Shomayim Congregation. That same year, Orthodox Jews built a large synagogue, Beth Jacob, in the heart of the ever-growing Jewish community in the North End.

In 1913, the Shaarey Shomayim and Shaarey Zedek congregations were united under the name Shaarey Zedek to tend to the spiritual needs of the Jewish community in the South End. It became a bastion of traditional, yet progressive,

Judaism in Winnipeg. Services were conducted in English by ordained *rabbis*, graduates from rabbinical seminaries in the United States.

Over the years, a number of smaller congregations formed in the North End of Winnipeg, primarily serving the Orthodox Jewish population. Overtime, due to changes in affiliation and other demographic factors, the Orthodox presence in Winnipeg diminished. Of the 15 orthodox synagogues founded between 1906 and 1932, only seven remained by the late 1960s.

As the Jewish population shifted within Winnipeg, and as it matured and became more prosperous, older synagogues ceased to exist while others, in newer sections of the city, were founded. In the North End, the centre of concentration of a diminishing Jewish population moved steadily northward and, with each successive move, synagogues were established in the new neighbourhoods. In 1952, the new Rosh Pina synagogue was the last synagogue to be built in north Winnipeg.

Figure 8: Teachers and schoolchildren in front of the schoolhouse, Narcisse Colony, Bender, Manitoba, 1921

As the Jewish population spilled over into West Kildonan—a suburb bordering the northern limit of Winnipeg—the B'nai Abraham congregation built its synagogue there, in 1958. With the steady growth of the Jewish population in West Kildonan, the Chevra Mishnayos congregation erected a synagogue in 1965 in Garden City, a new district situated in the north-west section of West Kildonan.

The Jewish community in the South End experienced a similar growth pattern. In the 1940s, an increasing number of Jews moved southward across the Assiniboine River into the area of the city known as River Heights. The Shaarey Zedek built a new synagogue in 1950, closer to the neighbourhood of its membership. As in West Kildonan, the population kept on growing and another congregation was born, the Adas Yeshurun Synagogue, in 1955.

More recently, Jewish immigrants have arrived in Manitoba from Argentina, the former Soviet Union, and Israel. The Jewish population of Winnipeg was estimated to be 13,690 in 2011 and approximately 16,000 in 2017.

Beyond Winnipeg

Winnipeg historian and writer Allan Levine has researched and written extensively about the history of the Jewish community in Manitoba including the *Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba*, which won the McNally-Robinson Book of the Year Award in 2010. The information in this section draws on his research and writings.

> "Beyond the city's perimeter, in scattered agricultural colonies and country villages and towns of Manitoba, Winnipeg became the proverbial homeland for hundreds of Jewish farmers, labourers, and storekeepers and their families, attempting to retain their religion and heritage. The city served as their supply depot for kosher food and a place to pray on the High Holidays."
> (Levine 2012)

As previously indicated, the Jewish community in Manitoba dates back over 141 years. While not the largest immigrant community (according to Allan Levine, at its height the Jewish community constituted 2.8 per cent of the total provincial population in 1931), it has been one of the "most vibrant and culturally rich Jewish communities in North America." (Levine)

At first, many Jewish immigrants were attracted by the lure of owning their own land. Some of the first Jewish settlers lived in St. Adolphe. Between 1880 and 1914, about 10,000 Jewish immigrants came to Manitoba, largely from the Russian controlled Pale of Settlement, which was located in what are present-day Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, and Western Russia.

A small number of Jews that immigrated tried farming at such agricultural settlements as Bender Hamlet, near Narcisse. Most of these agricultural communities disappeared during the Great Depression.

Levine indicates that, during the period extending from 1920 to the mid-1950s, there was a Jewish presence in more than 100 towns and villages throughout Manitoba. Many of these Jews were general storekeepers.

While larger Jewish communities developed in Brandon and Portage la Prairie, often the Jewish merchants and their families were the only Jews in the communities where they resided.

Today, the majority of the Jewish population of Manitoba lives in Winnipeg.

Origins of Judaism

The origins of Judaism date back more than 3500 years. This religion is rooted in the ancient near eastern region of Canaan (which today constitutes Israel and the Palestinian territories). Judaism emerged from the beliefs and practices of the people known as "Israel". What is considered classical, or *rabbinical*, Judaism did not emerge until the 1st century CE.

Judaism traces its origins to the covenant God made with Abraham and his lineage—that God would make them a sacred people and give them a land. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share this Abrahamic heritage and are often referred to as being Abrahamic religions. In other words, they all claim descent from the practices of the ancient Israelites and the worship of the "God of Abraham". The primary figures of Israelite culture include the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophet Moses, who received God's *Torah* at Mount Sinai.

Historically, Judaism went from being a religion practiced primarily in and around the lands that are modern Israel up to the year 70 CE to one practiced in lands beyond due to the exile and forced dispersal of Jews. It also evolved from a religion centered in religious practice in the two great temples, to *rabbinic* Judaism and religious worship and education in synagogues.

Rabbinic Judaism has been the mainstream form of Judaism since the 1st century. It is based on the belief that Moses received God's *Torah* in two forms; the *Written Torah* (*Pentateuch*) and an oral explanation, known as the *Oral Torah*, that Moses transmitted to the people.

Rabbinic Judaism contrasts with Sadducees, Karaite Judaism, and Samaritanism, which do not recognize the oral law as a divine authority nor the *rabbinic* procedures used to interpret Jewish scripture.

Judaism is a tradition grounded in the religious, ethical, and social laws as they are articulated in the *Torah*—the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. Jews refer to the Bible as the *Tanakh*, an acronym for the texts of the *Torah*, *Prophets*, and *Writings*. Other sacred texts include the *Talmud* and *Midrash*: the *rabbinic*, legal, and narrative interpretations of the *Torah*.

Rabbinic Judaism is also based on the emergence of rabbi's as leaders, the study of the *Torah*, and thrice daily prayer.

Development of Judaism Timeline Chart *

Judaism Timeline

2016 CE

Growing Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Israel

In 2016, the Israeli population totals 8,585,000.

- 74.8% Jews
- 20.8% Arabs
- 4.4% "others" (non-Arab Christians, non-Arab Muslims, and no ethnic or religious classification)

2012 CE

First Same -Sex Marriage in a Conservative Synagogue in Manitoba

In 2012, Arthur Blankstein and Ken Ure were married at Shaarey Zedek synagogue in Winnipeg.

2008 CE

Growing Jewish Diversity in Israel

In 2008, 75.6% of the Israeli population is comprised of Jews of various backgrounds.

- 70.3% were Sabra (born in Israel)
- 29.7% Olim (Jewish immigrants to Israel)
  - 20.5% were from Europe and the Americas
  - 9.2% were from Asia and Africa

2005 CE

Chinese Jewish Immigration

In 2005, a privately funded conservative religious organization, began assisting Chinese decedents of Jews from the Ka Ifeng area. Because most were patrilineal decedents of Jews, in order to legally qualify to remain in Israel under the Law of Return, they were required to undergo Orthodox conversions.

2000 CE

Oabru Emet Statement: A New Era in Christian/Jewish Relationships

For almost 2 millennia, Christians have had a sometimes negative and antagonistic perspective towards the Jewish faith and peoples. Since the Holocaust, there has been a dramatic shift in perspective within Christianity. Similarly, within Judaism, there is a new perspective on relationships between the two faiths. *Oabru Emet* consists of 8 statements about how Jews and Christians may relate to one another and is signed by over 150 *rabbis* and Jewish scholars from the U.S., Canada, UK, and Israel.

References and resources used to compile the following timeline chart include

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- Timeline NSW: www.ijs.org.au/chronology/default.aspx

Judaism Timeline

1989 CE	Russian/Soviet Immigration Aliyah Immigration to Israel from the former Soviet Union began en masse in the late 1980s. Between 1989 and 2006, about 1 million Soviet Jews and their non-Jewish relatives and spouses immigrated to Israel under the Law of Return. Although they have largely integrated into Israeli society, they had a significant impact on Israeli culture, politics, and society.
1984 CE	Ethiopian Jews Immigrate to Israel Immigrants from the Jewish communities of Ethiopia began to immigrate to Israel. There were a few waves of immigration, with most immigrants coming during the first two Israeli government-assisted operations, Moses in 1984 and Solomon in 1991.
1980s CE	Sephardic Haredi Formation and spread of the Sephardic Haredi lifestyle movement began in the 1980s through *Rabbi* Ovadia Yosef alongside the establishment of the Shas party in 1984.
1970s CE	Emergence of Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) Judaism in Israel Haredi Jews were almost wiped out by the Holocaust. Haredism re-emerged in the 1970s associated with the religious revival of the so-called *ballteshuva* movement.
1969 CE	Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel On March 19, 1969, Golda became the 4th Prime Minister of Israel after serving as Minister of Labour and Foreign Minister. Born in Ukraine, she was an Israeli teacher, *kibbutznik*, stateswoman, and politician.
1948 CE	Creation of the State of Israel Following the British capture of Ottoman territories and the formation of the Mandate of Palestine, aliyah (Jewish immigration to the Land of Israel) increased. This caused tensions and conflict between the Arab Palestinians and the Jews in Palestine. In 1948, partially in response to the Holocaust, the State of Israel was created when the United Nations partitioned land between Arabs and Jews and unrestricted Jewish immigration was permitted to the new state. Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews immigrated.
1935 CE	1935–1945 Nuremberg laws and Jewish Persecution in Germany Germany passed the Nuremberg Laws in September of 1935. It was the first of many such actions that took away the rights of Jewish citizens and was the start of a long period of Jewish persecution in Germany that culminated with the Holocaust. During this period, it is estimated that over 6 million Jews were systematically murdered under Nazi rule.

Judaism Timeline

First World Zionist Congress

The First Zionist Congress was the first major inter-territorial gathering of Jews to discuss the young Zionist movement. The movement hopes to establish a Jewish nation in Palestine.

First Synagogue

Built in Winnipeg, the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue was first built on Henry Avenue and 315 King Street. Built in 1890, it was the first of many synagogues to be built in Winnipeg. It was followed three years later by Rosh Pina Synagogue also built on Henry Avenue.

First Record of Jewish Presence in Manitoba

The first recorded Jewish residents of Manitoba were Reuben Goldstein, a peddler, and Edmond Coblentz, a clerk, one of three brothers from Alsace-Lorraine. The 1881 Canadian census listed 33 Jews in Manitoba, 21 of them in Winnipeg.

Oldest Surviving Synagogue in Canada

The synagogue built for Congregation Emanu-El (Victoria, British Columbia) is the oldest surviving synagogue.

Orthodox Judaism Emerges

Orthodox Judaism was established in mid-19th-century central Europe in response to the changes to tradition advocated by Reform Judaism. Orthodox Judaism claims to be the most faithful to classical *rabbinic* Judaism

Reform Judaism—Adam Geiger

Reform Judaism emerged in Europe in the late 1800s and early 1900s as a response to the major social and political changes in Europe. In 1839, Abraham Geiger joined a Breslau Jewish community and became one of Reform Judaism's strongest advocates. The movement aims to help Jews find a balance between Jewish tradition and modern developments in the wider society.

First Record of Jewish Residents in Canada

Samuel Jacobs was recorded as the first Jewish resident of Quebec, and thus the first Canadian Jew.

The oldest Jewish Congregation in Canada is the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal founded in 1760.

Hasidism and *Rabbi* Yisrael Baal Shem Tov

Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov was born. He goes on to found Hasidism. Hasidism is one of the most significant religious movements in Jewish history; however, it leads to divisions within Judaism. Hasidism emphasizes that by living a deeply religious life in all aspects of a person's life, anyone can grow closer to God.

Judaism Timeline

Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition

The Inquisition spread to Spain and Portugal and eventually led to mass persecution and expulsion of Jews in both countries. In 1492, Spain expelled all Jews from its borders as part of the inquisition. In 1536, the Portuguese Inquisition was launched in Portugal and led to persecution and difficult times for Jews in Portugal. By 1821, when the Portuguese inquisition was ended, most Portuguese Jews had fled Portugal.

Start of the Inquisition and Jewish Persecution

The official start is usually given as 1231 CE although it was actually instituted by Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) in Rome.

In 1231, the pope appointed the first "inquisitors of heretical depravity." At first, it dealt only with Christian heretics and did not interfere with Jews; however, disputes about *Maimonides'* books provided a pretext for harassing Jews. In 1242, the Inquisition condemned the *Talmud* and burned thousands of volumes. In 1288, the first mass burning of Jews on the stake took place in France.

Creation of the 13 Principles Maimonides

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides or "The Rambam") (1135–1204 CE). The Rambam's 13 principles of faith were formulated in his commentary on the Mishna. His was one of several efforts by Jewish theologians in the Middle Ages to create such a list.

Maimonides' 13 principles were controversial when first proposed but eventually were recognized by many Jewish groups.

European Massacre of Jews—First Crusade

After experiencing a golden age in European cities, Jews began experiencing persecution in Europe. The Crusaders, which attempted to regain control of Christian landmarks in the Holy Land, massacred Jewish citizens of European cities. This is the beginning of centuries of *pogroms* and persecution of Jews in Europe.

Babylonian *Talmud* Completed

The *Mishna* was studied by generations of *rabbis*. These *rabbis* wrote down their discussions and commentaries on the *Mishna's* laws in a series of books known as the *Talmud* around the year 368 CE. Later Babylonian *rabbis* compiled another version of the *Mishna* in 426 CE. The Babylon edition was more extensive than the Palestinian *Talmud* (*Talmud Bavli*) and became the most authoritative compilation of the Oral Law.

Judaism Timeline

200 CE

Mishna Compiled and Codified under Judah the Prince

The history of tragedies and persecution led Jewish academics to focus on compiling and codifying the teachings of the *rabbis*. About this time, the *Mishna* (collection of *rabbinic* teachings, sayings, and interpretations) is compiled. This is followed 300 years later by the compilation of the *Gemara*. Together, they comprise the *Talmud* (the transcription of Oral Law).

70 CE

Rabbinic Judaism

After the fall of the 2nd temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, *Rabbinic* Judaism began to emerge as the dominant form of Judaism. *Rabbinic* Judaism has its roots in the work of the Pharisaic *rabbis* and is based on the *Talmud*. *Rabbinic* Judaism established a mode of worship and a life discipline that was and is still practiced by Jews worldwide.

66 CE

Revolts Against Rome

Jews launched the Great Revolt against Roman rulers in response to years of cruelty. The revolt culminated in a siege of Jerusalem. In 70 CE, the Romans breached the walls of Jerusalem, destroyed the second Temple, and killed an estimated one million Jews as they reasserted authority. A second revolt in 132 CE resulted in the Jews being banned from Jerusalem.

164 BCE

The Maccabees Regain Control of Jerusalem

The death of Alexander the Great led to a fight for control of Jewish lands by his successors. In 198 BCE, the Seleucids gained control. They wished to assimilate the Jews and saw their religion as an obstacle. Therefore, they banned the teaching and practice of Judaism and converted the Second Temple of Jerusalem into a temple dedicated to the Greek god Zeus. The brutal persecution of the Jews by the Seleucids triggered a revolt. The Maccabees fought successfully to regain control of Jerusalem and purify the temple. This event is celebrated today as Hanukkah.

246 BCE

Septuagint—First Known Translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek

The *Torah* (*Pentateuch*, Five Books of Moses) or Hebrew Bible, which was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic was translated to Koine Greek during this period. At this time, Koine Greek was the dominant language of Alexandra, Egypt, and the Eastern Mediterranean. There were up to 7 later translations at different points of which only fragments survive.

Judaism Timeline

329 BCE	Alexander the Great Rules Israel Alexander, a Greek King, created an empire that stretched from Egypt to India. During his campaign against Persia, Alexander conquered Tyre and then Egypt via what is today Israel in the south. Alexander was respectful of the Jewish faith and thus spared Jerusalem. He reached an agreement with the Jews, that as long as they would be his loyal vassals and pay their taxes, they could remain autonomous. Israel was rather peacefully absorbed into his growing empire.
516 BCE	Second Temple Built In 539 BCE, the Persian ruler Cyrus the Great made the re-establishment of the city of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple possible. When the Jewish exiles were allowed to return to Jerusalem by Cyrus the Great, construction began on the original site of Solomon's Temple. and was completed in 516 BCE.
587 BCE	First Temple Destroyed (aka Solomon's Temple) Babylonians invaded and destroyed the First Temple (Solomon's) when they sacked the city of Jerusalem. About 90% of the Jewish population was forced into exile.
722 BCE	The Assyrians Conquer Israel The Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel. They forced the IO tribes of Israel that live there to resettle in other parts of the empire, as is Assyrian custom. This scattering of these 10 tribes was the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora, or living away from Israel, which characterizes much of Jewish history. The 10 tribes are lost to history, and they are now known as the Ten Lost Tribes. Later, the Babylonians forced the Judeans to leave the southern Kingdom of Judah.
920 BCE	Israel Split into Two Kingdoms King Solomon died and the northern Hebrew tribes revolted, resulting in two Kingdoms: the kingdom of Israel in the north and the kingdom of Judah in the south. They remained separate for over two hundred years.
970 BCE	First Temple Built Under Kings Saul, David, and Solomon, a united kingdom of Israel was formed and maintained. King Solomon of Israel built the First Temple on Mount Moriah. The temple is home to the Ark of the Covenant, a holy relic that contains the Commandments.

Judaism Timeline

Moses Led the Jews on an Exodus from Egypt

The Jews were enslaved in Egypt for hundreds of years. Moses, a Jewish man raised as an Egyptian prince, was appointed God's prophet. Around this time he led his people out of enslavement on a journey to Canaan (Exodus). During this time, Moses presented the Israelites with the Ten Commandments that he received from God on Mt. Sinai and formed a new covenant with God. This is the foundation for the Jewish religion.

First Covenant with God

Abraham circumcised himself, symbolizing the covenant between God and all his descendants. God promised to make Abraham the father of a great nation, and to give his descendants the land that later becomes Israel. This is the basis for male circumcision in the Jewish faith.

Beginning of Judaism

Abraham was born. According to the *Torah* and *Old Testament*, God chose Abraham to be the father of Isaac, the founder of the Jewish people.

Creation of the World / Jewish Calendar Begins

In Judaism, the stories of the creation of the world are found in the first two chapters of the *Book of Genesis* in the *Torah*. The Jewish calendar starts with the year 1 being the date ascribed to the creation of the world in the *Torah*, which is equivalent to Monday, October 7, 3761 BCE.

Significant Texts and Writings

Language

The Jewish nation has spoken many different languages during its long history.

Biblical and Modern Hebrew belong to the Semitic family of languages. There is evidence of Semitic languages being used as far back as 2500 BCE. The most widely spoken Semitic languages today are Arabic and Hebrew, but there are other Semitic languages in use. These include Maltese; African languages such as Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre; a number of other languages and dialects used in the Middle East in countries such as Syria and Turkey; and other languages in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa.

Historically, Semitic languages have played an important role in religious expression. These include Arabic in Islam, Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic in Judaism, Ge'ez in Ethiopian Christianity, as well as Syriac and Chaledean in Nestorian Christianity.

Biblical Hebrew was the language spoken by the ancient Jews during biblical times. Throughout history, Jewish people learned this biblical language in order to read the scriptures and pray. As for their daily lives, Yiddish (Ashkenazi Jews) and Ladino (Sephardic Jews) became the most prominent.

The establishment of the State of Israel and the destruction of East European Jewry essentially tipped the scales in favour of modern Hebrew. The Hebrew language underwent a process of revival: from a "dead language" of scriptures and prayer books, Hebrew was transformed into a dynamic, modern language. In the contemporary Jewish world, Hebrew is unchallenged in its claim to being the Jewish language, although it is mostly Israeli Jews who can actually use it. Outside of Israel, most Jews speak the language of the country that they reside in; however, Hebrew is the language used by most Jews for prayer and other religious observances and rites.

Key Writings/Scriptures

The *Torah*

The term *Torah* means instruction and can refer to many aspects of Jewish scriptures, practice, and history. Usually, the term *Torah* refers to the central religious texts of Judaism.

Judaic tradition teaches that the 5 books of 'Laws' (*Written Torah*) were given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai along with an *Oral Torah* ("Laws" that were not laws of Judaism. The *Written Torah* is also known as the *Chumash*, *Pentateuch*, or Five Books of Moses.

Sometimes, the term *Torah* is narrowly used to refer to the first 5 books (*Pentateuch*) of the 24 books of the *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible) or Jewish Written Law. Christians commonly refer to the *Pentateuch* as being the Old Testament.

Though the English word Bible comes from the Latin word *biblia*, which was derived from the Koine Greek word *τὰ βιβλία* (*biblia*) or "the books", the Greek word literally meant "paper" or "scroll" and eventually came to be used as the word for "book".

In the Hebrew Bible, the *Torah* is referred to both as the *Torah of the Lord* and as the *Torah of Moses*, and is said to be given as an inheritance to the congregation of Jacob, the Jewish people. Its purpose seems to be to make Israel "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The *Torah* was and continues to be considered by Jews as the source of freedom, goodness, and life. Further, for practicing Jews, the *Torah* was and continues to be identified with both wisdom and love. The *Torah* is written on a scroll made from kosher animal parchment.

In *rabbinic* literature and practice, the word *Torah* describes a collection of religious texts that includes the *Written Torah* and the *Oral Torah*. The *Oral Torah* consists of a written recitation of the *Oral Torah* and interpretations and commentary which, in *rabbinic* tradition, have been handed down from generation to generation and are now recorded in the *Talmud* and *Midrash*.

The *Tanach*

The Hebrew Bible is commonly referred to by non-Jews, as the Old Testament but the appropriate term to use for the Hebrew scriptures is *Tanach*. This word is derived from the Hebrew letters of its three components:

***Torah*:** The Books of Genesis (*Bereshit*), Exodus (*Shemot*), Leviticus (*Vayikrah*), Numbers (*Bamidbar*), and Deuteronomy (*Devarim*)

***Nevi'im* (Prophets):** The Books of Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habukkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (The last twelve are sometimes grouped together as *Trei Asar* [Twelve].)

***Ketuvim* (Writings):** The Books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah, I Chronicles, and II Chronicles

The *Mishnah* (The *Oral Torah*)

Moses received the *Mishnah* or *Oral Torah* along with the *Written Torah* on Mount Sinai. The *Oral Torah* was an important aspect of Jewish religious foundations. It was passed down in oral form from generation to generation until the destruction of the second temple.

The Jewish community of Palestine suffered horrendous losses during the Great Revolt (66–70 CE) and the Bar-Kokhba rebellion (132–135 CE). Well over a million Jews were killed in the two ill-fated uprisings, and the leading Jewish centres, along with thousands of their *rabbinical* scholars and students, were devastated.

This decline in the number of knowledgeable Jews seems to have been a decisive factor in *Rabbi* Judah the Prince's (leader of the Jews in Israel) decision around the year 200 CE to record in writing the *Oral Torah*. For centuries, Judaism's leading *rabbis* had resisted writing down the *Oral Torah*. Teaching the *Torah* orally, the *rabbis* knew, compelled students to maintain close relationships with teachers, and they considered teachers, not books, to be the best conveyors of the Jewish tradition. Nonetheless, with the deaths of so many teachers in the failed revolts, *Rabbi* Judah apparently feared that the *Oral Torah* would be forgotten unless it was written down.

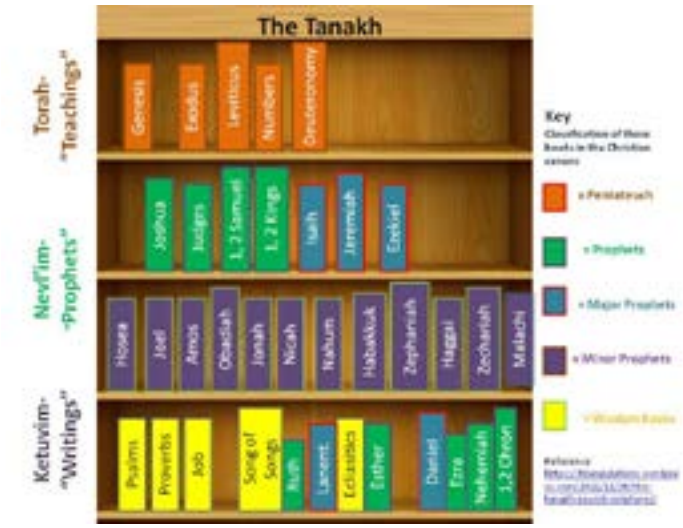

Figure 9: The Tanakh

The *Mishnah* is the collection of *rabbinic* traditions written by *Rabbi* Judah at the beginning of the third century CE. The *Mishnah* supplements, complements, clarifies, and systematizes the commandments of the *Torah* (The *Written Torah*). The contents of the *Mishnah* are the product of an ongoing process of elaborating and explaining the foundations, the details, and the significance of the *Torah*'s commandments. The *Mishnah* has shaped most of the actual practice of the Jewish religion, including present-day practice.

The *Talmud*

During the centuries following *Rabbi* Judah's editing of the *Mishnah*, it was studied exhaustively by generation after generation of *rabbis*. Eventually, some of these *rabbis* wrote down their discussions and commentaries on the *Mishnah's* laws in a series of books known as the *Talmud*. The *rabbis* of Palestine edited their discussions of the *Mishnah* around the year 400 CE: their work became known as the *Palestinian Talmud* (in Hebrew, *Talmud Yerushalmi*, which literally means *Jerusalem Talmud*).

More than a century later, some of the leading Babylonian *rabbis* compiled another editing of the discussions on the *Mishnah*. By then, these deliberations had been going on some three hundred years. The Babylon edition was far more extensive than its Palestinian counterpart, so that the *Babylonian Talmud* (*Talmud Bavli*) became the most authoritative compilation of the Oral Law. When people speak of studying the *Talmud*, they almost invariably mean the *Bavli* rather than the *Yerushalmi*.

The *Talmud's* discussions are recorded in a consistent format. A law from the *Mishnah* is cited, which is followed by rabbinic deliberations on its meaning. The *Mishnah* and the *rabbinic* discussions (known as the *Gemara*) comprise the *Talmud*, although in Jewish life the terms *Gemara* and *Talmud* usually are used interchangeably.

Other Significant Jewish Religious Texts

In addition to the *Torah*, the *Mishnah*, and the *Talmud*, there are several other religious texts of significance.

Midrash

The *Midrash* is a large collection of *rabbinical* material derived primarily from sermons (the Hebrew word for sermon is *d'rash*). The most significant parts of the *Midrash* were compiled between the 4th and 6th centuries CE, but the *midrashic* form continues to the present day. Midrash follows traditional Jewish beliefs and forms and contains both *halakhic* (legal) and *haggadic* (tales/explanatory) content, although it is best known for the explanatory elements. *Midrash* contains legends, parables, stories, and creative insights that tend to be more accessible to the average person than the *Torah* and *Talmud*.

The *Targums* (The Aramaic Bibles)

Any translation of the Hebrew Bible may be called *Targum* in Hebrew; however, the term tends to be used especially for translation of the books of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic. After the Babylonian exile, most Jews spoke Aramaic as their first language, so translation of the Hebrew Bible became a necessity. Many of the *Targums* contained additional material such as interpretations or explanatory notes along with the translated scriptures.

The Aramaic translation of the Bible is a part of the Jewish traditional literature and is thought to have begun as early as the time of the Second Temple. *Targums* that have survived include all the books of the Hebrew Bible, with the exception of the books of Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah, which were already partially written in Aramaic.

In *Rabbinical* Judaism, *Targum* had a place both in the synagogal liturgy and in biblical instruction. The reading of the Bible text was often combined with the *Targum* in the presence of the congregation assembled for public worship. This has a long history dating back to the time of the Second Temple.

The Targums are diverse as they were translated at different times and have more than one interpretive approach to the Hebrew Bible.

Zohar

The *Sefer ha-Zohar* (Book of Splendour) is the central text of Kabbalah, the mystical branch of Judaism. The *Zohar* is not a single text. Rather, it is a group of books. It is a mystical commentary on the *Torah*, originally written in medieval Aramaic and medieval Hebrew. Its contents include mystical discussions on the nature of God; the creation and structure of the universe; the nature of souls; sin and redemption; good and evil; and related subjects.

The *Zohar* was published by a Jewish writer named Moses ben Shem-Tov de Leon and first appeared in Spain in the thirteenth century. The publisher attributed the work to a *rabbi* of the second century, Simeon ben Yohai. It is believed that, during a time of Roman persecution, *Rabbi* Simeon hid in a cave for 13 years, studying the *Torah* with his son Eliezar. It is during this time that he is said to have been inspired by God to write the *Zohar*.

Figure 10: Title page of first edition of the Zohar, Mantua, 1558

The *Zohar* has been somewhat divisive in the Jewish community since its introduction. At the time, many *rabbis* lauded it because it opposed religious formalism and stimulated people's imagination and emotion. For many, it helped reinvigorate their experience of prayer because, for some, prayer had become an external religious exercise and requirement, whereas prayer was supposed to be a means of transcending everyday affairs and placing oneself in union with God.

In contrast, many *rabbis* censured it because it promoted many superstitious beliefs and produced a band of mystical dreamers, whose over-stimulated imaginations led them to see a world filled with spirits, demons, and all kinds of good and bad influences. *Maimonides* and many classical *rabbis* viewed these beliefs as a contradiction of Judaism's principles of faith.

As well, the *Zohar's* mystic mode of explaining some commandments was extrapolated by its commentators to apply to all religious observances, and stimulated a strong tendency to substitute a mystic Judaism in the place of traditional *rabbinic* Judaism.

Over time, the negative impact of the *Zohar* on the Jewish community and faith reduced the enthusiasm that had been felt for the book in the Jewish community. However, in contemporary Judaism, the *Zohar* is still very important, especially to many Orthodox Jews and the Hasidim (Hasidic Jews).

Responsa

An additional set of Jewish religious writings is the *Responsa* (answers to specific questions on Jewish law). This is a vast collection of thousands of texts that began to be collected in the Middle Ages and are still being compiled today. One can consider the *Talmud* to be the book of laws and the *Responsa* to be the case law. *Responsa* were and are composed by respected *rabbis* who have been asked to address a specific question, and include a full description of the question or situation, references to the applicable *Talmudic* passages, the *rabbi's* answer, and the reasoning behind their opinion.

Examples of recent *Responsa* are those dealing with such topics as the *kashering* of dishwashers, cosmetic surgery, and artificial insemination. The Global Jewish Database (the Responsa Project) has compiled and made accessible electronically 343 books of *Responsa*.

The Books of Judaism Graphic

The image that follows provides an overview of the major religious texts of Judaism and their position with respect to the timeline of Jewish religious development and evolution.

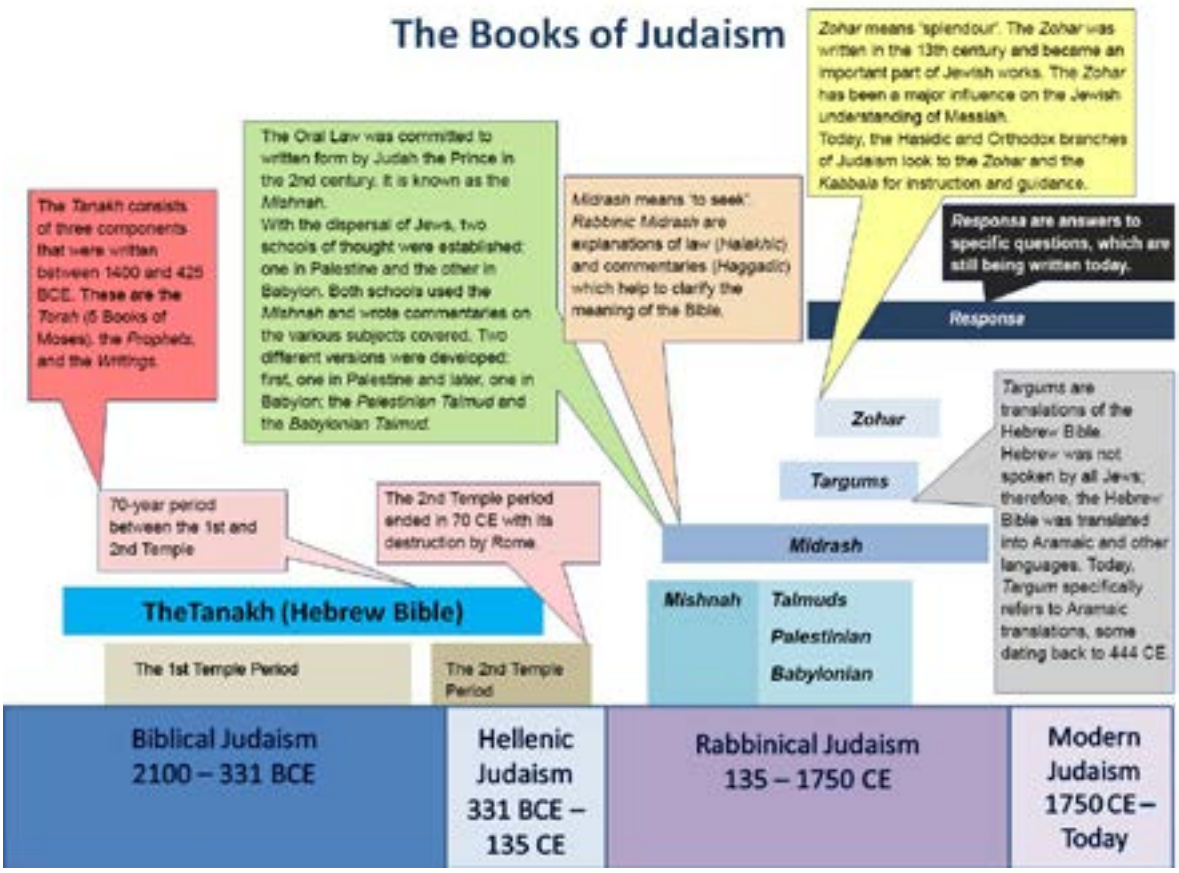

Figure 11: The Books of Judaism

Notes

Foundational Beliefs, Concepts, and Ideas

Conceptual Foundations

The Nature of God

One of the primary expressions of Jewish faith, recited twice daily in prayer, is the *Shema*, which begins "Hear, Israel: The Lord is our God, The Lord is One." This simple statement encompasses several different ideas.

1. There is only one God.
2. God is one and is a single, whole, complete indivisible entity, who cannot be divided into parts or described by attributes. Any attempt to ascribe attributes to God is merely man's imperfect attempt to understand the infinite.
3. God is the only being to whom we should offer praise.

God's Names

In *Rabbinic* Judaism there are seven names for God. In the Hebrew Bible the name of God used most often is the *Tetragrammaton YHWH*. This name is frequently anglicized as *Jehovah* and *Yahweh*. In most English editions of the Bible it appears written as "the Lord" flowing from the Jewish tradition of reading it as *Adonai* (My Lord) out of respect.

In Jewish thought, a name is not merely an arbitrary designation or a random combination of sounds. The name conveys the nature and essence of the thing named. It represents the history and reputation of the being named and therefore a name should be treated with the same respect as the thing's reputation. For this reason, God's names, in all of their forms, are treated with enormous respect and reverence in Judaism. This may include not writing or spelling out the name in full using G-d instead of God in English or saying *Tt-Vav* (*tetweh*) to indicate the number 15 in numerology instead of *Yōd-Hē* (*Yahweh*). Jews are commanded to never say God's name in vain and there is a prohibition on erasing or defacing a name of God.

13 Principles of Faith

The closest that anyone has ever come to creating a widely-accepted list of Jewish beliefs is *Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith*. These principles, which Rambam thought were the minimum requirements of Jewish belief, are as follows:

1. God exists.
2. God is one and unique.
3. God is incorporeal.
4. God is eternal.
5. Prayer is to be directed to God alone and to no other.
6. The words of the prophets are true.
7. Moses' prophecies are true, and Moses was the greatest of the prophets.
8. The *Written Torah* and the *Oral Torah* were given to Moses.
9. There will be no other *Torah*.
10. God knows the thoughts and deeds of men.
11. God will reward the good and punish the wicked.
12. The *Messiah* will come.
13. The dead will be resurrected.

Judaism focuses on relationships: the relationship between God and mankind, between God and the Jewish people, between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, and between human beings. The Jewish scriptures tell the story of the development of these relationships, from the time of creation, through the creation of the relationship between God and Abraham, to the creation of the relationship between God and the Jewish people, and forward. The scriptures also specify the mutual obligations created by these relationships, although various movements of Judaism disagree about the nature of these obligations. Some say they are absolute, unchanging laws from God (Orthodox); some say they are laws from God that change and evolve over time (Conservative); some say that they are guidelines that you can choose whether or not to follow (Reform, Reconstructionist). According to Orthodox Judaism, these actions include 613 commandments given by God in the *Torah* as well as laws instituted by the *rabbis* and long-standing customs.

Sacrifices

Figure 12: *Havdalah*

For the most part, the practice of sacrifice stopped in the year 70 C.E., when the Roman army destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem, the place where sacrifices were offered. Jews stopped offering sacrifices because they didn't have a proper place to offer them. The *Torah* specifically commands the Jews not to offer sacrifices wherever they wish; they are only permitted to offer sacrifices in the place that God has chosen for that purpose. The last place appointed by God for this purpose was the Temple in Jerusalem, but the Temple has been destroyed. In Jewish practice, prayer has taken the place of sacrifices.

Today, the practice of making sacrifices is symbolically represented in Jewish Passover *Seder* plates (meal) by the *zroah* (shank bone of a lamb). The *Seder* meal takes place midway through the Passover ritual. The *zroah* is essential to the *Seder*, as a lamb was sacrificed the night before the Exodus.

In contemporary Jewish homes, some will still place a lamb shank bone on the *Seder* plate, but others will use one from a chicken (neck, wing, or drumstick). Jews who are vegetarian may place olives, grapes, unfermented grains, or beets onto their *Seder* plates in place of any bones.

The *Sabbath*

The *Sabbath* (*Shabbat*) is the most important ritual observance in Judaism. It is the only ritual observance instituted in the Ten Commandments. The *Sabbath* is primarily a day of rest and spiritual enrichment. The word *Shabbat* comes from a Hebrew root meaning to cease, to end, or to rest. All types of work that were needed to build the sanctuary (like sowing, kindling a fire, tearing, etc.) are prohibited, as well as any task that operates by the same principle or has the same purpose. In addition, the *rabbis* have prohibited coming into contact with any implement that could be used for one of the above purposes (for example, one may not touch a hammer or a pencil). They have also prohibited travel, buying and selling, and other weekday tasks that would interfere with the spirit of the *Sabbath*. The use of electricity is prohibited because it serves the same function as fire or some of the other prohibitions, or because it is technically considered to be fire. As with almost all of the commandments, all of these *Sabbath* restrictions can be violated if necessary to save a life.

The *Sabbath* ends at nightfall, when three stars are visible, approximately fourty minutes after sunset. At the conclusion of the *Sabbath*, the family performs a concluding ritual called *Havdalah* (separation, division). Blessings are recited over wine, spices, and candles. Then a blessing is recited regarding the division between the sacred and the secular, between the *Sabbath* and the working days.

Prayers and Blessings

Figure 13: *Lia bat mitzvah*

In Judaism, prayer is largely a group activity rather than an individual activity, although it is permissible to pray alone and it fulfills the obligation to pray. Observant Jews pray in formal worship services three times a day, every day: at evening (*Ma'ariv*), in the morning (*Shacharit*), and in the afternoon (*Minchah*). Daily prayers are collected in a book called a *Siddur*, which derives from the Hebrew root meaning order, because the *Siddur* shows the order of prayers. Jews pray facing the city of Jerusalem (Israel).

The *Talmud* states that it is permissible to pray in any language that you can understand; however, traditional Judaism has always stressed the importance of praying in Hebrew. It is believed that through prayer the bond that has been created between Jews all over the world is maintained and strengthened.

A blessing (*berakhah*) is a special kind of prayer that is very common in Judaism. *Berakhot* are recited either as part of the synagogue services and as a response or prerequisite to a wide variety of daily occurrences. *Berakhot* are easy to recognize: they all start with the word *barukh* (blessed or praised).

Life and Death

In Judaism, life is valued above almost all else. The *Talmud* notes that all people are descended from a single person, thus taking a single life is like destroying an entire world, and saving a single life is like saving an entire world.

Of the 613 commandments, only the prohibitions against murder, idolatry, incest, and adultery are so important that they cannot be violated to save a life. Judaism not only permits, but often requires a person to violate the commandments if necessary to save a life.

Because life is so valuable, Jews are not permitted to do anything that may hasten death, not even to prevent suffering. Euthanasia, suicide, and assisted suicide are strictly forbidden by Jewish law. However, where death is imminent and certain, and the patient is suffering, Jewish law does permit one to cease artificially prolonging life.

Death, in Judaism, is not a tragedy, even when it occurs early in life or through unfortunate circumstances. Death is a natural process. Our deaths, like our lives, have meaning and are all part of God's plan. In addition, Jews have a firm belief in an afterlife, a world to come, where those who have lived a worthy life will be rewarded. In Jewish law, the human body belongs to its

Creator, to God. The body must therefore be "returned" in its entirety, just as it was given. Any violation of the human body is considered to be a violation of God Himself (self-mutilation as well as cremation are forbidden).

Mourning practices in Judaism are extensive, but they are not an expression of fear or distaste for death. Jewish practices relating to death and mourning have two purposes: to show respect for the dead and to comfort the living who will miss the deceased.

Bar Mitzvah / Bat Mitzvah

These terms denote both the attainment of religious and legal maturity and the occasion at which this status is formally assumed for boys at the age of 13 plus one day and for girls at the age of 12 plus one day. Upon reaching this age, a Jew is obliged to fulfill all the commandments. Jewish law fixed 13 as the age of responsibility considering this the time of physical maturity for boys (and 12 for girls). At this age, young people are thought to be able to control their desires.

Marriage

Marriage (*kiddushin*) and by extension the family is very important in Judaism. In Judaism, family and the home are thought to be great blessings. Traditionally, marriage was the union of a man and a woman.

Figure 14: Groom and Bride under a Contemporary *Chupah*

Same-sex marriage in Judaism in the last few decades has been a subject of much debate within Jewish denominations in Canada and across the Jewish diaspora. The traditional view that same-sex relationships are categorically forbidden by the *Torah* remains the current view of Orthodox Judaism, but not necessarily of Reconstructionist, Reform, and Conservative Judaism. These sects began changing their position on same-sex unions and LGBTQ inclusion a few decades ago. Reform and conservative synagogues in Canada and Manitoba have allowed and performed same-sex marriages in the last few years.

The importance of marriage is emphasized in the *Torah* and the *Talmud*. According to the *Midrash*, this is because when God created the first human it was in the form of one being, who had both male and female characteristics. Later, God separated the two aspects to form two separate entities, a man and a woman.

Wedding Ceremony

Wedding ceremonies and practices within the Jewish faith vary depending on regions, origins, and local customs. For example, the Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jewish communities have very different wedding ceremonies and traditions. As well, there are practices that are aligned with the three main Jewish sects, reformed, conservative, and orthodox. The nature of the wedding ceremony will be based on the synagogue in which the wedding is held. Reform Jewish ceremonies and Conservative Jewish ceremonies tend to be more liberal and modern; the Orthodox Jewish and Hassidic wedding ceremonies are the most traditional and follow strict patterns of practice.

The Ashkenazi Jewish wedding ceremony is relatively brief. Usually, the couple fasts the day before the marriage. Before beginning the wedding ceremony, the groom places a veil on his bride symbolizing modesty and his commitment to clothe and protect his wife.

The ceremony itself lasts 20–30 minutes, and takes place under a canopy (called a *chupah*), which represents the home that the new couple will share. Typically the ceremony proceeds as follows:

1. The *chatan* (groom) followed by the *kallah* (bride) are each escorted to the *chupah* by their respective parents.
2. When the groom reaches the *chupah*, the *chazan* (*cantor*) blesses him and asks God to bless the couple. When the groom arrives underneath the *chupah* he dons a *kittel* (white robe), which symbolizes spiritual purity.
3. Next the *kallah* circles the *chatan* seven times under the *chupah* symbolically building the walls of the couple's new home and alluding to aspects of the *Torah*.
4. This is followed by the actual wedding of the couple, the *kiddushin* and the *nisuin*.
5. For the *kiddushin*, the rabbi recites a blessing over the wine, and then a blessing acknowledging forbidden and permitted relationships in Jewish law. The first cup accompanies the betrothal blessing, and after these are recited, the couple drinks from the cup. As per Jewish custom, a *chatan* must give the *kallah* an object worth more than one *peruta* (a small unit of value); however, it has become customary for the *chatan* to give a ring. The man places the ring on the woman's finger and says "Be sanctified (*mekudeshet*) to me with this ring in accordance with the law of Moses and Israel."

According to Jewish law, this is the central moment of the wedding, and the couple is now married.

6. After the *kiddushin* is complete, the *ketubah* (marriage contract) is read aloud in the original Aramaic text. The contract is then signed by two *edim* (witnesses). The *ketubah* is the property of the *kallah* and she must have access to it throughout the couple's marriage.
7. The *nisuin* proceeds with the bride and groom standing beneath the *chupah*, and reciting seven blessings (*sheva brakhos*) in the presence of a *minyan* (prayer quorum of 10 adult Jewish men). The couple then drinks a second cup of the wine.
8. The groom smashes a glass (or a small symbolic piece of glass) with his right foot, to symbolize the destruction of the Temple.
9. The couple then retires briefly to a completely private room (*cheder yichud*) and are left alone for the first time. This time is also symbolic of the groom bringing his wife into his home.
10. *Yichud* is followed by a festive meal, which is followed by a repetition of the *sheva brakhos*. Exuberant music and dancing traditionally accompany the ceremony and the reception.

With respect to Orthodox Jewish weddings, men and women must sit separately and dance separately. As well, Orthodox Jewish weddings take place on Sundays, as opposed to Saturdays.

With respect to Hassidic weddings, men and women celebrate separately. Two receptions are held simultaneously, often in two rooms, or in one room separated by a partition. For almost the entire wedding reception and celebration, the women will converse, eat, dance, and celebrate with the bride, and the men will do so with the groom.

Divorce

In Judaism, Jewish marriage was traditionally and ideally intended to be for life but it has always been recognized and accepted that this is not always possible. The concept of a "no-fault" divorce has been accepted in Judaism for thousands of years.

Under Jewish law, a man can divorce a woman if she has faults or has transgressed in some way or for no specific reason. If the marriage breaks down and a divorce is desired, traditionally, the man has to give his wife a *Sefer k'ritut*, more commonly known as a *Get* (Aramaic name). A *Get* is the issuing of a bill of divorce from the husband to the wife. The *Get* (document of divorce) has to be presented at a *rabbinical* court (*Bet Din*) and approved. After a divorce, there are no restrictions on either partner remarrying.

While, it is possible for a man to refuse to give a *Get* to his wife, most Progressive Jews see this as unfair and will allow the woman to apply for a *Get*.

The *Get* is a dated and witnessed document wherein the husband expresses his firm intention to divorce his wife and sever all ties with her. The *Get* is usually written by an expert scribe acting as the husband's agent. Each *Get* is individually written to reflect the specific situation of the divorcing couple. The *Get* can be written in any language, as long as it contains the key words and phrases mandated by Jewish law. However, the almost universally accepted custom is to have it written in Aramaic.

Inequality of the Sexes

Within Judaism, with respect to divorce, the husband and wife are not equal in their powers. According to the *Talmud*, only the male can initiate a divorce, and the wife cannot prevent him from divorcing her. This has changed and, today, the requirement in the Jewish religious divorce process is the complete agreement of both parties to the proceedings even though traditionally it must be initiated and agreed to by the male partner.

For Orthodox women who feel the marriage has broken down or whose partner has broken their bonds of marriage, this inequality can be difficult. If the husband refuses to issue a *Get* and agree to a divorce they may be obligated by Jewish Law to remain with men who won't let them go. In the Orthodox Jewish community, when a *beth din* summons a husband to participate in the Get process, he can respond in one of three ways

- agree to the *Get*
- go to court and provide reasons for refusing and wait for the *rabbis*' decision
- ignore the request to appear

The *rabbinical* courts have limited powers to influence men who refuse to give their wives *Gets*. In Israel, the men can lose their driving privileges or be thrown in jail. In North America, however, the secular courts cannot interfere in Jewish divorce proceedings.

Marrying Gentiles or Non-Jews

Judaism has historically been a matrilineal faith (one's mother needs to be a Jew for that person to be considered one). As well, the *Torah* encourages Jews to marry within their religion; however, this is changing. For example, in Israel, a person who has a patrilineal connection to Judaism and can prove so, has the right to immigrate to Israel and receive citizenship.

Increasingly, in Canada and elsewhere, more Jewish men and women choose to marry non-Jews; however, in Orthodox families, this presents a challenge. Sometimes, when this occurs in an Orthodox family, the father may say *kaddish* (the memorial prayer said at funerals) to show that his child is now dead to him and the family.

Same-Sex Marriage and Judaism

Same-sex marriage in Judaism, as with Christianity and other religions, has been a subject of debate. The traditional view was that same-sex relationships were forbidden by the *Torah*. Today, this is still the position of Orthodox Judaism but not of Reconstructionist, Reform, and Conservative Judaism.

As the issue of same-sex marriage became a significant social and political issue in Canada and throughout the world and laws in several countries began to allow same-sex marriages, it has also become more prevalent in certain Jewish communities as well. Reform, Reconstructionist, and more recently Conservative Judaism have adopted more open and inclusive approaches to diversity of sexuality, gender identity, and expression. For example, in Winnipeg, the first known same-sex marriage in a Conservative synagogue took place in 2012.

Within the Orthodox community, there is a small, but increasing number of individuals and leaders who advocate for same-sex marriage as a secular institution. *Rabbi* Steven Greenberg, an American, is the first openly gay Orthodox *rabbi* and a well-known advocate among open-minded Orthodox and traditionally-observant Jews around the world.

Mysticism in Judaism

Mysticism and mystical experiences have been a part of Judaism that dates back to the beginning of the faith. For example, the *Torah* contains an abundance of stories of mystical experiences, ranging from visitations by angels to prophetic dreams and visions.

The mystical school of thought came to be known as *Kabbalah*. Generally, *Kabbalah* refers to Jewish mysticism dating back to the time of the second Temple. For many years, it was a carefully guarded oral tradition, but it became systematized and dispersed in the Middle Ages. The focus of the *Kabbalah* is the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God, with the latter described in terms of the *sefirot* or attributes of God.

Kabbalah is one of the most commonly misrepresented and misunderstood aspects of Judaism. These result largely from the fact that the teachings of *Kabbalah* have been significantly distorted by mystics, occultists, and new age practitioners.

Hebrews or Jews?

In the section relating to early Jewish history, the terms Hebrew or Hebrews is used. Hebrews is a term which appears in the Hebrew Bible. It is usually taken to mostly refer to the Semitic-speaking Israelites, especially in the pre-monarchic period when they were still nomadic.

While today Hebrew usually refers to the language and Jews to the people, in some languages, Hebrews is still the primary term used to refer to the people. This is due to the negative connotations that the word Jew(s) has in such languages as Armenian, Italian, Modern Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, Russian, Romanian, and others.

Notes

Change and Evolution

Stages in the Development of Judaism: A Historical Perspective

As the timeline chart presented earlier demonstrates, the development of the Jewish faith and tradition which occurred over thousands of years was affected by a number of developments and events that took place over that period.

As with other faiths, the scriptures or oral historical records of the development of the religion may not be supported by the contemporary archaeological, historical, or scientific theories and available data or artifacts. The historical development of the Jewish religion and beliefs is subject to debate between archeologists, historians, and biblical scholars. Scholars have developed ideas and theories about the development of Jewish history and religion. The reason for this diversity of opinion and perspectives is rooted in the lack of historical materials, and the illusive nature, ambiguity, and ambivalence of the relevant data.

Generally, there is limited information about Jewish history before the time of King David (1010–970 BCE) and almost no reliable biblical evidence regarding what religious beliefs and behaviour were before those reflected in the *Torah*. As the *Torah* was only finalized in the early Persian period (late 6th–5th centuries BCE), the evidence of the *Torah* is most relevant to early Second Temple Judaism. As well, the Judaism reflected in the *Torah* would seem to be generally similar to that later practiced by the Sadducees and Samaritans.

By drawing on archeological information and the analysis of Jewish Scriptures, scholars have developed theories about the origins and development of Judaism.

Over time, there have been many different views regarding the key periods of the development of Judaism. For the purpose of this document, we will describe the historical development of Judaism as undergoing the following distinct phases or periods:

1. Early Roots
2. Mosaic Stage
3. Monotheism (1300–1000 BCE)
4. Hellenistic Judaism (400 BCE–200 CE)
5. *Rabbinic* Judaism (200–1700 CE)

Early Roots

The early development of the Hebrew religion and its related worship before the migration from Egypt is not clear or well-known and, as a result, is often debated. The origins of Judaism have been traced back to the Bronze Age. It is believed to have emerged from the polytheistic ancient Semitic religions.

Judaic history is silent about Hebrew practice and worship during the time in Egypt. A single religious observance remains from this period: Passover. Passover commemorates an event in Egypt that took place shortly before the migration: the sparing of the Hebrews when God destroyed all the first-born sons in the land of Egypt.

The early Hebrew religion was likely polytheistic and a local variety of the pattern found in Iron Age Phoenicia in which there was a triad of deities. These deities were

1. a protective god of the city (often El)
2. a goddess, often El's wife or companion (in Ugarit and Israel Asherah), who symbolizes the fertile earth
3. a young god (in Ugarit and Israel Baal who was usually the goddess' or El's and the goddess' son) whose resurrection expresses the annual cycle of vegetation

Mosaic Stage: National Monolatry (1300–1000 BCE)

During the Iron Age (1300–700 BCE), the Israelite religion became distinct from other Canaanite religions due to the unique proto-monotheistic worship of *Yahweh*.

According to Jewish history, as narrated in Exodus, the second book of the *Torah*, the Hebrews became a nation and adopted a national god on the slopes of Mount Sinai in southern Arabia. While little is known about Hebrew life in Egypt, the flight from Egypt is described in Jewish history with great detail. The migration from Egypt itself creates a new entity in history, the Israelites. Exodus is the first place in the *Torah* which refers to the Jews as being a single national group, the *bene yisrael*, or children of Israel.

The *Yahweh* religion is learned when the mass of Jews collect at Mount Sinai in Midian (located in the southern regions of the Arabian Peninsula). During this period, Moses teaches the Hebrews the name of their god and brings them the laws that, as the chosen people, they must observe.

Scholars disagree greatly about the origin of the *Yahweh* religion and the identity of its founder, Moses. While Moses is an Egyptian name, the religion itself likely comes from Midian because Moses lived for a time with a Midianite priest, Jethro, at the foot of Mount Sinai. It appears that the Midianites had already developed a religion centered on *Yahweh* at this point and they worshiped the god of Mount Sinai as a form of a powerful deity of nature. It is, therefore, possible that the Hebrews picked up the *Yahweh* religion from another group of Semites and that this *Yahweh* religion slowly developed into the central religion of the Hebrews.

In Hebrew history, during the migration from Egypt and for two centuries afterwards, the Hebrews followed many religions, to different degrees.

The Jewish religion at that point was initially a monolatrous religion (a belief in the existence of many gods but with the consistent worship of only one deity). While the Hebrews were asked to worship no deity but *Yahweh*, there is no evidence that the existence of other gods was denied. The account of the migration contains numerous references, by the historical characters, to other gods. Also, the first law of the *Decalogue* is that no gods be put before *Yahweh*, not that no other gods exist. Consequently, while still controversial, most scholars have reached the conclusion that, for about two hundred years, the initial Mosaic religion was a monolatrous religion.

The Prophetic Revolution (800–600 BCE)

During this period where the Hebrews settled in Palestine, after over two centuries of sporadic conflict with indigenous peoples, a damaging civil war, and the constant presence of threats, the disparate Hebrew settlers of Palestine began to long for a unified state under a single monarch. This desire would lead to the first major crisis in the Hebrew world view, the formation of a Hebrew monarchy.

However, by desiring to have a king, the tribes of Israel were committing a serious act of disobedience towards *Yahweh*, as this suggested that they were choosing a human being and human laws instead of *Yahweh* and *Yahweh's* laws.

In the books of Samuel in the account of the formation of the monarchy, Samuel tells the Israelites that they are committing an act of disobedience for which they will dearly pay. Ignoring Samuel's warnings, they push ahead with the monarchy. Saul, the first monarch is disobedient towards *Yahweh's* commands and falls out with both Samuel and *Yahweh*, and gradually becomes a despot. This pattern—the conflict between *Yahweh* and the kings of Israel and Judah—becomes the historical pattern in the Hebrew stories of the prophetic revolution.

This leads to a group of religious leaders addressing the crisis created by the institution of the monarchy by reimagining and redirecting the *Yahweh* religion during this period. These religious reformers were called *nivi'im*, or prophets. The most important of these prophets were Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah (who is actually three people: Isaiah and "Second Isaiah" [Deutero-Isaiah], and a third, post-exilic Isaiah, and Micah). These, and a number of lesser prophets, are as important to the Hebrew religion as Moses.

The innovations of the prophets can be grouped into the following three large categories:

- **Monotheism:** The prophets clearly designate *Yahweh* as the one and only God of the universe. *Yahweh* ruled the entire universe and all the peoples in it, whether or not they recognized and worshipped *Yahweh*. The *Yahweh* religion as a monotheistic religion is concretized during the prophetic revolution.

- **Righteousness:** While *Yahweh* was first seen and described as having many human aspects and sometimes failings (e.g., sometimes angry and violent), the *Yahweh* of the prophets can do nothing but good and what is right and just. *Yahweh* becomes a God of righteousness. In this concept of God, the good and the just are always rewarded, and the evil are always punished. The evil in the world is the result of human action.
- **Ethics:** Earlier practices were concerned with the cultic rules to be followed by the Israelites; the prophets re-centered the religion around ethics. Ritual practices became less important than ethical demands that *Yahweh* requires of humans.

The prophets and the historical forces which led to their innovations are important to understand. The emergence of a Hebrew monarchy brought with it all the evils of a centralized state: arbitrary power, vast inequality of wealth, poverty in the midst of plenty, heavy taxation, slavery, bribery, and fear. The prophets were specifically addressing these corrupt and fearsome aspects of the Jewish state. In doing so, they created a new religion, a monotheistic religion, centered on distinguishing right and wrong.

Post-Exilic Religion (600 BCE–400 BCE)

The defeat and exile of the Jewish people during this period had an enormous impact on Jewish religion and culture. Defeated by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC, the Judean population was partially exiled to Babylon. This was followed by Nebuchadnezzar returning, laying siege to Jerusalem, and burning it down along with the Temple.

These events shook the Hebrews world view. They had been promised the land of Palestine by their God and the covenant between *Yahweh* and Abraham promised them *Yahweh's* protection.

The literature of the Exile and the time shortly after demonstrates the despair and confusion of the population uprooted from its homeland. In *Lamentations* and various *Psalms*, we get a profound picture of the sufferings of those left in Judea, who coped with starvation and massive privation, and the community of Hebrews wandering Babylon. In *Job*, a story written a century or so after the Exile, the central character suffers endless calamities—when he finally despairs of *Yahweh*'s justice, his only answer is that *Yahweh* is not to be questioned.

The Hebrew religion shifted profoundly in the years of *Exile*. A small group of religious reformers believed that the calamities suffered by the Jews were due to the corruption of their religion and ethics. These religious reformers reoriented Jewish religion around the *Torah*, the five books of Moses. These five books represented all the law that Hebrews should follow. These laws, mainly centered on cultic practices, should remain pure and unsullied if the Jews wished to return to their homeland and keep it.

Post-exile Jewish religion was about reform, an attempt to return religious and social practice back to its original nature. This reform was accelerated by the return to Judaea itself; when Cyrus the Persian conquered the Chaldeans in 539,

he set about re-establishing religions in their native lands. This included the Hebrew religion. Cyrus ordered Jerusalem and the Temple to be rebuilt and, in 538 BC, he sent the Judaeans home to Jerusalem for the express purpose of worshipping *Yahweh*. The reformers then occupied a central place in Jewish thought and life all during the Persian years (539—332 BCE).

However, more changes were to come. While the reformers were busy trying to purify the Hebrew religion, the Persian religion (Zoroastrianism) began to impact on Jewish peoples. Zoroastrianism offered a world view that both explained and tempered the tragedies such as the *Exile*. It seems that the Hebrews adopted some of this world view in the face of the profound disasters they had weathered.

Zoroastrianism, founded in the seventh century BCE by a Persian prophet named Zarathustra (Zoroaster is his Greek name), was a dualistic, eschatological, and apocalyptic religion. After the Exile, popular religion among the Judeans and the Jews of the Diaspora included several innovations that draw on Zoroastrianism.

Figure 16: Maurycy Gottlieb—Jews Praying in the Synagogue on *Yom Kippur*

- **Dualism:** After the *Exile*, the Hebrews adopt a concept of a more or less dualistic universe, in which all good and right comes from *Yahweh*, while all evil arises from a powerful principle of evil. Such a dualistic view of the universe helps to explain tragedies such as the *Exile*.
- **Eschatology and Apocalypticism:** Popular Jewish religion begins to form an elaborate theology of the end of time, in which a deliverer would defeat once and for all the forces of evil and unrighteousness.
- **Messianism:** Concurrent with the new eschatology, there is much talk of a deliverer who is called *messiah*, or anointed one. In Hebrew culture, only the head priest and the king were anointed, so this *messiah* often combined the functions of both religious and military leader.
- **Otherworldliness:** Popular Judaism adopts an elaborate afterlife. Since justice does not seem to occur in this world, it is only logical that it will occur in another world. The afterlife becomes the place where good is rewarded and evil eternally punished.

Hellenistic Judaism and Roman Rule (400 BCE–200 CE)

Palestine was conquered by Alexander the Great in 322 BCE and came under Greek control. It was later conquered by the Romans and was under their control from 63 BCE–135 CE.

After being conquered by Alexander the Great (332 BCE), Palestine became part of the Hellenistic kingdom of Ptolemaic Egypt, the policy of which was to permit the Jews considerable cultural and religious freedom. When, in 198 BCE, Palestine was conquered by King Antiochus III (247–187 BCE) of the Syrian Seleucid dynasty, the Jews were treated even more liberally, being granted a charter to govern themselves by their own constitution, namely, the *Torah*. Despite this freedom, Hellenistic beliefs and culture began to have a significant impact on the people of Palestine.

Following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE, 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.

Post-Temple Stage: *Rabbinic* Judaism (200 CE–1750 CE)

Rabbinic Judaism develops after the destruction of the Second Temple and the exile and dispersal of Jews from their lands. *Rabbinic* Judaism has been the mainstream form of Judaism since the 6th century CE, after the codification of the Babylonian *Talmud*.

From the 3rd to 6th centuries CE, the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible and the *Talmud* were compiled. As there were various versions of the Hebrew Bible, for *Rabbinic* Judaism, the Masoretic Text (MT) is considered the authoritative Hebrew and Aramaic text of the *Tanakh*. However, contemporary scholars seeking to understand the history of the Hebrew Bible's text will draw on a number of other resources such as Greek and Syriac translations of the Hebrew Bible, quotations from rabbinic manuscripts, the *Samaritan Pentateuch* and others such as the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. It is important to note that many of these are older than the Masoretic text and often contradict it.

Due largely to the censoring and burning of manuscripts in medieval Europe, the oldest existing manuscripts of various *rabbinical* works are quite late. The oldest surviving complete manuscript copy of the *Babylonian Talmud* is dated to 1342 CE.

Prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, there were a number of small Jewish sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, and followers of Jesus; however, after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, these sects took different paths or broke off from Judaism.

Following from Pharisaic Judaism, *Rabbinic* Judaism is based on the belief that, at Mount Sinai, Moses received from God the *Written Torah* (*Pentateuch*) in addition to an oral explanation, known as the *Oral Torah*, which Moses transmitted to the people. In contrast Sadducees, Karaite Judaism, and Samaritanism, do not recognize the oral law as having divine authority nor do they accept the *rabbinic* procedures used to interpret Jewish scripture.

Although today there are significant differences among Jewish denominations of *Rabbinic* Judaism with respect to the binding force of *halakha* (Jewish religious law) and the willingness to challenge preceding interpretations, all identify themselves as coming from the tradition of the oral law and the rabbinic method of analysis. It is this aspect which distinguishes them as *Rabbinic* Jews, in comparison to Karaite Judaism.

The Sadducees believed that only the *Written Torah* was divinely inspired and dismissed some other core tenets of the Pharisees. The sect was an important aspect of the upper social and economic echelon of Judean society and fulfilled various political, social, and religious roles, including maintaining the Temple. The sect is believed to have become extinct sometime after the destruction of Herod's Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE.

While Samaritanism is a similar and related religion, it is traditionally considered separate from Judaism. Samaritans believe that they are the direct descendants of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh from the northern Kingdom of Israel, which was conquered by Assyria in 722 BCE. They also believe that their worship, which is based on the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, is the true religion of the ancient Israelites from the time before Babylonian captivity, preserved by those who remained in the Land of Israel. In contrast, they see Judaism to be a related but altered and amended religion, brought back by those returning from the Babylonian Captivity. The Samaritans believe that Mount Gerizim was the original Holy Place of Israel from the time that Joshua conquered Canaan (Israel). The major issue between Jews and Samaritans has always been the location of the Chosen Place to worship God: Mount Zion in Jerusalem according to the Jewish faith or Mount Gerizim according to the Samaritan faith. Once a large community, the Samaritan population today is estimated to be fewer than 1,000 persons.

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 as recorded in the *Mishnah* (and developed by later *rabbis* in the two *Talmuds*), relying instead only upon the Tanakh. These included the Isunians, the Yudganites, the Malikites, and others. They soon developed oral traditions of their own, which differed from the *rabbinic* traditions, and eventually formed the Karaite 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. Some of these groups are the Ashkenazi (of central and Eastern Europe), the Sephardi (of Spain, Portugal, and North Africa), the Beta Israel of Ethiopia, and the Yemenite Jews from the southern tip of the 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.

Modern Judaism (1750–present)

As indicated earlier, modern Judaism is founded on *Rabbinical* Judaism. However, beginning in the 18th and 19th centuries, movements developed that resulted in the development of the four major divisions that exist in Judaism today.

Jews in Europe were affected by the intellectual, social, and political movements of the late 18th century that swept Europe and the rest of the World, and that we now know as the *Enlightenment*. These movements advocated scientific thinking and free thought, and encouraged people to question previously unshaken religious dogmas. The emancipation of the Jews in many European communities and the *Haskalah* movement started by Moses Mendelssohn brought *Enlightenment* to the Jewish communities.

Reform Judaism grew out of *Enlightenment* and was an attempt to respond to the challenges of integrating Jewish life with *Enlightenment* values. German Jews in the early 19th century began to develop the concept of Reform Judaism, adapting Jewish practice to the new conditions of an increasingly urbanized and secular community.

The ideas of Reform Judaism were not accepted by all. Some were strongly opposed to the Reform movement and became known as being Orthodox Jews. Later, some members of the Reform movement felt that Reform Judaism had gone too far and was moving away from tradition too quickly. This led to them forming the Conservative movement.

Orthodox Jews who were sympathetic to the *Haskalah* formed what became known as neo-Orthodox or modern Orthodox Jews. Orthodox Jews who opposed the *Haskalah* became known as Haredi Jews.

These major contemporary divisions in Judaism are discussed in the section that follows.

Diversity of Judaism

Diversity of Religious Interpretation and Practice

In addition to ethnic diversity, modern Jewish adherents are divided into several different branches or sects. In North America, the four main branches include Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist.

Orthodox Judaism

Orthodox Judaism is considered the most traditional form of modern Judaism. Orthodox Judaism views itself as the continuation of the beliefs and practices of normative Judaism, as accepted by the Jewish nation at Mt. Sinai and codified in successive generations in an ongoing process that continues to this day.

Figure 17: Colourful *Kippah*

According to Orthodox Judaism beliefs, both the Written Law and the Oral Law are of divine origin, and represent the word of God. The Orthodox movement holds that the information (except for scribal errors) is the exact word of God and does not represent any human creativity or influence. For the Orthodox, the term *Torah* refers to the Written Law as interpreted by the Oral Law. As practical questions arise, Orthodox authorities apply the Halakhic process (the system of legal reasoning and interpretation described in the *Oral Torah*) using the *Torah* (both Oral and Written) to determine how best to live in accordance with God's will. In this way, Orthodoxy evolves to meet the demands of the times.

Hasidic Judaism: Hasidic (or Chasidic) Judaism emerged in 12th-century Germany. The *Hasidim*, or pious ones in Hebrew, belong to a special movement within Orthodox Judaism. It is a mystical movement that stresses joy, faith, and ecstatic prayer, accompanied by song and dance. The Hasidic ideal is to live a pious life, in which even the most mundane actions are sanctified. *Hasidim* live in closely-knit communities (known as courts) that are spiritually centered on a dynastic leader known as a *rebbe*, who is both a political and religious authority.

Haredi Judaism: *Haredim* (members of Haredic communities) are one of the most visibly identifiable groups within Judaism today. This is in part due to their distinctive dress and appearance. Haredi men wear black suits and wide-brimmed black hats and Haredi women wear long skirts, thick stockings, and head coverings. *Haredi* is a general term, used either as an adjective or a noun, which refers to a broad array of theologically, politically, and socially conservative Orthodox Jews. Sometimes they will be referred to as being ultra-Orthodox Jews.

What unites *Haredim* is their absolute reverence for the *Torah* including both the written and oral laws as being the central and determining factor in all aspects of the adherent's life. Haredi Jews usually live in communities that are comprised primarily or exclusively of *Haredim*. To prevent external influences and erosion of values and practices, Haredim tend to limit their contact with the non-Haredi world thereby avoiding, as much as possible, interaction with both non-Haredi Jews and persons of other faiths.

Figure 18: Orthodox Family in the Park

The origins of the Haredi may be traced to 19th-century Europe as a response to the changes in Jewish societies and communities and the emergence of a more worldly Jewish life and culture. This reaction to these changes resulted in an extremely conservative, anti-secular, and isolationist expression of Judaism.

The *Holocaust* was also a fundamental factor in the development of Haredi Judaism. With the destruction of the major European Jewish communities and the deaths of millions of Jews throughout Europe, the ability to live a religious life as practiced in the *shtetls* (small towns and communities) seemed nearly impossible.

Thus, the surviving, highly observant, European Jews were inspired by a desire to preserve their lifestyle to move their communities and learning institutions to mother places, mainly Israel and the United States. While Haredi communities were established throughout the world after World War II, with the emergence of the State of Israel, it became the center of Haredi activity and institutions. In Israel, *Haredim* re-established their *yeshivots* (religious schools) and their communities.

Currently, it is estimated that over 800,000 Haredi live in Israel, which makes it the largest Haredi community in the world.

Reform Judaism

Reform Judaism may be considered the most liberal form of Judaism. While respecting traditional sources of wisdom and inspiration, it explicitly rejects the divine revelation of the oral law. Reform Jews observe practices such as dietary laws or *Sabbath* restrictions on an optional basis.

Reform Judaism was born at the time of the French Revolution, a time when European Jews were recognized for the first time as citizens of the countries in which they lived. *Ghettos* were being abolished; special badges were no more; and people could settle where they pleased, dress as they liked, and follow the occupations that they wanted.

Rabbi Abraham Geiger suggested that observance might also be changed to appeal to modern people. Geiger, a skilled scholar in both *Tanach* and German studies, investigated Jewish history. He discovered that Jewish life had continually changed. Every now and then, old practices were changed and new ones introduced, resulting in a Jewish life that was quite different from that lived 4,000 or even 2,000 years before. He noticed these changes often made it easier for Jews to live in accordance with Judaism. Geiger concluded that this process of change needed to continue to make Judaism attractive to all Jews. American Reform Judaism began as these German "reformers" immigrated to the United States of America in the mid-1800s. The first Reform Judaism group was formed by a number of individuals in Charleston, South Carolina.

Figure 19: Jewish students from across North America participate in a *havdalah* ceremony, at the *Chabad* on campus, Crown Heights neighbourhood, Brooklyn, New York, 2014

Reform Judaism differs from the other major movements in that it views both the oral and written laws as a product of human hands (specifically, it views the *Torah* as divinely inspired, but written in the language of the time in which it was given). The laws reflect their times, but contain many timeless truths. The Reform movement stresses retention of the key principles of Judaism. As for practice, it strongly recommends individual study of the traditional practices; however, adherents are free to follow only those practices that increase the sanctity of their relationship to God. Reform Judaism also stresses equality between the sexes.

Reform Judaism shares the universal Jewish emphasis on learning, duty, and obligation, rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life. Reform stresses that ethical responsibilities, personal and social, are enjoined by God. Reform Jews also believe that ethical obligations are but a beginning and that these obligations extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including

creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; lifelong study; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the *Sabbath* and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; and being involved with the synagogue and community and other activities that promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence. Within each aspect of observance, Reform Judaism demands that Jews confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and exercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating their holiness as people and as community. The requirement for commitment and knowledge is repeatedly emphasized. A Reform Jew who determines their practice based on convenience alone is not acting in accordance with the recommended position of Reform Judaism.

Conservative Judaism

Conservative Judaism may be seen to take a more centrist position between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Conservative Judaism was developed in the United States at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and interprets the *Torah* from a different perspective, allowing its adherents to share in Canadian social, cultural, and educational institutions while still professing Jewish identity and religious practice. Zacharias Frankel's (1801–1875) teachings form the foundation of Conservative Judaism.

Figure 20: *Torah* Ark, Mishkan Yoseph Synagogue

Conservative Judaism attempts to combine a positive attitude toward modern culture, acceptance of critical secular scholarship regarding Judaism's sacred texts, and commitment to Jewish observance. Conservative Judaism believes that the scholarly study of Jewish texts indicates that Judaism has constantly been evolving to meet the needs of the Jewish people in varying circumstances, and that a central *halakhic* authority can continue the *halakhic* evolution today.

Conservative Judaism affirms that the *halakhic* process reflects the Divine will. In Conservative Judaism, the central *halakhic* authority of the movement, the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (CJLS), will often set out more than one acceptable position. In such a case, the rabbi of the congregation is free to choose from the range of acceptable positions (or none of them), and his congregation is expected to abide by his choice. Although *rabbis* mostly adhere to the CJLS, they have the ability to make their own *halakhic* decisions when appropriate.

Conservative Judaism holds that the laws of the *Torah* and *Talmud* are of divine origin, and thus mandates that halakha (Jewish law) be followed. At the same time, the Conservative movement recognizes the human element in the *Torah* and *Talmud*, and accepts modern scholarship that shows that Jewish writings also show the influence of other cultures and, in general, can be treated as historical documents. Conservative Judaism affirms the legitimacy of scientific biblical criticism.

The movement believes that God is real and that God's will is made known to humanity through revelation. The revelation at Sinai was the clearest and most public of such divine revelations, but revelation also took place with other people, called prophets, and, according to some, in a more subtle form can continue to take place even today.

Reconstructionist Judaism

This is the most recent branch to emerge from within Judaism. Reconstructionists see Judaism as an evolving religious civilisation. They do not believe that God chose the Jewish people or that a personified deity is active in history. This branch rejects the assertion that the *Torah* was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. For this branch, Judaism is in a continual process of evolution that incorporates the inherited Jewish beliefs and traditions with the needs of the contemporary world.

Figure 21: Raphael Hadane, the *Liqa Kahenat* (High Priest) of Beta Israel in Israel

Both the idea and the movement owe their inspiration to Mordecai Menahem Kaplan (1881–1983). Raised Orthodox in Eastern Europe, Kaplan came to North America at age eight. He saw his generation responding to this radically different setting in two ways: struggling to maintain Jewish identity while acclimating to North America, or abandoning Jewish identity altogether. Kaplan believed that with the breakdown of belief in the *Torah* as the revealed word of God, in the authority of *halakhah* (Jewish law), in a supernatural conception of God, and in the notion of the Jews as a separated and "chosen people," a new rationale for maintenance of Jewish identity was needed. For Kaplan, belonging to the Jewish people came before behaving according to Jewish practice or believing according to Jewish religion.

Kaplan rejected supernaturalism in all of its manifestations. For Kaplan, the *Torah* was a human document recording the Jewish people's earliest record of their search for God and for the behaviours that would lead to human responsibility. What tradition called divine commandments were for Kaplan folkways that had been created by the Jewish people, and thus were subject

to adaptation, change, and/or rejection in response to the changing needs of the Jewish people. Many Jewish intellectuals were attracted to Kaplan's program for a Jewish life.

Kaplan was also a pioneer in conceiving of the synagogue as a Jewish centre, in which social, intellectual, and athletic activities would be as much a part of the institutional program as the synagogue and the religious school. This vision helped inspire the creation and development of the Jewish Community Centre movement.

Until the founding of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) in 1968, Reconstructionist ideology was essentially defined by Kaplan and his immediate circle of disciples and followers. Once the RRC began to ordain Reconstructionist *rabbis*, and as the number of Reconstructionist congregations began to grow in the 1980s and 1990s, Reconstructionism itself began to evolve, adapt, and change to meet new circumstances. As an independent movement, Reconstructionism had to grapple with creating positions and practices that, if not exactly couched as a return to *halakhah*, meant a serious engagement with *halakhah*. In the last quarter of the 20th century, the *Torah* and other biblical writings were reengaged as myth and poetry, and not only as historical documents.

The founding of the Reconstructionist movement may be dated from the establishment of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism (SAJ) by Mordecai Menahem Kaplan in January 1922.

Reconstructionism in the 21st century remains firmly grounded in Kaplan's essential insight that Judaism is the product of the historical experience of the Jewish people, and is not the revealed word of God or an inspired reaction to revelation. The traditional sources and practices of Judaism still have, in Kaplan's famous formulation, a "vote but not a veto." The concept of values-based decision-making has become integral to Reconstructionism, as has inclusivity—the bringing into the Jewish community of intermarried Jews, single Jews, gay and lesbian Jews, single Jewish parents, and elderly Jews, among others. Kaplan's emphasis on belonging over behaving and believing remains central to Reconstructionism. What has changed is that it is as much the belonging to a Jewish community as to the Jewish people that is now central.

Cultural Diversity

Historically as well as in the present, Judaism encompasses a diversity of cultures, perspectives, and interpretations.

One aspect of this diversity is with respect to ethnicity. Jewish ethnic diversity is reflected in the distinctive communities within the world's ethnically Jewish population. Although considered one single self-identifying ethnicity, there are distinctive ethnic divisions among Jews. This ethnic diversity is the result of migration and geographic branching from an original Israelite population mixing with local populations, and subsequent independent evolutions.

Over a long time, and as a result of their dispersal, Jews formed distinct ethnic groups in several different geographic areas. These included larger groups such as the Ashkenazi Jews (of central and Eastern Europe), the Sephardi Jews (of Spain, Portugal, and North Africa), and the Beta Israel of Ethiopia. Smaller groups include

- the Teimanim from Yemen
- Indian Jews such as the Bene Israel, Bnei Menashe Cochin Jews, and Bene Ephraim
- the Romaniotes of Greece
- the Italian Jews (Italkim or Bené Roma)
- various African Jews
- Chinese Jews, most notably the Kaifeng Jews
- other distinct but now almost extinct communities

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 disputes.

Historically, European Jews have been divided into two major groups: the Ashkenazim (Germanics) and the Sephardim (Hispanics). A third historic term, Mizrahim (Easterners), has been used to describe other non-European Jewish communities to the east, but the usage of this term has changed over time and geographical contexts. Today, Mizrahim includes both Middle Eastern and North African Jews.

At present, Ashkenazi Jews are the largest group, and represent an estimated 70% to 80% of all Jews worldwide. As a result of their massive emigration from Europe in search of better opportunities, and for asylum during periods of war and intense persecution, they became the overwhelming majority of Jews in the 'New World', including the United States, Mexico, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Africa. Conversely, in Venezuela and Panama, Sephardim represent the majority of the Jewish communities. In France, more recent Sephardic immigration from North Africa and their descendants means they now outnumber the Ashkenazim.

Figure 22: Diversity of Jews

The Jewish community in Canada is composed predominantly of Ashkenazi Jews and their descendants. Other Jewish ethnic divisions are also represented, including Sephardi Jews, Mizrahi Jews, and a number of converts. The Jewish Canadian community manifests a wide range of Jewish cultural traditions, and encompasses the full spectrum of Jewish religious observance.

Significant Persons/ Founders

Historical Figures

Abraham

According to Jewish tradition, Abraham was born under the name Abram in the city of Ur in Babylonia in the year 1948 from Creation (circa 1800 BCE). He was the son of Terach, an idol merchant; however, from his early childhood, he questioned the faith of his father and sought the truth. He came to believe that the entire universe was the work of a single Creator, and he began to teach this belief to others.

Eventually, the one true Creator that Abram had worshipped called to him and made him an offer: if Abram would leave his home and his family, then God would make him a great nation and bless him. Abram accepted this offer, and the covenant between God and the Jewish people was established. Abram was subjected to ten tests of faith to prove his worthiness for this covenant.

God promised the land of Israel to Abram's descendants. Abram was growing old and his beloved wife, Sarai, was past child-bearing years. She therefore offered her maidservant, Hagar, as a wife to Abram. (This was a common practice in the region at the time.) Hagar bore Abram a son, Ishmael, who, according to both Muslim and Jewish tradition, is the ancestor of the Arabs.

When Abram was 100 and Sarai 90, God promised Abram a son by Sarai. God changed Abram's name to Abraham (father of many), and Sarai's to Sarah (from "my princess" to "princess"). Sarah bore Abraham a son, Isaac, who was the ancestor of the Jewish people. Abraham died at the age of 175.

Jacob

Isaac's wife Rebecca (Rivka) gave birth to fraternal twin sons: Jacob (Ya'akov) and Esau. Esau had little regard for the spiritual heritage of his forefathers, and sold his birthright of spiritual leadership to Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew. An angel of God later blessed Jacob and gave him the name "Israel".

Jacob married Leah and later her sister Rachel, as well as Rachel's and Leah's maidservants, Bilhah and Zilphah. Between these four women, Jacob fathered

12 sons and one daughter. These 12 sons (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin) are the ancestors of the tribes of Israel, and the ones for whom the tribes are named. The Jewish people are generally referred to as the Children of Israel, signifying their descent from Jacob.

Moses (c.1391–c.1271 BCE)

Along with God, it is the figure of Moses who dominates the *Torah*. Acting at God's behest, it is he who leads the Jews out of slavery under Pharaoh's rule, unleashes the Ten Plagues against Egypt, guides the freed slaves for forty years in the wilderness, carries down the law from Mount Sinai, and prepares the Jews to enter the land of Canaan. Without Moses, there would be little apart from laws to write about in the last four books of the *Torah*.

Figure 23: Rembrandt-Moses with the Ten Commandments

The saddest event in Moses' life might well be God prohibiting him from entering the land of Israel. An act of disobedience to God while in the desert is generally offered as the explanation for this harsh punishment.

Despite challenging episodes, Moses impressed his monotheistic vision upon the Jews with much force for the succeeding three millennia. No one knows Moses' burial place to this day.

Rashi (1040–1105 CE)

Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Shlomo Yitzhaki) is widely known as Rashi. He is considered to be the greatest European Jewish scholar and teacher of medieval times and one of the most influential and widely read Jewish commentators. He was born and died in Troyes, Champagne, in northern France.

In 1070, he founded a *yeshiva* (Jewish religious school) and taught many students, some of which also became prominent Jewish scholars. Sadly, in 1096, Rashi's family became the victims of the Crusades and the persecution of the Jews that took place throughout Europe. He witnessed the massacre of many friends and family members at the hands of Crusaders en route to the Holy Land.

Rashi is best known for his comprehensive commentaries on the *Bible* and the *Babylonian Talmud*. From the 1520s until today, few editions of the *Talmud* that have been published do not feature Rashi's commentary in the margins. His commentaries on the *Hebrew Bible* are considered to be foundational elements of Jewish education to this day. In addition to his commentaries, Rashi also wrote

responses on a range of Jewish religious questions, as well as devotional poetry.

Rashi's fame and influence is a result of his concise explanatory style and clarity of explanations. His commentaries effectively combine an explanatory style that clearly describes the simple meaning of the text and an interpretive style that further expands and clarifies the meaning of religious texts and complex ideas.

Rashi is also known for his position on the role of women in Judaism. As a scholar, he was one of the few at the time who was willing to make changes for the benefit of women's rights, even where the Jewish religious texts and sources were not favourable to women. Rashi saw women as being 'godly folk' and, while he was not immune to prejudicial opinions about women in the sources, he is seen as being relatively open and considerate towards women within the Jewish tradition.

While he primarily wrote in Hebrew, he sometimes created his own terms in his commentaries and he frequently translated Hebrew terms into French, writing the French in Hebrew script with the intention of instructing his French-speaking students and followers with respect to various subjects, but especially those that impacted daily life, such as *Shabbat* observance, kosher laws, and relations with non-Jews.

Maimonides/Rambam (1135–1204 CE)

Maimonides was a twelfth century Jewish sage credited with amazing writings and achievements. Maimonides was the first person to write a systematic code of all Jewish law, the *Mishneh Torah* (which later served as the model for the *Shulkhan Arukh*); he produced one of the great philosophic statements of Judaism. He published a commentary on the entire *Mishna*; served as physician to the sultan of Egypt; wrote numerous books on medicine; and served as the leader of Cairo's Jewish community.

Maimonides' full name was Moses ben Maimon. In Hebrew, he is known by the acronym of *Rabbi* Moses ben Maimon, Rambam. He was born in Spain, but to avoid persecution by the Muslim sect in power, he fled with his family, first to Morocco, later to Israel, and finally to Egypt.

To this day, Maimonides is one of the most widely studied Jewish scholars. Maimonides was one of the few Jewish thinkers whose teachings also influenced the non-Jewish world; much of his philosophical writings were about God and other theological issues of general, not exclusively Jewish, interest.

Figure 24: Israeli postage stamp depicting medieval Jewish scientist and philosopher Maimonides (Rav Moses ben Maimon, RAMBAM)

Nachmanides/Ramban (1194–1270)

Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, Nachmanides, was the foremost *halakhist* of his age. Like Maimonides before him, Nachmanides was a Spaniard who was both a physician and a great *Torah* scholar. However, unlike the rationalist Maimonides, Nachmanides had a strong mystical bent. His biblical commentaries are the first ones to incorporate the mystical teachings of *kabbalah*.

Nachmanides could be described as one of history's first Zionists, because he declared that it is a commandment to take possession of Israel and to live in it (relying on the *Torah*). Nachmanides fulfilled this commandment, moving to the Holy Land during the Crusades after he was expelled from Spain for his polemics. He found devastation in the Holy Land, "but even in this destruction," he said, "it is a blessed land." He died there in 1270 C.E.

Theodor Herzl (1860–1904)

Theodor (Binyamin Ze'ev) Herzl was the visionary behind modern Zionism and the reinstitution of a Jewish homeland. Hertzl was an Austro-Hungarian journalist and writer. He coined the phrase "If you will, it is no fairytale," which became the motto of the Zionist movement. Although at the time no one could have imagined it, Zionism led, only fifty years later, to the establishment of the independent State of Israel. Herzl died and was buried in Austria. In his will, he requested to be buried in the state of Israel. In 1949, after Israel's establishment, his remains were brought and buried in Jerusalem on a mountain that was then renamed in his honour—Mount Herzl.

Figure 25: Theodor Herzl

Religious / Community Leaders

Rabbis

The word *rabbi* originates from the Hebrew word meaning teacher. The term has evolved over Jewish history to include many roles and meanings. The basic role and function of *rabbis* developed in the Pharisaic and Talmudic era, when learned teachers came together to codify Judaism's written and oral laws. The first use of the title *rabbi* appears in the *Mishnah* in reference to Yohanan ben Zakkai who lived in the early to mid-first century CE.

In more recent times, the duties of a rabbi have become increasingly similar to those of Christian Protestant clergy, and has resulted in the use of the term *pulpit rabbis*. In 19th-century Germany and the United States of America, rabbinic activities such as sermons, pastoral counseling, and representing the community, all increased in importance. Today, the title *rabbi* usually refers to those who have received rabbinical ordination and are educated in matters of *halacha* (Jewish law). They are the ones knowledgeable enough to answer *halachic* questions. Most countries have a chief rabbi they rely on to settle *halachic* disputes.

In present times, the *rabbi* serves the community as an educator, social worker, and preacher, and also occasionally conducts prayer services. The *rabbi* is not required to lead prayer services, as any knowledgeable member of the congregation may do so.

Figure 26: First woman ordained as a *rabbi*, 1935, Germany
Regina Jonas
Regina Jonas in a photograph presumed to have been taken after 1939. Her stamp on the back of the photograph bears the compulsory name of "Sara," which all Jewish women had to bear after 1939 and reads "Rabbi Regina Sara Jonas."

The Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform movements began to grant women rabbinical ordination in the last few decades. Orthodox congregations do not ordain women as *rabbis*. They follow the stricter interpretation in the *Talmud* prohibiting women from serving as witnesses or judges.

Change has also occurred with respect to the training and ordination of LGBTQ *rabbis*. In the early 1980s, several *rabbis* openly declared themselves to be gay. Then, in 1984, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in the United States became the first to accept and ordain *rabbis* without regard to their sexual orientation. In 1988, Stacy Offer became the first openly lesbian *rabbi* employed by a reform Jewish congregation in Minneapolis. In 2006, Elliot Kulka came out as transgender 6 months before his ordination in 2006.

Together, most of the Jewish denominations, with the exception of Orthodox Judaism, ordain openly LGBTQ Jews. This is true of Reconstructionist Judaism, Jewish Renewal, Reform Judaism, and Conservative Judaism who collectively represent the majority of Canadian and American Jews who belong to a synagogue.

Rebbe

Rebbe is the term used in a Hasidic community to refer to their spiritual leader and guide. Sometimes *rebbe* is translated as *grand rabbi*, but the word literally means *my rabbi*. A *rebbe* has the final word over every decision in a Hasidic person's life. A rebbe is also considered to be a *tzaddik*. The position is usually hereditary.

Outside of the Hasidic community, the term *rebbe* may be used to refer to one's personal *rabbi* or any *rabbi* with whom a person has a close relationship.

The term *rebbe* should not be confused with the term *reb*, which is a Yiddish title of respect similar to the term mister in English.

Cantors

In Judaism, a *cantor* (also known as *hazzan* or *chazzan*) is primarily someone who leads the congregation in prayer along with the *rabbi*; however, they may have other duties. Contemporary cantors in the Reform and Conservative Jewish worlds are usually trained in the musical arts or have attended *cantorial* school. Professional *cantors* who have attended *cantorial* school are ordained. But there are also some *cantors* from the community, who are not professionally trained, with a deep knowledge of the prayer services.

In some situations, the *rabbi* might fill both the roles of *rabbi* and *cantor*. Volunteer *cantors* and *rabbi*/*cantor* prayer leaders are especially common in small synagogues. In Hasidic congregations, the cantor is always the *rebbe*.

In Orthodox Judaism, a *cantor* must be male, however, in Conservative and Reform Judaism a *cantor* can be either male or female.

In addition to leading prayer services, in the Reform and Conservative Jewish worlds, *cantors* have a variety of responsibilities that vary from synagogue

to synagogue. Some of these duties may include teaching *bar/bat mitzvah* students to read from the *Torah*, teaching members of the congregation how to participate in prayer services, leading other life-cycle events, and working with the choir.

As ordained clergy, Reform and Conservative cantors can also perform pastoral duties such as conducting weddings or funeral services.

Gabbai

A *gabbai* is a lay person who volunteers to perform various duties in connection with *Torah* readings at religious services. To serve as a *Gabbai* is a great honour, and the position requires a thorough knowledge of the *Torah* and the *Torah* readings.

A *gabbai* may do one or more of the following:

- choose people who will receive an *aliyah* (the honour of reciting a blessing over the *Torah* reading)
- read from the *Torah*
- stand next to the person who is reading from the *Torah*, checking the reader's pronunciation and chanting and correcting any mistakes in the reading

Kohein

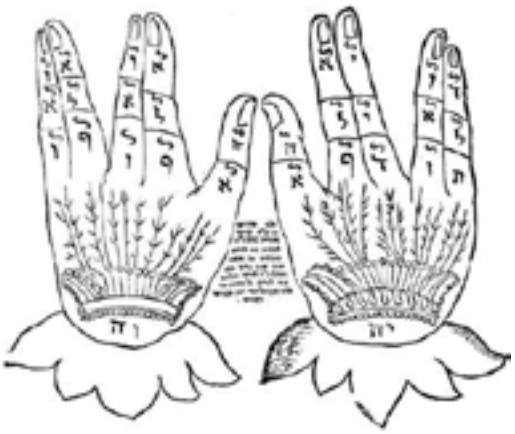

Figure 27: *Kohanim* Blessing
Hands are depicted in the position for *kohanim* blessing. The hands are divided into twenty-eight sections, each containing a Hebrew letter. Twenty-eight, in Hebrew numbers, spells the word *koach* = strength. At the bottom of the hand, the two letters on each hand combine to form יהוה, the name of God. The hands of the *kohanim* are spread out over the congregation, with the fingers of both hands separated so as to make five spaces between them.

The *kohanim* are the descendants of Aaron, chosen by God at the time of the incident with the Golden Calf to perform certain sacred work, particularly in connection with the animal sacrifices and the rituals related to the Temple. In *Rabbinical* Judaism the role of the kohanim has diminished significantly in favour of the *rabbis*; however, Jews continue to keep track of *kohein* lineage.

Kohanim are given the honour of the first *aliyah*, the first opportunity to recite a blessing over the *Torah* reading, on *Shabbat*. As well, at certain times of the year they are also required to recite a blessing over the congregation.

The term *kohein* is the source of the common Jewish surname Cohen although, in practice, not all Cohens are *koheins* and not all *koheins* are Cohens. Katz is also a common surname for a *kohein* (it is an acronym of *kohein tzaddik*, that is, righteous priest), but again not all Katzes are *koheins*.

Levi

Historically, the tribe of *Levi* had a special role in the community and the temple, as they were to perform specific sacrificial rights. In *Rabbinical* Judaism, as there is no temple, their importance has drastically diminished. But as with the *kohanim*, Jews continue to keep track of their lineage. *Levites* are given the second *aliyah* on *Shabbat* (i.e., the second opportunity to recite a blessing over the *Torah* reading), which is also considered an honour. The common Jewish surnames Levin and Levine are derived from the tribal name *Levi*, but not all Levins or Levines are *Levites* and not all *Levites* have surnames that suggest the tribal affiliation.

Tzaddik

The literal meaning of the word *tzaddik* is righteous one. The term is used to refer to a person who is deemed to be a completely righteous individual, and generally also indicates that the person has been deemed to have spiritual or mystical powers. A *tzaddik* is not necessarily a *rebbe* or a *rabbi*, but the *rebbe* of a Hasidic community is considered to be a *tzaddik*.

Sharing Responsibilities

Jewish ceremonies are relatively inclusive and non-hierarchical. Most or all of the functions of *rabbi*, *cantor*, or *gabbai* may be shared among the members of the congregation. In denominations where the *Torah* is read only by men, as in an Orthodox synagogue, the only requirement is that those who read from the *Torah* are over the age of 13 and have had their *bar mitzvah*.

If an Orthodox synagogue were to lack a *rabbi* for a ceremony, the *cantor* or *gabbai*, or any other Jewish male over the age of 13, could lead the ceremony. In Conservative and Reform synagogues, these functions may be, and often are, performed by women, with no restriction on their participation in any ceremony or recognition in any role.

Practices, Rituals, and Symbols

Role and Status of Women

The role of women in traditional Judaism is complex and contradictory in some respects. The traditional view is that women are generally seen as separate but equal. Women's obligations and responsibilities may be different from men's, but are also important.

The role of women in Judaism is determined by the Hebrew Bible, Oral Law, custom, and non-religious cultural factors. Although the Hebrew Bible and *rabbinic* literature mention various female role models, religious law treats women differently from men in various circumstances.

Traditionally, 'Jewishness' is determined by one's mother. In traditional Judaism, Jewishness is matrilineal and is passed down through the mother, although the father's name is used to describe sons and daughters in the *Torah* (e.g., Dinah, daughter of Jacob).

In Biblical Times

In Judaism, God has not been seen as being exclusively either male or female. Judaism has maintained that God has both masculine and feminine qualities. It is argued that when Jews refer to God using masculine terms, they do so simply for convenience's sake, because Hebrew has no neutral gender pronouns.

Figure 28: Woman at The Western Wall (Wailing Wall), Jerusalem

According to most Jewish scholars, the first human was created in Genesis 1:27 with aspects of both genders and was later separated into male and female persons. Therefore, both man and woman were created in the image of God.

Women also have important roles in the Jewish scriptures. The matriarchs (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah) were believed to have very strong prophetic

abilities as were the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). As well, women were described as refusing to participate in the worshiping of idolatry with respect to the Golden Calf. Some traditional sources suggest that women are closer to God's ideal than men.

Since biblical times, women have held positions of importance in Judaism, for example, Miriam is considered one of the liberators of the Children of Israel, along with her brothers Moses and Aaron. One of the Judges (Deborah) was a woman. Seven of the 55 prophets of the Hebrew Bible were women. The Ten Commandments require respect for both mother and father.

Talmudic Times

While few women are mentioned by name in *rabbinic* literature, and none are known to have authored a *rabbinic* work, those who are mentioned are portrayed as having a strong influence on their husband. There were many learned women who were recognized for their qualities. The *Talmud* and later *rabbinical* writings speak of the wisdom of Berurya, the wife of *Rabbi* Meir. In several instances, her opinions on *halakhah* (Jewish Law) were accepted over those of her male contemporaries.

The *Talmud* also says some very negative things about women, although it is important to note that the *Talmud* also has negative things to say about men. Various *rabbis* at different times describe women as being lazy, jealous, vain, gluttonous, prone to gossip, and particularly prone to engaging in the occult and witchcraft. In the *Talmud*, men are repeatedly advised against associating with women.

Traditionally, women were discouraged from pursuing higher education or religious pursuits. However, Jewish scholars often note that the rights of women in traditional Judaism were much greater than they were in the rest of Western civilization until recently. For example, within Judaism women had the right to buy, sell, and own property, as well as make their own contracts, rights which women in Western countries did not have until the 1900s.

Women also have the right to choose their partners with regard to their marriage. Marital sex is regarded as the woman's right, and not the man's. Men do not have the right to beat or mistreat their wives, a right that was not recognized by law in many Western countries until the modern era. In cases of rape, in Judaism, a woman is generally presumed not to have consented to the intercourse. Traditional Judaism recognizes that forced sexual relations within the context of marriage are rape and are not permitted.

Traditional Role as a Wife and Mother

Nevertheless, the primary role of a Jewish woman was as wife and mother, and the keeper of the household. However, Judaism has great respect for the

importance of these roles and the spiritual influence that the woman has over her family.

Jewish scholars point out that women are exempted from all positive *mitzvot* (thou shalts as opposed to thou shalt nots) that are time-related (that is, *mitzvot* that must be performed at a specific time of the day or year), because the woman's duties as wife and mother are so important that they cannot be postponed to fulfill a *mitzvah* (religious requirement).

The exemption of Jewish women from certain *mitzvot* has led to a belief that women have a diminished role in Judaism; however, it is important to note that it is an exemption not a prohibition. Generally, although women are not required to perform time-based positive *mitzvot*, they are generally permitted to observe such *mitzvot*. Nevertheless, because this exemption diminishes the role of women in the synagogue, many people perceive that women have a limited role in Jewish religious life.

Women's *Mitzvot*: *Nerot*, *Challah*, and *Niddah*

In Jewish tradition, there are three mitzvot (commandments) that are reserved specifically for women

- *nerot* (lighting candles)
- *challah* (separating a portion of dough, which literally is the name of the bread used for the Shabbat)
- *niddah* (sexual separation during a woman's menstrual period and ritual immersion afterwards)

If a woman is present who can perform the first two *mitzvot*, the privilege of fulfilling the mitzvah is reserved for the woman. The first two of these *mitzvot* can be performed by a man if no woman is present. All of these *mitzvot* are related to the home and the family, areas where the woman is primarily responsible.

Women's Holiday: *Rosh Chodesh*

Rosh Chodesh, the first day of each month, is a minor festival in Judaism. There is a custom that women do not work on *Rosh Chodesh*. A *midrash* teaches that each of the *Rosh Chodeshim* was originally intended to represent one of the twelve tribes of Israel, just as the three major festivals (*Pesach*, *Sukkot*, and *Shavu'ot*) each represent one of the three patriarchs. However, because of the sin of the Golden Calf, the holiday was taken away from the men and given to women, as a reward for the women's refusal to participate in the construction of the Golden Calf.

The Role of Women in the Synagogue

Traditionally, in most synagogues, men and women were separated. This apparently dates back to the practices observed during the period of the two temples, where women could only access a portion of the temple site. Women were given their own section, most likely a second floor balcony, or behind a designated screened or walled area. Some synagogues had a separate building for women.

Separation from the men was directed by the *rabbis* in the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*. The reasoning behind the *halacha* was that a woman and her body would distract men and give them impure thoughts during prayer. As well, Jewish tradition and custom prohibit direct physical contact between men and women who are not related. How this is interpreted will depend on one's level of religious observance. Formal contact, such as a handshake, may be seen by some as a form of greeting. However, others may include a handshake in the prohibition of physical contact.

It is important to understand the nature of *mitzvot* (commandments) in Judaism and the separation of men and women. The *mitzvot* that were given to the Jewish people are regarded as a privilege, and the more *mitzvot* one is obliged to observe, the more one is privileged.

Because women were not required to perform certain *mitzvot*, their observance of those *mitzvot* does not "count" for group purposes. Thus, a woman's voluntary attendance at daily worship services does not count toward the creation of a *minyan* (the 10 people necessary to recite certain prayers), a woman's voluntary recitation of certain prayers would not count on behalf of the group (thus women cannot lead services), and a woman's voluntary reading from the *Torah* would not count towards the community's obligation to read from the *Torah*. The same is true of boys under the age of 13, who are not obligated to perform any *mitzvot*, though they are permitted to perform them.

Figure 29: Women challenge gender segregation at the Wailing Wall 11/4/13
Two Parliament members of the Israeli *Knesset*, Michal Rozin and Tamar Zandberg, in solidarity with the "Women of the Wailing Wall" and objecting the arrests of five members

The combination of the exemption from certain *mitzvot* and the separation of men and women resulted in the view that women had an inferior and limited role in the synagogue. Women are not obligated by Jewish law to attend formal religious services, and cannot participate in many aspects of the services, so they have less motivation to attend.

Lastly, women's obligations in the home (which are the reason why women are exempt from time-based *mitzvot* like formal prayer services) often keep them away from synagogue.

However, many *rabbis* and Jews would argue that a restriction on participation in synagogue life does not mean that women are excluded in the Jewish religion, because the Jewish religion is not just something that happens in synagogue. They would argue Judaism is something that permeates every aspect of a person's life, everything that one does, from the time they wake up in the morning to the time they go to bed, from what one eats and how one dresses to how one conducts business. Prayer services are only a small, though important, part of the Jewish religion.

Women in Contemporary Judaism

Figure 30: Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella of the Supreme Court of Canada

The role of women in contemporary Jewish communities and synagogues varies widely, although it has generally moved towards greater equity and full participation. With some very rare exceptions, women historically were not allowed to serve as *rabbis* until the 1970s. Modern human rights ideals and the influence of feminism and other developments favouring gender equity impacted on Judaism (as they have on other religions) in North America and throughout the world. Today, ordained female *rabbis* may be found within all branches of Judaism, with the exception of Orthodox Judaism. In Orthodox Judaism, women generally are excluded from being ordained or functioning as *rabbis*. Each movement, except the Orthodox, Haredi, and Hasidim, have come to accept the right of women to become *rabbis* after long periods of reflection and debate regarding their own religious philosophies and ideals.

Women as *Rabbi's* and Religious Leaders in Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Judaism

The role of women in the *rabbinate* has been hotly debated within the Jewish community. For some Jewish scholars, Asenath Barzani (1590–1670) is considered to be the first female *rabbi* in Jewish history as well as being the oldest recorded female Kurdish leader in history. Hannah Rachel Verbermacher, commonly known as the Maiden of Ludmir, was a 19th-century Hasidic *rebbe*, and the only female *rebbe* in the history of Hasidism. The first female *rabbi* ever to be formerly ordained was Regina Jonas of East Berlin. On December 25, 1935, *Rabbi* Dr. Max Dienemann, head of the Liberal

Rabbis Association of Offenbach, ordained Jonas to serve as a *rabbi* in Jewish communities in Germany.

In the United States, the Reform movement ordained its first female *rabbi* in 1972, the Reconstructionist movement in 1974, and the Conservative movement in 1985. The Orthodox movement has recently accepted women in its *rabbinate*, although a few Orthodox women have been ordained in some seminaries.

Some notable firsts with respect to female *rabbis*, dates, and locations include

- **1980:** In Canada, Joan Friedman becomes the first woman to serve as a *rabbi* in Canada when she is appointed as an assistant *rabbi* at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto. Shortly after Joan's appointment, Elyse Goldstein is appointed as assistant rabbi from 1983–1986.
- **1986:** In Manitoba, Temple Shalom, a Reform Congregation, hires as its *rabbi* Tracy Guren Kliers, the first woman to head a synagogue in Manitoba's Jewish history.
- **1988:** American Stacy Offner becomes the first openly lesbian *rabbi* hired by a mainstream Jewish congregation (Shir Tikvah in Minneapolis).
- **1992:** In Israel, Naamah Kelman, born in the United States, becomes the first female rabbi ordained in Israel.
- **2009:** In the United States, Alysa Stanton, born in Cleveland and ordained by a Reform Jewish seminary in Cincinnati, becomes the world's first black female *rabbi*. Later in 2009, she is appointed *rabbi* at Congregation Bayt Shalom, a small majority-white synagogue in Greenville, North Carolina, making her the first African-American *rabbi* to lead a majority-white congregation.
- **2016:** In Israel, Carmit Feintuch is appointed as *Rabbinat* of the Ramban Synagogue (Orthodox) in Jerusalem.
- **2017:** In Germany, Nitzan Stein Kokin, a German, becomes the first person to graduate from Zacharias Frankel College in Germany, which also makes her the first Conservative rabbi to be ordained in Germany since before World War II.

Women as *Rabbis* and Religious Leaders in Orthodox Judaism

The Orthodox Jewish tradition and apparent communal consensus until recently is that the *rabbinate* is solely the realm of men. While in the last decades there has been a push for Orthodox *yeshivas* to admit women as *rabbinical* students, this has been largely and actively opposed by most Orthodox *rabbis*.

Nevertheless, the advocacy for a greater role for women in Orthodox Judaism has resulted in some changes in the last few decades in developing roles for women as *halakhic* court advisors and congregational advisors. For example, in Britain in 2012, Lauren Levin was appointed as Britain's first Orthodox female

halakhic adviser, at Finchley Synagogue in London. In Israel, a growing number of Orthodox women are being trained as *yoatzot halakhah* (*halakhic* advisers). In 2013, the first class of female *halachic* advisers trained to practice in the United States of America graduated from the North American branch of Nishmat's *yoetzet halacha* program. As well, some women now serve in Orthodox Jewish congregations in roles that were previously reserved only for men.

Furthermore, in spite of opposition to female *rabbis* in Orthodox institutions, there have been some efforts to ordain and appoint Orthodox female *rabbis*. The grammatically correct Hebrew equivalent to the masculine title *rabbi* is *rabbanit* and is sometimes used for women in this role (traditionally *rabbanit* was the title used for the wife of a *rabbi*, usually within the Orthodox, Haredi, and Hasidic Jewish communities). Some, following correct Hebrew feminized grammar, use the title *rabba* while some use another variant, *rabet*.

In 2009, in Israel, the Shalom Hartman Institute, founded by Orthodox *Rabbi* David Hartman, opened a program granting *semicha* (ordination) to Jews of all denominations and sexes, including Orthodox Judaism. However, the program is intended for the graduates to assume roles of *rabbi-educators* and not *pulpit rabbis*, in North American Jewish religious schools.

In the United States, the first Orthodox seminary for women to confer an equivalent to *rabbinic* ordination, the Yeshivat Maharat, uses the title *maharat* for its graduates (an acronym of *manhiga hilkhatit rukhanit Toranit*). In June 2009, Sara Hurwitz was ordained with the title *maharat* rather than *rabbi*. In February 2010, it was announced that her title of *maharat* was being changed to *rabba* in part to clarify Hurwitz's position as a full member of the *rabbinic* staff of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

Figure 31: A Jewish Scroll

By 2015, Yaffa Epstein was ordained as *rabba* by the Yeshivat Maharat. Also in 2015, Lila Kagedan was ordained as *rabbi* by that same organization, making her their first graduate to take the title *rabbi*. Sara Hurwitz continues to use the title *rabba* and is considered by some to be the first female Orthodox *rabbi*.

These initiatives met with strong opposition from Orthodox governing bodies. In the fall of 2015, the *Rabbinical* Council of America passed a resolution effectively outlawing the ordination and appointment of female *rabbis* in Orthodox institutions. The resolution declared that Orthodox institutions could not

- ordain women into the Orthodox *rabbinate*, regardless of the title used
- hire, or ratify the hiring of, a woman into a *rabbinic* position at an Orthodox institution
- allow a title implying *rabbinic* ordination to be used by a teacher of *Limudei Kodesh* in an Orthodox institution

Similarly, in the fall of 2015, Agudath Israel of America denounced moves to ordain women, and went even further, declaring that Yeshivat Maharat and similar affiliated entities had rejected basic tenets of Judaism.

Symbols

Symbolism is a very important aspect of Judaism. A description of some of the more common symbols follows.

Mezuzah

The commandment to place a *mezuzah* on the doorposts of Jewish houses is derived from Deuteronomy 6:4-9, a passage commonly known as the *Shema*. In that passage, God commands the Jewish people to keep his words constantly in their minds and in their hearts by (among other things) writing them on the doorposts of their houses. The words of the *Shema* are written on a tiny scroll of parchment, along with the words of a companion passage, Deuteronomy 11:13-21. On the back of the scroll, a name of God is written. The scroll is then rolled up and placed in the case, so that the first letter of God's name is visible (or, more commonly, the letter is written on the outside of the case).

Figure 32: *Mezuzot*

Every time a person passes through a door with a *mezuzah* on it, they touch the *mezuzah* and then kiss the fingers that touched it, expressing love and respect for God and his commandments, and reminding oneself of the commandments contained within them.

Tzitzit and *Tallit*

Figure 33: *Tallit* and *Kippa*

The *Torah* commands the Jews to wear *tzitzit* (fringes) at the corners of their garments as a reminder of the commandments. There is no particular religious significance to the *tallit* (shawl) itself, other than the fact that it holds the *tzitzit* (fringes) on its corners. There are also very few religious requirements with regard to the design of the *tallit*. The *tallit* must be long enough to be worn over the shoulders (as a shawl), not just around the neck (as a scarf), to fulfill the requirement that the *tzitzit* be on a garment.

Tefillin

Figure 34: Preparing for a *Bar Mitzvah: Tefillin*

The *Shema* also commands Jewish men to bind the words to their hands and between their eyes. Jews do this by "laying *tefillin*", that is, by binding to their arms and foreheads leather pouches containing scrolls of *Torah* passages.

Like the *mezuzah*, *tefillin* are meant to remind the Jewish people of God's commandments. They bind them to their head and their arm, committing both their intellect and their physical strength to the fulfillment of the commandments. This is done at the morning prayer services and appropriate blessings are recited during the process. The *tefillin* are removed at the conclusion of the morning services.

Menorah

Figure 35: *Menorah, Shabbat* Candles, and Porcelain *Dreidles*

One of the oldest symbols of the Jewish faith is the *menorah*, a seven-branched candelabrum used in the Temple. The *Rabbis* lit the *menorah* in the Sanctuary every evening and cleaned it out every morning, replacing the wicks and putting fresh olive oil into the cups. It has been said that the *menorah* is a symbol of the nation of Israel and their mission to be "a light unto the nations." (Isaiah 42:6). The sages emphasize that light is not a violent force; Israel is to accomplish its mission by setting an example, not by using force. In today's synagogues, there is a lamp called the *ner tamid* (the continual light, the eternal flame), symbolizing the *menorah*.

Chai

The Hebrew word *chai* (living or alive) is commonly seen on jewelry and ornaments. The concept of *chai* is important in Jewish culture. For example, the typical Jewish toast is *l'chayim* (to life) and charitable donations are often given in multiples of 18 (the numeric value of the word *chai*).

Figure 36: The Hebrew word/symbol *chai* in Judaism means "life."

Star of David

The Star of David is the symbol most commonly associated with Judaism today, but it is actually a relatively new Jewish symbol. It is supposed to represent the shape of King David's shield (or perhaps the emblem on it), but there is no support for that claim in any early *rabbinic* literature. In the 17th century, it became a popular practice to put a Star of David on the outside of synagogues, to identify them as Jewish houses of worship. The Star of David gained popularity as a symbol of Judaism when it was adopted as the emblem of the Zionist movement in 1897. Today, the Star of David is the universally recognized symbol of Jewry. It appears on the flag of the state of Israel.

Figure 37: Star of David

Art and Aesthetics

The concept of Jewish visual arts dates back to the biblical Bezalel, who was commissioned to create a divine dwelling place (tabernacle) in the wilderness guided by Moses who took direction from God. From then on, Jewish visual arts have flourished and reflect the influences and experiences of Jews' journeys around the globe.

Jewish attitudes toward art have been influenced by two contradictory factors. The first is the interpretation of the Second Commandment (forbidding graven images) that prohibits or limits artistic creations, so that they may not be used for idol worship. The second is the value of *hiddur mitzvah* (beautification of the commandments) which encourages the creation of beautiful ritual items and sacred spaces.

These two forces had great impact on folk art as well as the architecture of synagogues, religious objects, and Jewish homes. Judaism as a monotheistic religion focuses on sacred texts rather than sacred images. For example, in a synagogue one will not find paintings or statues of biblical figures.

During the age of Enlightenment in Europe, Jewish artists emerged from Jewish *ghettos* to become prominent global artists. These artists displayed their relationship with Judaism and identity as Jews in various ways in the visual arts that they created. Some artists such as Marc Chagall reflected their Jewish heritage and experiences in their works. Yet for others, like Camille Pissarro, Judaism was of limited or no relevance to their works.

Jewish folk art has pervaded Jewish homes and synagogues for centuries. This has included the *mizrach* and other religious objects. Some examples are

- ***Mizrach***—It is the Hebrew word for east and it refers to an object hung on the east wall of a home designating the direction of Israel/Jerusalem to help orient its inhabitants for their prayer.
- ***Shivitti***—It is an adornment placed in synagogues intended to help focus attention.
- **Jewish Micrography**—In Jewish micrography, sacred words and texts are used to create drawings.
- **Artistic Ritual Art**—This includes *kiddush* cups (for *Sabbat* prayers), *mezuzot* (hung on doorposts), candlesticks, and more.

Figure 38: "If Not, Not" by B B Kitaj
Ronald Brooks Kitaj was an American artist of Jewish roots. This painting is probably Kitaj's best-known work. The painting is related to T S Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land' and Auschwitz/the Holocaust.

Judaism Modesty Requirements

Clothing

Contemporary Jews vary greatly in terms of their customs and practices with respect to how they dress. Their style of dress is dependent on the region, the local customs and preferences, and the trends. For the most part, the typical Jewish person in any modern town or city will not stand out in any significant way and will be indistinguishable from non-Jews.

However, this will not be true of Orthodox, Haredi, and Hasidic persons. What some people stereotype as the distinctive Jewish dress or style is very often one that is related to these groups.

Jewish tradition requires men and women to dress modestly. This can be interpreted in different ways, depending on one's level of observance. For those who are very observant, males will wear only long pants when in public, and females will only wear clothing that doesn't reveal the shape of their bodies.

Jewish males keep their head covered; however, there is no prescribed covering. Over time, specific head coverings were developed in different parts of the world. Jewish males may choose to wear a specific kind of covering, such as a *kippah* (also known as a *yarmulke*); however, even a baseball cap is acceptable.

Figure 39: 2015, 10th grade Israeli students ORT Kiriat Bialik High School, north of the city of Haifa with American antiracism educator, Erin Gruwell (Freedom Writers)

Distinctive Jewish costume for men largely disappeared in the early 20th century. The wearing of a head covering at all times (to show respect for God) has become the external sign of the Orthodox Jew. Today, this usually takes the form of wearing a small skull cap known as a *kippah* or *yarmulke*. Ultra-Orthodox groups, concentrated mostly in Jerusalem and Bene Berak in Israel, and in limited areas in other parts of the world, still wear the characteristic *streimel* (a fur hat) on *Sabbaths* and festivals and the long *caftan*, which is yellow and white striped, is sometimes also still used.

Figure 40: Orthodox Jews at the Western Wall

Jewish law regarding modesty and community customs dictate the dress code for women. This dress code is practiced primarily by Orthodox Jews. Typically, women are expected to wear sleeves extending at least to the elbow, blouses or dresses with necklines that do not expose any cleavage and skirts long enough to cover the knees when seated.

In addition, it is considered a breach of modesty for a married woman to have uncovered hair while in the presence of men other than her husband. Customs differ as to how much hair can be showing beneath the head covering, or if a wig is better or worse than a hat of some sort. This custom, however, is no longer widely observed, except in Orthodox circles. Unmarried women are not required to cover their hair.

Tzniut is a Judaic term for the character traits of modesty and humility as well as a group of Jewish laws that concern human conduct in general, and

especially interaction between genders. *Tzniut* has the greatest influence within Orthodox Judaism. These concepts are not unique to Judaism, as there are similar concepts and requirements within Islam, Christianity, and other faith groups and traditions.

The term is frequently used with regard to the rules of dress for women, but it applies to all members of the community. Jewish tradition requires men and women to dress modestly. This can be interpreted in different ways, depending on one's level of observance and one's faith community. For those who are very observant, males will wear only long pants when in public, and females will only wear clothing that doesn't reveal the shape of their bodies.

Orthodox Judaism interpretations of *tzniut* require that both men and women substantially cover their bodies. Customarily, this includes covering the elbows and knees.

As well, Jewish law requires married women to cover their hair. The nature and form of the hair coverings varies across different Jewish groups and cultural communities. Modern Orthodox Jewish women usually use hats, berets, baseball caps, bandanas, or scarves tied in a number of ways to accomplish the goal, depending on how casually they are dressed. Some modern Orthodox women cover their hair with wigs.

According to Jewish tradition, men must cover their heads regardless of whether they are married or not. The most common head covering for males is the *kippah* (Hebrew for skull cap), which is also known as *yarmulke* in Yiddish. Orthodox men will tend to wear a head covering at almost all times. Non-Orthodox men may choose to cover their heads when performing a religious act, or when eating.

The style of dress involved also depends on cultural considerations that are distinct from religious requirements. For example, members of Conservative and Reform synagogues may follow dress codes that generally range from 'business' casual to informal. In contrast, many Haredi and Hassidic communities have specific customs and styles of dress which are distinctive and help to identify members of their communities. These dress codes and styles are seen to be customs of their communities rather than a general religious requirements expected of all observant Jews.

Some additional examples of the diversity of dress codes and styles within the Jewish communities follow:

- In Haredi communities, men will wear long pants and mostly long-sleeved shirts. Haredi women wear blouses covering the elbow and collarbone, and skirts that cover the knees while standing and sitting. The ideal sleeve and skirt length varies by community. Some women try not to follow fashion, while others wear fashionable but modest clothing.
- Contemporary Orthodox women also usually attend to *tzniut* and dress in a manner which would be considered modest compared to the contemporary urban societies. However, their communal definition does not necessarily

require the covering of their elbows, collarbones, or knees, and may allow for wearing pants. Contemporary Orthodox men's dress is often indistinguishable from those of non-Orthodox peers.

- Conservative Judaism generally requires modest dress, although this requirement may often not be observed on a daily basis, but is more likely to be adhered to when members attend synagogue.
- Reform Judaism has no religious dress requirements.

Food

Judaism has specific laws or requirements that guide adherents in their daily life and in rituals associated with holy or sacred days. The laws that deal with these food requirements are called *kashrut*. *Kashrut* derives from a Hebrew root word meaning fit, proper, or correct. It is the same root as the more commonly known word *kosher*, which describes food that meets these standards. *Kashrut* details what foods Jews can and cannot eat and how those foods must be prepared and eaten. The word *kosher* can also be used, and often is used, to describe ritual objects that are made in accordance with Jewish law and are fit for ritual use.

Figure 41: Canadian *Kosher* Symbols

Although the details of *kashrut* are extensive, the laws all derive from the following fairly simple rules:

- Certain animals may not be eaten at all. This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs, and milk of the forbidden animals.
- Of the animals that may be eaten, the birds and mammals must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.
- All blood must be drained from the meat or broiled out of it before it is eaten.
- Certain parts of permitted animals may not be eaten.
- Meat (the flesh of birds and mammals) cannot be eaten with dairy. Fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables, and grains can be eaten with either meat or dairy.
- Utensils that have come into contact with meat may not be used with dairy, and vice versa. Utensils that have come into contact with non-*kosher* food may not be used with *kosher* food.
- Grape products made by non-Jews may not be eaten.

Almost all prepackaged foods have some kind of *kosher* certification that will also indicate whether the product is dairy, meat, or neither.

Foods Which Are Permitted and Foods That Are Not Permitted

- **Animals:** Any land animal with split hoofs that chews its cud is permitted. For example, cows, sheep, goats, and deer are *kosher*, while pigs, rabbits, bears, and horses are not.
- **Fowl:** The *Torah* lists 24 non-*kosher* bird species; essentially, all predatory and scavenger birds are not *kosher*. For example, *kosher* birds are the domestic species of chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, and pigeons.
- **Fish/Seafood:** A water creature is *kosher* only if it has fins and scales. For example, salmon, tuna, pike, flounder, carp, and herring are *kosher*, while catfish, sturgeon, swordfish, lobster, shellfish, crab, and all water mammals are not.

Figure 42: *Kosher* Asian Sauces

- **Reptiles, Amphibians, Worms, and Insects:** With the exception of four types of locusts, these are all not *kosher*.
- **Fruits, vegetables, cereals:** All products that grow in the soil or on plants, bushes, or trees are *kosher*; however, there are laws that apply specifically to the planting and sowing of vegetables, fruits, and grains. The hybridization of different species is not permitted. Therefore, it is not permitted to sow two kinds of seeds on a field or in a vineyard. There are also additional restrictions. For instance, fruits from trees three years of age or less may not be eaten.
- ***Kosher* Wine:** There are strict guidelines concerning *kosher* wine. The laws dictate what yeast may be used, which additives are not permitted, how the devices and utensils used for the harvest or the processing of the grapes are to be prepared and cleaned, and that the reuse of bottles is not permitted. As well, the vineyards must be maintained and processed according to *halacha* (Jewish religious law). For example, as noted earlier, hybridization is not permitted, so no other plants may be crossbred with the grapes.

Figure 43: Kosher Pizza; Paris, France

- **Beverages:** There are strict rules concerning alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages such as juices, coffees, and others. Prepackaged beverages that are considered *kosher* will carry a symbol indicating their *kosher* status.
- **Combined Meat and Dairy:** It is not permitted to mix dairy with meat, to cook dairy products and meat together, or to serve them together at the same time. *Kosher* rules are complex, as they also involve a specific approach to food preparation and processing.

The chart that follows provides an overview of some common foods and the details concerning how they may or may not meet *kosher* laws.

Food	Concern	Alternative	Availability
Crackers	May be made with animal shortening (lard)	*Kosher* food products require *rabbinic* certification to be considered *kosher*. This is determined by the presence of one of the following symbols on the product label: COR, MK, or U.	Many supermarkets carry *kosher* products
Cookies	May be made with animal shortening (lard)		
Cheese	Many cheeses are made with rennet and pepsin which are animal by-products	There are *kosher* cheeses or cheeses made with vegetarian rennet.	Supermarkets now carry acceptable cheeses, which are also available through special order
Pizza	May be made with cheeses that were made with rennet and pepsin which are animal by-products	Use cheeses made with vegetarian rennet or *kosher* cheeses.	Some supermarkets and *kosher* restaurants
Beef and Poultry	Beef and poultry must be slaughtered in a certain way	Purchase *kosher* meat. Consider vegetarian hot dogs and other vegetarian substitutes.	Alternatives are available at all supermarkets
Pork or Pork By-Products	Pork is forbidden. Some foods may be made with pork by-products. (e.g., hamburgers, wieners)	No pork products are acceptable.	
Combination of Milk and Meat Products	Milk and meat products are not eaten together.	Ensure adequate alternatives to milk beverages. Don't automatically add cheese to hamburgers and meat to pizza.	

Food	Concern	Alternative	Availability
Gelatin-Based Desserts and Candies	Many candies and desserts are made with gelatin which is an animal by-product. (e.g,. Jell-O, wine gums, Starbursts, gummy bears, and gumdrops)	Choose other candies and desserts.	Supermarkets

Fasting (*Ta'anit* or *Taanis*)

Fasting is a common aspect of Jewish religious traditions and rituals. There are about 25 holidays and religious events that are associated with fasting. As well, there are rules that guide the practice of fasting in Judaism. These include

- No fasting on *Shabbat*, or on any holiday or festival with the exception of *Yom Kippur*
- No fasting during the month of *Nisan*
- No fasting for those too ill to fast
- No fasting for pregnant women
- In modern interpretations, no fasting, if you hold a position of *rabbi*, teacher, security, or other essential personnel, so that you are able to perform your duties adequately

The most well-known and observed fast is the fast of *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. This is the only fast day specifically noted in the *Torah*. The fast for *Yom Kippur* extends from sunset to darkness the following night (25 hrs). The other day where Jews must do a full fast is the *Ninth of Av*, *Tisha B'Av*. Both of these fast days have additional requirements such as not washing one's body; not wearing leather shoes; not using colognes, oils or perfumes; and not having sexual relations. *Yom Kippur* also has all the restrictions of *Shabbat* and *Tisha B'Av* has restrictions somewhat similar to a mourner sitting *shiva*.

All other fasts are minor fasts, observed from dawn to nightfall, without additional restrictions.

A few of the minor fast days are

- 10th Day of *Tevet*
- 17th of *Tammuz*
- 3rd of *Tishrei* (The Fast of Gedaliah)
- 13th of *Adar*
- 14th of *Nisan* (Fast of the Firstborn)
- the day preceding *Purim* (Fast of Esther)

Fasting is also part of the preparation of a couple for their wedding. Although this is not a requirement included in the *Talmud*, it is a cultural and historical tradition. The couple fasts from daybreak until after the *chuppah*, eating their first meal during their *yichud* seclusion at the end of the wedding ceremony.

Taanit Tzadikim (fast of the righteous ones) occurs on days set aside to commemorate the death anniversaries of great Jewish figures. They are usually only observed by the *Chevra Kadisha* (organization of Jewish men and women who prepare the bodies of deceased people for burial), but others may fast on them too. The primary ones are

- Fast of Pilegesh Bagiva—on 23rd *Shevat*
- Fast of Moses—on 7th *Adar*
- Fast of Nadab and Abihu—on 1st *Nisan*
- Fast of Miriam—on 10th *Nisan*
- Fast of Joshua—on 26th *Nisan*
- Fast of Samuel—on 28th *Iyar*

Significant Times and Dates

Festivals

The Jewish Calendar

Jewish holidays or festivals (*yamim tovim*) are holidays observed by Jews throughout the Hebrew calendar and include religious, cultural, and national aspects. Some are derived from Biblical *mitzvot* (commandments), others from *rabbinic* mandates, while others commemorate Jewish history and the history of the State of Israel.

All Jewish holidays begin the evening before the date specified. This is because a Jewish day begins and ends at sunset, rather than at midnight. (It is inferred from the story of creation in Genesis, where it says, "And there was evening, and there was morning, one day".)

Jewish holidays occur on the same dates every year in the Hebrew calendar, but the dates vary in the Gregorian calendar. This is because the Hebrew calendar is a lunisolar calendar (based on the cycles of both the moon and sun), whereas the Gregorian calendar is only a solar calendar.

The Jewish calendar is primarily lunar, with each month beginning on the new moon. There are approximately 12.4 lunar months in every solar year, so a 12-month lunar calendar loses about 11 days every year. To prevent the "drifting" of months and holy days, Hillel II, in the fourth century, established a fixed calendar based on mathematical and astronomical calculations. This calendar, still in use today, realigned the lunar calendar with the solar years.

Holidays of biblical and *rabbinic* (*Talmud*ic) origin include

- The *Sabbath*
- *Rosh Chodesh*—The New Month
- *Rosh Hashanah*—The Jewish New Year
- *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*—Ten Days of Repentance
- *Tzom Gedalia*—Fast of Gedalia
- *Yom Kippur*—Day of Atonement
- *Sukkot*—Feast of Booths

- *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* (celebrates the end of the cycle of reading the *Torah* and starting a new one: literally "rejoicing the *Torah*")
- *Hanukkah*—Festival of Lights
- Tenth of *Tevet*
- *Tu Bishvat*—New Year of the Trees
- *Purim*—Festival of Lots
- *Ta'anit Esther*—Fast of Esther
- *Pesach*—Passover
- *Sefirah*—Counting of the *Omer*
- *Shavuot*—Feast of Weeks—*Yom HaBikurim*
- Mourning for Jerusalem: Seventeenth of *Tammuz* and *Tisha B'Av*

Israeli/Jewish National Holidays and Days of Remembrance

Yom HaShoah: Holocaust Remembrance Day is commemorated throughout the world. It is intended to ensure that the Jews and others who were victims of the Nazi Genocide are never forgotten.

Holidays celebrated in Israel and by some of the Diaspora Jews include the following:

- *Yom Hazikaron*: Memorial Day
- *Yom Ha'atzmaut*: Israel Independence Day
- *Yom Yerushalayim*: Jerusalem Day
- *Yom HaAliyah*: Aliyah Day
- A day to commemorate the expulsion of Jews from Arab lands and Iran

Descriptions of a Few of the More Significant and Popular Festivals and Special Days

Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)

The Jewish New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*) is a time to begin introspection, looking back at the mistakes of the past year and planning the changes to make in the new year. No work is permitted on *Rosh Hashanah*. One of the most important observances of this holiday is hearing the sounding of the *shofar* (a ram's horn which is blown somewhat like a trumpet) in the synagogue; while a popular observance during this holiday is eating apples dipped in honey, a symbol of the wish for a sweet new year. Another popular practice of the Jewish New Year is *tashlikh* (casting off). Jewish people walk to flowing water, such as a creek or river, on the afternoon of the first day and empty their pockets into the river, symbolically casting off their sins. (Throwing bread crumbs into the water is a popular alternative.)

Yom Kippur

Figure 44: Breaking *Yom Kippur* Fast with Roti and Samosas

Yom Kippur, meaning Day of Atonement is probably the most important holiday of the Jewish year. Many Jews who do not observe any other Jewish custom will refrain from work, will fast, and/or will attend synagogue services on this day. It is a day set aside to "afflict the soul," in order to atone for the sins of the past year. According to the Jewish tradition, God has "books" in which he writes people's names, indicating who will live and who will die, as well as who will have a good life and who will have a bad life, for the next year. On *Yom Kippur*, the judgment entered in these books is sealed. This day is, essentially, the last appeal: the last chance to change the judgment and to demonstrate repentance and make amends. *Yom Kippur* atones only for sins between man and God, not for sins against another person. To atone for sins against another person, one must first seek reconciliation with that person, righting the wrongs they committed against them if possible. That must all be done before *Yom Kippur*.

Yom Kippur is a complete *Sabbath*; no work can be performed on that day. It is a complete, 25-hour fast beginning before sunset on the evening before *Yom Kippur* and ending after nightfall on the day of *Yom Kippur*. The *Talmud* also specifies additional restrictions that are less well-known: washing and bathing, anointing one's body (with cosmetics, deodorants, etc.), wearing leather shoes (Orthodox Jews routinely wear canvas sneakers under their dress clothes on *Yom Kippur*), and engaging in sexual relations are all prohibited on *Yom Kippur*. As always the case in Judaism, any of these restrictions can be lifted where a threat to life or health is involved. Most of the holiday is spent in the synagogue, in prayer. It is customary to wear white on the holiday, which symbolizes purity and calls to mind the promise that the sins shall be made as white as snow.

Sukkot

Figure 45: *Sukkot* 2010

The Festival of *Sukkot* begins on the fifth day after *Yom Kippur*. *Sukkot* is a time for joy and celebration and is commonly referred to in Jewish prayer and literature as *Z'man Simchateinu*, the Season of our Rejoicing.

Sukkot is the third of the *Shalosh R'galim* or three pilgrimage festivals. Like *Passover* and *Shavu'ot*, *Sukkot* has a dual significance, one biblical/historical and one agricultural. Historically, *Sukkot* commemorates the forty-year period during which the children of Israel were wandering the desert, living in temporary shelters. Agriculturally, *Sukkot* is a harvest festival.

The word *Sukkot* means booths, and refers to the temporary shelters in which Jews are expected to live during this holiday in memory of the period of wandering. *Sukkot* lasts for seven days.

The two days following the festival, *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*, are separate holidays but are related to *Sukkot* and are commonly thought of as part of *Sukkot*. *Simchat Torah*, literally means Rejoicing in the *Torah* and marks the completion of the annual cycle of weekly *Torah* readings in the synagogue.

No work is permitted on the first and second days of the holiday. Work is permitted on the remaining days. These intermediate days on which work is permitted are referred to as *Chol Ha-Mo'ed*, as are the intermediate days of Passover.

Hanukah (Chanukah)


Figure 46: First Night of *Hanukah*

Hanukah or *Chanukah*, is the Jewish festival of rededication, which is also known as the Jewish festival of lights. It is an eight-day festival which commemorates the revolt of the Jews against Greek oppression in biblical times. Antiochus IV, the Greek ruler who was in control of the region at the time including the land of Judea, began to severely oppress the Jews in an attempt to control them. Jews were massacred and he prohibited the practice of the Jewish religion,

and desecrated the Temple. The Jews eventually revolted and succeeded in regaining control of their land and the Temple was rededicated.

According to Jewish tradition, at the time of the rededication, there was very little oil left that had not been defiled by the Greeks. Oil was needed for the *menorah* (candelabrum) in the Temple, which was supposed to burn throughout the night every night. There was only enough oil to burn for one day yet, miraculously, it burned for eight days. An eight-day festival was declared to commemorate this miracle.

Hanukah is a traditional/historical holiday rather than a holiday of religious significance. It has become well-known and celebrated throughout the world because the festival usually falls in December around Christmas.

The only religious observance related to the holiday is the lighting of candles. The candles are arranged in a candelabrum called a *hanukiah*. Many people refer to the *hanukiah* incorrectly as a *menorah*. The name *menorah* is used only to describe the seven-branched candelabrum that was housed in the Jewish Temple.

The *hanukiah* holds nine candles: one for each night, plus a "servant candle" (*shamash*) at a different height. On the first night, one candle is lit using the *shamash* to light it. Each night, another candle is added.

It is traditional to eat fried foods on this holiday, because of the significance of oil to the holiday. This usually includes potato pancakes. The only traditional gift of the holiday is *gelt*, small amounts of money given to the children. Another tradition of the holiday is playing *dreidel*, which is marked with four Hebrew letters commemorating the historical miracle.

Purim

The festival of *Purim* is celebrated every year on the 14th of the Hebrew month of *Adar* (late winter/early spring). The festival commemorates the saving of the Jewish people in ancient Persia from Haman's plot to wipeout Jews, as recorded in the *Megillah* (book of Esther).

Figure 47: Chocolate *hamantaschen*

Purim means "lots" in ancient Persian. The name of the holiday flows from Haman's decision to throw lots to determine when he would carry out his genocidal scheme.

Purim celebrations are meant to be fun and lively. It is also traditional for children (and adults, if they desire) to dress up in costumes.

On the day before *Purim* (or on the Thursday before, when *Purim* is on a Sunday), it is customary to fast, commemorating Queen Esther's fasting and praying to God that the Jewish people be saved.

There are special observances or rituals that are part of the celebration of *Purim*. They are as follows:

- Reading the *Megillah* (book of Esther) which tells the story of the *Purim* miracle. Readings take place twice during the celebrations, once on the eve of *Purim* and again the following day.
- Giving money gifts to at least two less fortunate or poor persons.
- Offering gifts of two kinds of food to at least one person.
- Having a festive *Purim* feast—a traditional Purim food is *hamantaschen* (or *oznay haman*), three-cornered pastry filled with poppy seeds or another sweet filling.

Passover

Passover (*Pesach*) is one of the best known Jewish holidays, as much for its connection to Jewish redemption and the figure of Moses, as for its ties with Christian history (the Last Supper was a Passover meal). The name Passover refers to the fact that God "passed over" the houses of the Jews when he was slaying the firstborns of Egypt during the last of the ten plagues in the biblical Book of Exodus. The primary observances of Passover are related to the Jewish Exodus from Egypt after 400 years of slavery as told in the same book.

Passover lasts for seven days (eight days outside of Israel). The first and last days of the holiday (first two and last two outside of Israel) are days on which no work is permitted. Work is permitted on the intermediate days.

Figure 48: *Seder* Plate

Many of the Passover observances still held were instituted in the Exodus story in the *Torah*. Probably the most significant observance involves the removal of leavened bread (*chametz*) from homes and property. *Chametz* includes anything made from the five major grains (wheat, rye, barley, oats, and spelt) that has not been completely cooked within 18 minutes after coming into contact with water. The removal of *chametz* commemorates the fact that the Jews left Egypt in a hurry and did not have time to let their bread rise. It is also a symbolic way of removing the "puffiness" (arrogance, pride) from people's souls. Jews are not only prohibited from eating *chametz* during Passover, but they may not own

or derive any sort of benefit from it either, including using it to feed pets. This important stipulation requires Jews to sell all remaining leavened products before Passover begins, including utensils used to cook *chametz*. The grain product eaten during Passover in place of *chametz* is called *matzah*. *Matzah* is unleavened bread made simply from flour and water and cooked very quickly. This is traditionally viewed as the bread that the Jews made for their flight from Egypt.

On the first night of Passover (first two nights outside of Israel), Jews are commanded to have a special family meal filled with ritual to remind them of the significance of the holiday. This meal is called the *Seder*, which means "order" in Hebrew because there is a specific set of tasks that must be completed and information that must be covered in a specific order throughout the meal. To correctly follow the process, the text of the Passover meal is written in a book called the *Haggadah*.

Other Special Days

- ***Shavuot* (Season of the Giving of the *Torah*):** This holiday commemorates the receiving of the *Torah* from God at Mount Sinai.
- ***Tisha B'Av:*** On this day, Jews remember the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, as well as other tragedies which have befallen the Jewish people. Observant Jews will fast on this day.

Notes

Places

World

Israel

Established in 1948, Israel is the world's only Jewish State. It lies in the area biblically referred to as the Land of Israel (in the continent of Asia, in the Middle East region). In April 2013, Israel's population was 8,018,000. At that time, the Jewish population in the area totaled 6,042,000 (75.3% of the population), the Arabs totaled 1,658,000 (20.7% of the population), and all other people in the area totaled 318,000 (4% of the population).

Jerusalem

Ever since King David made Jerusalem the capital of Israel 3,000 years ago, the city has played a central role in Jewish existence. The Western Wall in the Old City—the last remaining wall of the ancient Jewish Temple, the holiest site in Judaism—is the object of Jewish veneration and the focus of Jewish prayer. Three times a day for thousands of years Jews have prayed "To Jerusalem, thy city, shall we return with joy," and have repeated the psalmist's oath, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

Temple Mount

Figure 49: Jerusalem: Temple Mount

All three of the world's major monotheistic faiths consider Jerusalem sacred and it is home to many important religious sites for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Since biblical times, various groups have fought for control of the

land that is Israel and Jerusalem. Israel and Jerusalem have a tumultuous past that continues to the present time.

An example of the importance of Jerusalem to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is the Temple Mount located in Jerusalem's Old City. The Temple Mount is believed to be Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered to sacrifice his son Isaac to God.

For Jews, the Temple Mount is the site on which the First Temple was built by King Solomon in 957 BC to house the Ark of the Covenant (which held the Ten Commandments) in a special room called "The Holy of Holies". In Judaism it is the holiest of sites and the Foundation Stone under the dome is where, in the Hebrew scriptures, Earth was first created.

For Christians, the Temple Mount is of importance because Jesus prayed there daily and later preached with his disciples.

For present-day Muslims, this complex houses two very important Islamic structures, the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Muslims refer to this complex as *Haram al-Sharif* (Noble Sanctuary). It is the 3rd holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia. Muslims believe that a winged horse from heaven, Buraq, carried the Islamic prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Jerusalem and back during the Isra and *Mi'raj* or "Night Journey" in the seventh century. It was also the direction toward which Muslims were to pray before God allowed Muhammad to pray towards Mecca instead.

The Western (Wailing) Wall

Figure 50: The Wailing/Western Wall, Old City Jerusalem

The Western Wall (in Hebrew the *Kotel*) is commonly known as the Wailing Wall. It is for Jews one of the most significant religious sites, if not the most significant. It is also one of the sites that people throughout the world are likely to identify with Judaism and Jerusalem. Essentially, the Western Wall is a very ancient stone retaining wall built for the 2nd Temple that surrounds the whole Temple Mount plaza. Jews believe it to be the closest spot to Solomon's original temple and the Holy of Holies (or Gate of Heaven). It is as close to the site of the original Sanctuary as Jews can go today. The Temple was located on a platform above and behind this wall. It is the place towards which Jews face when praying. The wall is the only remnant of the Temple's outer surrounding wall.

For Muslims, it is known as the Buraq Wall, where the Prophet Muhammed tied his winged horse Buraq, while others believe he tied him to the rock which lies under the dome.

Jews will often leave prayer notes between the crevices of large stones, *bar mitzvahs* are held there, and people pray at the site 24-hours a day. Following Orthodox custom, there is a separate women's prayer area off to the right side. Only a small section of the Western Wall is accessible as the balance extends underground.

During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, the Old City of Jerusalem (historical centre) and The Western Wall were captured by Jordan. Jerusalem became a divided city and Jews faced restrictions on access to the site for 19 years. During the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel recaptured the Old City and Jews regained access and control of all of Jerusalem.

Gathering Places/Places of Practice

Historical

When the term The Temple is used in conversation or in Jewish written texts, it refers to a place in Jerusalem that was the center of Jewish worship from the time of Solomon to its destruction by the Romans in the year 70 C.E. The Temple was the one and only place where sacrifices and certain other religious rituals were performed.

The Temple was partially destroyed at the time of the exile of the Jews to Babylonia, but was rebuilt. The rebuilt temple was known as the Second Temple.

Traditional Jews believe that The Temple will be rebuilt when the *Mashiach* (Messiah) comes. They eagerly await that day and pray for it continually.

Figure 51: Model of Ancient Jerusalem
Model of Ancient Jerusalem, was commissioned in 1966 and shows the Temple. The replica is located outside the "Shrine of the Book" and shows how the city looked in biblical days.

Some contemporary Jews, reject the idea of rebuilding the Temple and resuming sacrifices. They call their houses of prayer temples, believing that such houses of worship are the only temples that Jews need and the only temples they will ever have. For them, these are equivalent to the Temple in Jerusalem. This idea is very offensive to some traditional Jews.

Contemporary

Synagogue is the term used to designate the place where Jews gather to pray and hold their religious rituals. The Hebrew term for synagogue is *beit k'nesset* (literally, House of Assembly).

The Orthodox and Chasidim may also use the Yiddish word *shul*. The word is derived from a German word meaning school, and emphasizes the synagogue's role as a place of study.

Conservative Jews usually use the word synagogue, which is actually a Greek translation of *beit k'nesset* and means place of assembly (it's related to the word *synod*).

Reform Jews generally use the word temple, because they consider every one of their meeting places to be equivalent to, or a replacement for, The Temple in Jerusalem.

The use of the word temple to describe modern houses of prayer offends some traditional Jews because it trivializes the importance of The Temple. The word *shul*, on the other hand, is unfamiliar to many modern Jews. Therefore, the word synagogue is commonly used in Canada.

Functions of a Synagogue

The synagogue is the center of the Jewish religious community: a place of prayer, a place for study and education, a place for social and charitable work, as well as a social centre.

A synagogue has multiple functions. First, it is a *beit tefilah*—a house of prayer. It is the place where Jews come together for communal prayer services. Jews can satisfy the requirement to pray daily by praying anywhere. However, there are certain prayers that can only be said in a group and require the presence of a *minyan* or *quorum* of ten adult men. As well, it is traditionally believed that there is more merit to praying with a group than there is in praying alone. The sanctity of the synagogue for this purpose is second only to The Temple. In *rabbinical* literature, the synagogue is sometimes referred to as the little Temple.

In addition, a synagogue is usually also a *beit midrash*—a house of study. Contrary to

Figure 52: Synagogue and Congregation Emmanu-el, Victoria B.C.
Built in 1863, it is the oldest surviving synagogue in Canada. The synagogue is still in use today. The building is a National Historic Site of Canada.

popular belief, Jewish education does not end at the age of *bar mitzvah*. For the observant Jew, the study of sacred texts is a life-long task. Thus, a synagogue normally has a well-stocked library of sacred Jewish texts for members of the community to study. It is also the place where children receive their basic religious education.

Most synagogues also have a community, or multi-purpose hall for religious and non-religious activities. The synagogue often functions as a sort of town hall where matters of importance to the community can be discussed.

In addition, the synagogue may function as a social welfare agency, providing support and assistance for the poor and needy within the community.

Inside a Synagogue

The Sanctuary is the portion of the synagogue where prayer services are performed. Synagogues in Canada and North America are generally designed so that the front of the sanctuary is on the side towards Jerusalem, which is the direction that Jews are supposed to face when reciting certain prayers.

The Ark is probably the most important feature of the sanctuary. It is a cabinet or recession in the wall that holds the *Torah* scrolls. The Ark is also called the *Aron Kodesh* (holy cabinet).

Figure 53: The Ark: Mishkan Yoseph Synagogue

The Ark is generally placed in the front of the sanctuary or the side that faces towards Jerusalem. The Ark has doors as well as an inner curtain called a *parokhet*. This curtain is in imitation of the curtain in the Sanctuary in The Temple. During certain prayers, the doors and/or curtain of the Ark may be opened or closed. Opening or closing the doors or curtain is performed by a member of the congregation, and is considered an honour. All congregants stand when the Ark is open.

In front of and slightly above the Ark, you will find the *ner tamid*, the Eternal Lamp. This lamp symbolizes the commandment to keep a light burning in the Tabernacle outside of the curtain surrounding the Ark of the Covenant. (Exodus 27:20-21).

The Menorah (candelabrum) can be found in addition to the *ner tamid* in many synagogues, symbolizing the *menorah* in the Temple. The *menorah* in the synagogue

Figure 54: *Menorah* in the Sephardic Museum in the Sinagoga del Transito, Toledo, Spain

will generally have six or eight branches instead of the Temple *menorah's* seven, because exact duplication of the Temple's ritual items is improper.

The *bimah* is a pedestal located in the centre of the room or in the front. The *Torah* scrolls are placed on the *bimah* when they are read. The *bimah* is also sometimes used as a podium for leading services. There is an additional, lower lectern in some synagogues called an *amud*.

In Orthodox synagogues, there is a separate section where the women sit. This may be on an upper floor balcony, or in the back or on the side of the room, separated from the men's section by a wall or curtain called a *mechitzah*. The rationale for this is so that men can focus on their prayer rather than on more earthly concerns.

The *mikveh* is a pool or a bath of clear water. Ritual immersion by men and women is an ancient part of Jewish tradition. This practice is both noted in the *Torah* and in later *rabbinic* commentaries. Today, there are only a few cases where immersion is still designated as a *mitzvah*, or an act required by Jewish law. These are

- for converts to Judaism
- for brides
- for women observing *niddah*, the practice of immersing monthly following menstruation

Mikveh was also used for other purposes throughout Jewish history. For example,

- by men prior to *Shabbat* and the holidays
- by women in the ninth month of pregnancy
- as an aid to spirituality, particularly on the eve of the *Sabbath* and festivals, especially the Day of Atonement
- to commemorate a wide variety of transitions and occasions such as prior to reading *Torah* for the first time; before or after surgery; on the occasion of being ordained a *rabbi*; on the occasion of becoming a grandparent; or when reaching the age of 40, 50, or 85

Many religious traditions use water to denote purity, change, and transformation. In Jewish tradition, water is part of their sacred narrative, as when Hebrews traveled through the waters of the Red Sea as they left Egypt, marking their transformation from a tribe of slaves into a free people.

Mikveh is the Jewish ritual that symbolically enacts this kind of profound change for individuals. The mikveh pool recalls the watery state that each of us knew before we were born: the ritual of entering and leaving *mayyim hayyim*, living waters, creates the time and space to acknowledge and embrace a new stage of life.

Most contemporary *mikvoth* are indoor constructions, involving rain water collected from a cistern, and passed through a duct by gravity into an ordinary bathing pool; the *mikveh* can be heated, taking into account certain rules, often resulting in an environment not unlike a spa.

Gathering Places in Manitoba

There are several synagogues in Winnipeg and its surrounding area.

- Ashkenazi Synagogue (Orthodox)—297 Burrows Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2W 1Z7
- Aish HaTorah Winnipeg Learning Centre—www.aish.com/winnipeg/
- Chabad-Lubavitch of Winnipeg (Orthodox)—1845 Mathers Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3N 0N2 www.chabadwinnipeg.org/
- Chavurat Tefilah (Fellowship of Prayer) Synagogue (Orthodox)—459 Hartford Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2V 0W9
- Chevra Mishnayes Synagogue (Orthodox)—700 Jefferson Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2V 0P6
- Congregation Etz Chayim (Conservative)—Formed by amalgamation of Beth Israel, Bnay Abraham, and Rosh Pina synagogues in 2002—123 Matheson Ave E, Winnipeg, MB R2W 0C3, www.congregationetzchayim.ca/
- Hebrew Congregation of Winnipeg Beach—Camp Massad, Winnipeg Beach
- Herzlia-Adas Yeshurun Congregation (Modern Orthodox)—620 Brock St, Winnipeg, MB R3N 0Z4, www.herzlia.org/
- Lubavitch Center of Winnipeg—www.chabadwinnipeg.org/
- Shaarey Zedek Congregation—561 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, MB R3M 0A6, www.shaareyzedek.mb.ca/
- Talmud Torah Beth Jacob Synagogue (Orthodox)—1525 Main Street, Winnipeg, MB R2W 3W3
- Temple Shalom (Reform)—1077 Grant Ave, Winnipeg, MB R3M 1Y6, www.templeshalomwinnipeg.ca
- The New Shul of Winnipeg Inc (No affiliation)—www.jewishwinnipeg.org/directory/the-new-shul-of-winnipeg-inc

Secular or Humanist Jewish organizations include the following:

- The Sholem Aleichem Community, Inc. Youth School Programs
  PO Box C-105
  123 Doncaster St, Winnipeg, MB R3N 2B2
  http://sholemaleichemcommunity.ca
- United Jewish People's Order (UJPO)
  http://ujpo.org/

Notes

Modern Judaism: Issues and Challenges

Judaism, like many other religions, religious perspectives, and traditions is always evolving and responding to, as well as reacting to, social, political, legal, and other developments, incidents, and trends. Although many of the challenges faced by Judaism at this time are unique to Judaism, they are very relevant and constitute specific historical and contextual aspects that are important to understand and consider.

Who Is a Jew? Multifaith, Multicultural, Multilingual, and Multiracial Diversity in Families

The question of who is a Jew is a complex and challenging one as it in part depends on one's definition of a Jew, one's sense of identity, and the perspective of a specific person or group. For some, it means someone who identifies with and is a follower or believer of Judaism and observes Judaic practices. For others, Jews are people who have a shared history and identify with the Jewish people regardless of what religion, if any, they may practice or follow. Yet for others still, it is a question of genetics and genealogy.

Figure 55: Kylie is an Afro Cuban-Danish-Spanish-Sephardi Jew.

Traditionally, to be considered a Jew one must have a mother who is a Jew; it is based on matrilineal descent. Today it may also include converts who have been accepted and gone through a formal conversion process.

Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, and the immigration of Jews from secular and non-Orthodox Jewish groups from Europe, Africa, and other places to Israel is changing traditional definitions of Jewishness and who has the power to arbitrate such matters for marriage, divorce, conversions, and other purposes.

A Question of Identity, Shared Culture, and History

For many persons of Jewish descent, being a Jew is a question of identity, culture, and of a sense of shared common history and experience. They identify as Jews regardless of whether it was their mother, their father, or another ancestor that was a Jew and regardless of their religious practice or beliefs (i.e., they do not follow the Jewish faith, or are secular Jews, or follow other faiths). One author points to this sense of shared culture, history, and experience in his description of secular Jewishness:

> "The fact of the matter is that secular Jewishness calls on the same folk traditions and learns from the same traumas in Jewish history as does Judaism. If it doesn't, it's not Jewish." (Rosenfeld)

Secular Jews are not a new or contemporary development. Rosenfeld states that the Lovers of Zion (Chov'vey Tsion), a group of young intellectuals living in Eastern Europe in the 1860s, were the first organized modern Jewish secularists. Since then, Secular Jews have formed networks, associations, organizations, and congresses to bring them together and support each other in North America and in other countries. For example, the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO—www.csjo.org/) has 14 different affiliates across Canada and the United States. In Manitoba, there are secular Jewish organizations: the Sholem Aleichem Community and the United Jewish People's Order—UJPO.

A Question of Matrilineal or Patrilineal Descent?

As stated earlier, traditionally, to be considered a Jew one must have a mother who is/was a Jew. "Jewishness" from this perspective is based on matrilineal descent. Therefore, Orthodox Judaism will consider an individual with a Jewish mother to be Jewish, even if that person converted to or was raised in another religion. Today, persons who have gone through a formal conversion process, would also be considered Jews.

The tradition of matrilineal descent to determine one's Jewishness contrasts with other traditional Judaic beliefs and practices which are based on patrilineal descent such as tribal affiliation, priestly status, noble status, and so forth. While the *Torah* does not specifically state that matrilineal descent should be used, Jewish scholars and *rabbis* believe there are passages in the *Torah* which clearly propose that the child of a Jewish woman and a non-Jewish man is a Jew, and other passages where it is understood that the child of a non-Jewish woman and a Jewish man is not a Jew.

As indicated earlier, the tradition of using matrilineal descent to determine one's Jewishness is changing within Judaism. Some Jewish denominations will now accept patrilineal descent, as well as converts who have undergone a conversion with a non-Orthodox *rabbi*. Reform Judaism in the United States adopted such a position in 1983. (However, later Responsa were prepared to clarify the resolution and pointed out that it applied only to children

raised exclusively as Jews. Children who came from families with religiously diverse faiths, and were raised simultaneously in Judaism and another religious tradition, would not be presumed to be Jews and such children would be required to undergo formal conversion before observing *bar/bat mitzvah* in the synagogue.)

Today, all dominant forms of Judaism accept converts, although the process and requirements differ between groups and not all conversions are recognized by all branches/denominations of Judaism.

In *Rabbinic* Judaism, the laws of conversion are based on the classical sources of Jewish law (*halakha*). *Halakha* is regarded as authoritative by the Orthodox and Conservative movements. *Halakhic* requirements for conversion are

- instruction in the commandments
- male circumcision (if the male is already circumcised, a drop of blood is drawn)
- immersion in an appropriate body of water before valid witnesses
- acceptance of the commandments before a *rabbinical* court

Orthodox Judaism requires that conversions be performed in accordance with traditional Jewish law, as described above, and recognizes only those converts that have completed the conversion process under the guidance/supervision of an Orthodox *rabbi*. Conversions by *rabbis* in other movements are not generally accepted by Orthodox authorities.

Like Orthodox Judaism, Conservative Judaism requires that conversions be conducted according to traditional Jewish law. However, Conservative *rabbis* generally will recognize any conversion done in accord with the requirements of Jewish law, even if done outside the Conservative movement.

The Union for Reform Judaism requires converts to study Jewish theology, rituals, history, culture, and customs; and to begin incorporating Jewish practices into their lives. The length and format of the course of study will vary from congregation to congregation, but most require a course in basic Judaism and individual study with a *rabbi*, as well as participating in communal rituals, home practice, and synagogue life. The Central Conference of American *Rabbis* of the Union recommends that at least three *rabbis* be present for the conversion ceremony.

The *Rabbinical* Court of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism requires an average of one year of study to become conversant in Jewish life and tradition. Following this, converts are required to immerse in a ritual bath, be circumcised if male, and accept the commandments before the *rabbinical* court.

The Challenge of Mixed Marriages

In North America and the Jewish Diaspora, intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews is becoming more common. In the United States, it is currently estimated that over 50 percent of Jews marry non-Jews. In Canada, based on the 2011 National Household survey, the intermarriage rate was 26 percent, a significant growth from 16 percent 20 years earlier. Some see the acceptance of Reform Judaism of patrilineal descent as being in part, at least, a response to this growing trend. However, other movements are increasingly under pressure to change their position and practices.

Conservative Judaism has acted to make it easier for children of intermarriages to join, subject to the condition that they convert to Judaism before their *bar/bat mitzvah*.

Figure 56: Collage Highlighting the Diversity of the Jewish Comunity

On the other side, there is increasing concern with respect to loss of Jewish identity that may occur as a result of interfaith marriages. As Jews are a small minority in North America and in countries other than Israel, if Jews keep marrying non-Jews, future generations will consist of a smaller number of Jews. And this will mean that Jews in the future will be less likely to find a partner from the 'tribe'. This has led to reform and movement still taking steps to make non-Jews feel comfortable and accepted in their congregations, while more aggressively promoting conversion.

The Situation in Israel

As indicated earlier, Israel changed its laws concerning recognition of Jewish status for immigration purposes under the Law of Return after a challenge in the Israeli courts concerning recognition of only matrilineal descent. Israel now extends the right of immigration to Israel to those who can demonstrate either matrilineal or patrilineal descent.

As well, Israel recognizes non-Orthodox conversions done outside Israel; however, within Israel, only Orthodox conversions are accepted by the government and the *rabbinate*. This issue has been quite controversial and much debated in Israel for many years. This was especially true after the arrival of 800,000 Russian immigrants in the late 1980's. While they were allowed to immigrate under the Law of Return, about 200,000 to 300,000 were not considered to be Jews according to Jewish religious law, *halakhah*.

This issue also arose with Ethiopian Jewish immigrants who practiced a *pre-rabbinical* form of Judaism that was more in keeping with Biblical Judaism. In response, the Israeli *rabbinate* proposed a symbolic conversion of all Ethiopian Jews to be done before they could be married. This caused quite a negative reaction from Ethiopians who refused to do so as they saw it as a denial of their legitimate status as Jews. The issue was partially resolved when a *rabbi*, sympathetic to their cause, was able to register their marriages. However, Ethiopian *rabbis* in Israel still have difficulty having the marriages and divorces they perform in Israel recognized.

As well, there have been issues related to marriages, as only Orthodox *rabbis* are allowed to marry Jews and this forces many secular Israelis to travel to Cyprus and other foreign countries to have a civil ceremony, which they are not permitted in Israel. Orthodox *halachic* rules apply to converts who want to marry in Israel. Under these rules, a conversion to Judaism must strictly follow *halachic* standards to be recognized as valid.

For individuals born outside of Israel and wishing to marry in Israel, they must provide a letter from an Orthodox *rabbi* certifying that they are Jewish according to religious law (*halakha*). To qualify as Jewish *halakhically*, they must either have been born to Jewish mothers or have been converted by Orthodox *rabbis* approved by the *rabbinate*.

More recently, there have been tensions between the Israeli *rabbinate* and Orthodox *rabbis* in North America and the Diaspora concerning the determination of Jewish status for those that wish to marry in Israel but come from other countries. In

2017, the Israeli *rabbinates* published a list of 160 *rabbis* from around the world, including 62 from the United States, many of which were prominent *rabbis*, ordained by the Orthodox movement, that were considered to be ineligible to provide letters attesting to a person's Jewish status. If one's ancestral line of Jewishness is challenged or in doubt, then the person would need to go through a formal conversion process in Israel.

While Israel does recognize marriages performed by Conservative and Reform *rabbis* in other countries, divorces issued abroad by *rabbis* from these movements are not recognized by the *rabbinate* in Israel, which has sole jurisdiction with respect to divorce of Jews in that country. With respect to marriage, divorce, and burial, all of which are under the jurisdiction of the Israeli Interior Ministry, the *halakhic* definition of who is a Jew is applied. When there is any doubt, the matter is referred to the Israeli Chief *Rabbinate*.

Increasingly, in Israel, there is dissatisfaction with the role and power of the Israeli *rabbinate*. The Jerusalem Post reported that in a survey of Israelis in 2016, 75% of all respondents supported a move towards establishing an option for civil divorce. The survey revealed that the vast majority of non-Haredi Jews supported such a move, both on the right and left of the Israeli political spectrum.

Antisemitism 2.0

There is evidence that antisemitism and hatred are on the rise in Europe, the Middle East, North America, and other places in the world. Unfortunately, antisemitism and hatred of Jews is not a thing of the past.

Antisemitism takes different forms such as bomb threats against Jewish community centres and schools, or vandalism at Jewish cemeteries and synagogues. It can also take the form of Holocaust denial, antisemitic rock groups and websites, and organizations such as the Klu Klux Klan, and neo-Nazi and anti-immigration/ diversity groups.

As stated in a Washington Post opinion piece by Yair Rosenberg, annually, Jews in the United States are, according to the FBI, subjected to the most hate crimes of any religious group. This, in spite of the fact that they account for only 2 percent of the American population. In 2017, in Canada, B'nai Brith Canada, reported 1,728 anti-Semitic incidents took place across the country in 2016, a 26% increase from 2015 and the highest number since they began tracking such incidents 35 years ago.

In Europe, the picture is also alarming. In 2014, France reported Jews were the target of 51% of racist attacks, even though they make up less than 1% percent of the population. In the last decade, synagogues as well as Jewish schools and museums have been subject to terrorist attacks in France, Denmark, and Belgium. A 2013 European Union survey found that almost 40% of European Jews fear publicly identifying as Jewish, including 60 percent of Swedish Jews.

There are similar and more troubling developments in other regions of the world. For example, in the Middle East in Arab nations, where nearly 1 million Jews once lived, Jews now number only a few thousand as a result of persecution or flight from conflict and war in the past century.

According to a 2017 report by the Pew Research Center, Global Restrictions on Religion Rise Modestly in 2015, Reversing Downward Trend, in 2015, hostilities "against Jews in Europe remained common and increased slightly, from 32 (71%) countries in 2014 to 33 (73%) countries in 2015. Many of the incidents targeting these religious groups occurred in the form of mob violence." As well, Jews faced harassment in 74 countries in 2015, down from 81 countries in 2014. However, the Pew Research Center pointed out that as Jews make up just 0.2% of the world's population, they faced harassment in a large number of nations.

There are various theories or explanations as to the continuity of antisemitism, especially in the post-Holocaust, post-Declaration of Universal Human Rights era.

For some, it is a continuation of the long history of antisemitism in Europe and throughout the world that has deep roots which have never died and have shown new vigour recently. Anti-immigrant, xenophobic, and pro-Christian movements in Europe have raised hostility towards non-Christian groups such as Jews, Muslims, and Hindus in Europe and elsewhere. In fact, the Pew Research report cited earlier reported that, in 2015, nearly all Jews, Muslims, and Hindus lived in countries where their group was harassed.

However, some believe that a new form of antisemitism has developed in the late 20th and early 21st centuries that was stimulated by several influences, including the far left, Islamism, and the far right. From this perspective, such antisemitism tends to manifest itself as opposition to Zionism and the State of Israel. This perspective tends to see that much of what is purported today to be valid criticism of Israel by individuals, the media, and world bodies is really the demonization of Jews and Israel. They argue that this, together with an apparent international resurgence of attacks on Jews and Jewish symbols and what appears to be an increased acceptance of anti-Semitic beliefs and statements in public discourse, represents an evolution in the nature of anti-Semitic beliefs.

However, both Jewish and non-Jewish critics argue that seeing all criticism of Israel as having anti-Semitic roots blends anti-Zionism with antisemitism. They point out that the position limits legitimate criticism of Israel too narrowly and demonizes too broadly which, as a result, trivializes and exploits antisemitism in order to silence legitimate political debate.

Yair Rosenberg, in an article that he wrote for the *Washington Post*, "Five Myths about Anti-Semitism," attempts to balance these two perspectives on Israel and antisemitism. He points out that criticism of Israeli policies and actions should not be construed as being generally anti-Semitic. For him, as for many other Jews, legitimate criticism of Israel's actions concerning the Palestinians or other issues cannot all simply be labeled anti-Semitic. Within Israel and with Jews across the globe, there are many different perspectives and positions on different issues with respect to the modern State of Israel. For example, opposition to Jewish settlements and calls to boycott are debatable political positions, not anti-Semitic slurs. He argues that Israel, just like any other democracy or nation, should be held accountable for its actions.

On the other hand, he does acknowledge that criticism of Israel can mask hatred or prejudice toward Jews. He points out examples where critics of Israel were

Holocaust deniers; those who accused Israel of committing "Palestinian genocide," in spite of the fact that the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported a 400% population increase since Israel's founding; and situations where Israel is subjected to criticism at a level not experienced by any non-Jewish country. He points to the United Nations, whose Human Rights Council has condemned Israel more often than all other countries combined, including Syria, North Korea, Iran, and Russia. He argues that such approaches share a common trait which is that they treat Israel in much the same way anti-Semites have historically unfairly treated and demonized Jews.

A third position is that the new antisemitism represents a third, or ideological, wave of anti-Semitism: one that is 'Israel-derived anti-Semitism' with the first two waves being religious and racial anti-Semitism. The first wave, religious anti-Semitism arose with the emergence of Christianity and resulted from the Jews' rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. The second wave, racial anti-Semitism, emerged in Spain when large numbers of Jews were forced to convert. Doubts within the Christian-Spanish community about the sincerity of the converts led to idea of the importance of racial purity or purity of blood.

Third wave anti-Semitism is seen emerging from the Arab states and as being, in part, the result of the creation of the State of Israel. This perspective points to the fact that, until the 19th century, although Jews living in Arab and Muslim countries were not treated as equals, they were extended an amount of respect. Change in this view began to happen with colonialism and the spread of Christianity and Western anti-Semitism. This was exacerbated by the series of Israeli military victories beginning in 1948 followed by those in the 1956, 1967, and 1973 wars. The Jewish state not only managed to survive these wars, but even expanded its territory. Israel's taking over of the Gaza Strip from Egypt and the West Bank from Jordan, which were home to large numbers of Palestinian Arabs, was and remains one of the most controversial outcomes.

Supporters of third wave anti-Semitism partly blame the United Nations for its emergence. They argue that the international public response and the United Nations' handling of the 1948 refugee situation convinced the Arab world that discrimination against Jews was acceptable. They also point to the inaction by the international community when the ancient Jewish community in East Jerusalem was evicted (after the partition of Jerusalem) and Jewish historical and religious sites were desecrated. As well, Jewish refugees fleeing or driven out of Arab and Muslim countries were not offered help, in contrast to the support provided for Arabs or Muslims who fled or were driven out of the lands that became Israel. At that time, all the Arab governments involved in the conflict announced that they would not accept Israelis of any religion into their territories, and that they would not give visas to Jews, no matter what their citizenship. The failure of the United Nations and international community to protest these actions sent a clear message to the Arab world. This new anti-Semitism provides non-Jews license to criticize or attack Jews without feeling burdened by the crimes of the Nazis.

Israel's military successes and its willingness to occupy Arab lands until a peace treaty can be negotiated, has resulted in Arab anti-Semitism hardening into official doctrine for several decades. While historically traditional Muslim views were sympathetic towards Jews, there has been tendency among some contemporary Muslim scholars in the Arab world to reread and reinterpret the *Quran* to provide

evidence of the Jews' devilish nature. This misuse of the *Quran* to legitimize anti-Jew and anti-Israeli hatred is seen by many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars as a particularly menacing form of anti-Semitism.

Israel, Middle East Conflict, and the Arab World

There is no doubt that the creation of the State of Israel and the wars that followed have impacted and influenced contemporary understandings about Jews and the world. It is also true that the Arab-Israeli wars and continued conflicts in the Middle East and in many Muslim dominated countries have created a complex situation.

Figure 57: 2016 UN Ambassador, Samantha Power Visits Max Rayne Bilingual Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem
Hand in Hand Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel operates 6 schools and communities throughout Israel. The schools provide thousands of Jewish and Arab students with an opportunity for a bilingual and bicultural education. See www.handinhandk12.org/.

As well, there is widespread belief of media bias among all sides of the issues. Pro-Palestinians often see Western mainstream media to be biased and pro-Israel, while pro-Israeli see Arab media to be biased and pro-Palestinian. Consequently, one must critically read and digest media reports and materials.

Figure 58: Jews for Palestine
Some Jews do not believe that a separate Jewish state is necessary and support Palestinians. This photo was taken at a rally in Montreal in support of the people of Gaza in July of 2012.

To that end, one must study and understand the issues related to Israel, the Middle East conflicts, and Palestinians from a well-informed and balanced perspective. Many of us may have limited knowledge of the history and facts related to these themes. Knowing the facts about the creation of Israel and the impact on Palestinians, as well as the conflict that grew out of this development is key to understanding the issues at hand.

Furthermore, there is a tendency to oversimplify and stereotype the perspectives and positions of Jews, Christians, Muslims, Arabs, Israelis, and Palestinians. In doing so, the diversity of opinions and positions that exist within each of these groups is lost. For example, on the Jewish side, Jews for Justice for Palestine advocates for a two-state solution to the conflict and, on the Muslim side, some Muslim clerics, such as

Sheikh professor Abdul Hadi Palazzi, Director of the Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic Community, and Imam Dr Muhammad Al-Hussaini believe that the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and the establishment of Israel, are in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Notable Muslims who publicly support Zionism include former radical Islamist Ed Husain; Dr. Tawfik Hamid; Tashbih Sayyed, a Pakistani-American scholar, journalist, and author; and the Bangladeshi journalist Salah Choudhury. Additional Muslim people who voiced public support for Israel include figures such as

Kasim Hafeez is a Manitoban of British Muslim Pakistani origins who is best known for founding "The Israel Campaign", a pro-Israel advocacy organization. Hafeez believes that much of the hatred and intolerance of Israel in the Arab and Islamic world is the result of misinformation and ignorance. In his video, "I Was Born to Hate Jews" for Praeger university, he explains his journey from hating Israel to becoming pro-Israel. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSrMCnuBz3k.

- Kasim Hafeez (British Muslim of Pakistani origin, now residing in Winnipeg)
- Irshad Manji (born in Uganda, Canadian citizen, now a Senior Fellow at the USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy, founder of the Moral Courage Project)
- Salim Mansur (born in India, professor, University of Western Ontario)
- Abdurrahman Wahid (deceased former President of Indonesia)
- Abdullah Saad Al-Hadlaq (Kuwaiti writer)
- Khaleel Mohammed (Guyanese-born professor, San Diego State University)
- Mithal al-Alusi (former member of parliament of Iraq)
- Mohamed "Ed" Husain (former Islamic activist and cofounder of Quilliam Foundation, a counter-extremism organization)
- Nadiya Al-Noor (a Muslim interfaith activist from New York)
- Noor Dahri (director of Pakistan Israel Alliance (PIA), an independent researcher based in London)

Muslim and Zionist

Qanta A. Ahmed, MD

Dr. Ahmed is a noted physician, author, journalist, and practicing Muslim. Ahmed is opposed to the boycott against Israel but is also opposed to the occupation of the Palestinian Territories. She has spoken for and defended Israel's right to exist.

Stephen Suleyman Schwartz

Stephen Schwartz is executive director of the Centre for Islamic Pluralism, an international network of moderate Muslims. He has authored two books on Islam. He has been a student of Sufism since the late 1960s and an adherent of the Hanafi school of Islam since 1997.

- Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury (Bangladeshi author and founder of A-21 TV)
- Tawfik Hamid (Egyptian author who owns and runs the website IslamforPeace)
- Zuhdi Jasser (American M. D., founder and president of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy [AIFD])

Finally, multiple perspectives must be heard and considered while studying the issues.

Countering Religious Extremism

Religious extremism leading to religion-related terrorism is a growing concern throughout the world. In 2014, a significant number of countries in the Middle East-North Africa region experienced religion-related terrorism. As well, the Asia-Pacific region saw a large increase in the countries experiencing such terrorism. Terrorist activities have been lethal in many counties in Europe and Israel in particular, where attacks resulted in over 50 casualties in 2014.

This type of terrorism also includes groups who engage in ethnic cleansing related to religion. In Iraq, in 2014, Islamic State militants were reported to have engaged in a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing that targeted religious and ethnic minorities, including the Yazidis.

Jewish extremist groups are a growing concern in Israel. These groups have both religious and political motivation for their position and actions; however, most recent Jewish extremist groups have tended to emphasize religious rather than secular motives for their actions. In the case of Jewish terrorism, most extremist networks have been associated with religious Zionists and ultra-Orthodox Jews living in relatively isolated Jewish communities.

Impact on Manitoba and Canada

Jewish Canadians and Judaism have contributed to the shaping of contemporary Canadian society and communities. Like many other groups, they have added to the diversity of perspectives as well as to our cultural and social mosaic.

The following are questions for exploration and discussion with respect to Judaism in Manitoba and Canada.

1. In what ways has Judaism positively contributed to the development of Manitoba and Canadian society? Provide some examples.
2. Do Canadians in general have a good understanding of Judaism and Jewish cultures or do they hold stereotypical and mal-informed views and understandings about Judaism?
3. How have you benefited from the opportunity to explore Judaism?

Teaching/Learning Resources

Books

Judaism

Charing, Douglas. *Judaism*. New York: DK Pub., c2003.

Graham, Ian. *Judaism*. North Vancouver, B.C.: Walrus Books, c2004

Hawker, Frances; Campbell, Bruce; Taub, Daniel. *Judaism in Israel*. St. Chaterines, Ont.: Crabtree Pub., c2010.

Levine, Allan.—*Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada. Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba.* Winnipeg: Heartland Associates, 2009.

Manitoba Historic Resources Branch. *The Beginning of the Jewish Community in Manitoba.* Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Historic Resources, 1991.

Rosinsky, Natalie M. *Judaism*. North Vancouver, B.C.: Walrus Books, c2004.

Telushkin, Joseph. *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History.* NY: William Morrow and Co., 2006.

Israel-Palestine

Adwān, Sāmī A.-R, Dan Bar-On, and Eyal J. Naveh. *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel/Palestine.* New York: The New Press, 2012. Print. This publication is from the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME)—a non-governmental, non-profit organization established by Palestinian and Israeli researchers with the help of the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt, Germany. PRIME has developed a dual-narrative history project which has produced resources for teaching about the conflict from the two perspectives or narratives. Earlier test versions of the resource are available for downloading on the Prime website.

Bard, Mitchell Geoffrey. *Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict.* American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2012.

Caplan, Neil. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories.* Chichester, U.K: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Internet resource.

Discovery Education: *Israel and Palestine: The Roots of Conflict. Lesson Plan.* A short lesson plan as well as resources to introduce students to the history and issues. www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/israel-and-palestine-the-roots-of-conflict.cfm.

Ian Bickerton and Carla Klausner. *A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. 7th ed.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2014.

Mark Tessler. *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. 2nd ed.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

Middle East

Andersen, Roy., Robert Seibert, and Jon Wangler. *Politics and Change in the Middle East. 10th ed.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2011.

Ellen Lust, Ed. *The Middle East. 13th ed.* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2014.

Fellure, Jacob M. *The Everything Middle East: The Nations, Their Histories, and Their Conflicts.* Avon, MA: Adams Media, c2004

Mehran Kamrava. *The Modern Middle East: A Political History since the First World* War. 3rd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

Glossaries

Audio Glossaries

- Augsburg Fortress develops engaging resources for Lutheran congregations. It offers a downloadable glossary with embedded audio files. (http://augsburgfortress.org/media/downloads/9780800696634Glossarysound.pdf)
- Annenberg Learner, World History Audio Glossary (https://www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/audio_glossary.html) contains references for 350 place names and historical figures. While this is not an exhaustive list, it does cover the major content areas in the organization's Bridging World History video and print materials.
- The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education Audio Glossary (www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/glossary/a.html)

Text Glossaries

- Jewish Virtual Library, Glossary (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/glossary) offers an extensive glossary of Jewish terminology with respect to history and religion.
- Judaism 101: Glossary of Jewish Terminology (www.jewfaq.org/glossary.htm)
- Mechon Mamre (www.mechon-mamre.org/): A website that includes the Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*) and the Rambam's Complete Restatement of the Oral Law (*Mishneh Torah*). The site also contains a glossary of Jewish terminology.
- A British independent educational consultancy that offers resources, including resources related to religious diversity. There are also glossaries for 6 religions as well as one glossary on perspectives. See www.mmiweb.org.uk/publications/glossary/glossary.html. A glossary of Jewish terms with Sephardic pronunciations of some terms is part of the collection. See www.mmiweb.org.uk/publications/glossary/glossaries/judglos.html.

Profiles

Cohn-Sherbok, Lavinia. *Faith Guides for Higher Education: A Guide to Judaism*. Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, Higher Education Academy, School of Theology and Religious Studies University of Leeds. 2006. (www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/faith_guide_judaism.pdf)

International Students Inc. *Judaism and the Jewish People: A Religion Profile from International Students* (www.isionline.org/Portals/0/Religion%20Profiles/Judaism%20Profile%202004.pdf)

Judaism by Harvard Religious Literacy Project (https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/publications/judaism)

Judaism by Patheos (www.patheos.com/library/judaism)

Videos

Gadgets help observe Sabbath (2.5 minutes)
A RT (Russian Television) video about modern gadgets and technology helps Orthodox Jews observe the *Sabbath*.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzIyCGJvjE8&safe=active

Short Introduction to Judaism (12 minutes and 46 seconds)
A short introduction to Judaism from BeJewish.org
www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TnKVYM9Euk

Jerusalem Tour by Broadband TV
A series of 9 videos produced by Broadband TV on Jerusalem. Each video focuses on a different aspect of Jerusalem and covers Jewish, Christian, and Islamic sites and information on these religions. Broadband TV also has a series that focuses on Israel. The most relevant of the Jerusalem videos to Judaism are

- Part 1 (3 minutes and 2 seconds): Introduction to the city of Jerusalem and its relevance to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sICZTS6pTQ&feature=relmfu.
- Part 3 (3 minutes): Agriculture in Jerusalem and *Kosher* food culture in Jerusalem. www.youtube.com/watch?v=AROLSO5ctRw&feature=relmfu.
- Part 5 (3 minutes): Significance of Jerusalem for Muslims and the Dome of the Rock. www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mFJ2E3Jmuo&feature=relmfu.
- Part 6 (3 minutes): The Wailing Wall, Written and Oral Law, and Prayer Rituals. www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2Vkvrr4LU0&feature=relmfu.

Is Jesus the Jewish Messiah? A two-part video series of a debate between a Christian and a Jew: Dr. Michael Brown and Shmuley Boteach.

- Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cg1zAnGsayg
- Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImPcBXnogzk

What is the *Tanakh*? by Rachel-Esther bat-Avraham provides an overview of the *Tanakh* at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDSCeYrfkTc.

Tanakh versus *Old Testament*? by Rachel-Esther bat-Avraham provides an overview of the differences between the *Tanakh* and the *Christian Old Testament* at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPN_LSxHFk0.

Jewish biblical song—*Katonti*: A Jewish religious biblical song—*Katonti*—from the Book of Genesis (32-10) in the bible (*Torah*), performed by Israeli Orthodox Jewish singer Ofir Ben Shitrit at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYyHpRDqIWg.

Jewish men singing Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here" is a street performance by two Orthodox Jews in Jaffa Street in Jerusalem. See it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rirDOIttODM.

What it takes to prepare a *Kosher* meal (10 minutes) by Don McCracken is a video of a food network episode at www.youtube.com/watch?v=wG13bVyVhXo.

This Is What it Takes to Run a *Kosher* Steakhouse by Fortune Magazine is a video about a *Kosher* Steakhouse in New York City at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lveWXdOROW8.

Keeping it *Kosher* in LA's *Kosher* Corridor, Soul Food by Munchies, is a video of comedian host Kiran Deol who heads over to LA's *Kosher* Corridor to get wise to the ways one can keep it *kosher* at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qTatb6qHEM.

Writing of the *Talmud* (4 minutes) by JewishHistory.org is a video about the writing of the *Talmud* at www.youtube.com/watch?v=-V-mF3uL9Fk&feature=relmfu.

Yom Kippur reenactment (10 minutes) by Andrew Ferrier is a reenactment of *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement), the most holy day in the Jewish year, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRCKKNj-VcI.

Middle East Conflict

The Israel-Palestine conflict: a brief, simple history (10 minutes and 19 seconds) by Vox Video describes the history of the conflict which dates back more than 100 years at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZY8m0cm1oY.

The Middle East Problem, by the Prager U. is a video in which Dennis Prager gives his understanding of the history of the conflict and the challenge of finding a solution at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EDW88CBo-8.

Websites

Judaism

Aish Ha*Torah* (www.aish.com)
This website has articles and information about Judaism and the Jewish world.

Chabad-Lubavitch website, CHABAD.ORG (www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1675888/jewish/Jewish-Practice.htm)
Website of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement and organization: The site offers information on Jewish Practice.

Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) (www.jewishencyclopedia.com/)
This website offers the complete contents of the 12-volume Jewish Encyclopedia, originally published between 1901 and 1906. Although the original work was completed almost 100 years ago and therefore does not cover a significant portion of modern Jewish history, it still contains an incredible amount of information that is relevant today. The Jewish Encyclopedia recently became part of the public domain. The site offers over 15,000 articles and illustrations.

Hebcal Jewish Calendar (www.hebcal.com/)
A free Jewish calendar and holiday website. It offers a custom Jewish calendar tool that lets you generate a list of Jewish holidays for any year (past, present, or future). Also available are a Hebrew date converter, *Shabbat* candle lighting times, and *Torah* readings.

Jewish Canadians: The Canadian Encyclopedia, Jewish Canadians (www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jewish-canadians/)
The Canadian Encyclopedia is an online resource that features information on Jewish Canadians and Judaism.

Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (www.jewishwinnipeg.org)
The website of the Jewish Federation provides information on Jewish organizations and events in Manitoba and Winnipeg.

Judaism by BBC Religion (www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/)
This is the archived section of the BBC website on religions and Judaism. It offers an overview of Judaism and other religions and practices.

Judaism by ReligionFacts. (www.religionfacts.com/judaism)
The goal of the Religion Facts website, as its name implies, "is to provide free, reliable information—"just the facts" on questions related to the diversity of religions and belief systems as well as their rituals and customs.

Judaism by Religious Tolerance (www.religioustolerance.org/judaism.htm)
Religious Tolerance is the website of the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance (OCRT), which is a multi-faith agency of five volunteers in the U.S. and Canada who follow five different religious beliefs (Agnosticism, Atheism, Christianity, Wicca, and Zen Buddhism). The site features articles and essays on a variety of religions and topics.

Judaism 101 (www.jewfaq.org/index.shtml)
This online encyclopedia of Judaism, covers Jewish beliefs, people, places, things, language, scripture, holidays, practices, and customs. The information in this site is written predominantly from the Orthodox point of view.

My Jewish Learning (www.myjewishlearning.com/)
A website of Jewish information and education that offers articles and resources on all aspects of Judaism and Jewish life. The site is geared toward adults of all ages and backgrounds, from the casual reader looking for interesting insights, to non-Jews searching for a better understanding of Jewish culture, to experienced learners wishing to delve deeper into specific topic areas.

The Canadian Encyclopedia, Judaism: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/judaism/

Reform Judaism Website (www.reformjudaism.org/glossary-search)
The website offers a variety of resources on Judaism practice, life, holidays, and other aspects including a section on social justice.

The Global Jewish Database/The Responsa Project (http://responsa-forum.co.il/www/?page_id=322&lang=en) is a searchable database that includes the full text of the Hebrew Bible and its principal commentaries, the *Babylonian Talmud* with Rashi's commentary and *Tosafot*, the *Jerusalem Talmud*, the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides, *300 Rambam Commentaries* (Friedberg ed.), *Shulchan Aruch* with commentaries, Midrashim, hundreds of books of responsa, searchable text of 14,000 articles from various *Torah* periodicals and collections, and the *Talmud*ic Encyclopedia.

The *Torah*.com (http://the*Torah*.com/) is the website of Project TABS (*Torah* and Biblical Scholarship), an educational organization. The aim is to integrate the study of the *Torah* and other Jewish texts with the disciplines and

findings of academic scholarship. The website features many resources related to the *Torah*, Jewish history, and other themes.

The Virtual Jewish Library (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/) is a comprehensive online Jewish encyclopedia. With more than 16,000 articles and 7,000 photographs and maps, this site covers every topic related to Judaism and Israel.

Palestine-Israel Conflict

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Infographics

There are a number of web-based resources for developing or creating infographics and other interactive resources. Some are offered at no cost while others require a subscription.

- Behance is an Adobe Creative platform/website dedicated to showcasing and discovering Creative Work. See https://www.behance.net/. Student Show is a similar site dedicated to showcasing design student projects. See www.studentshow.com/.

- Paul Murray's blog *Infographical* includes a posting related to World Religions. Paul is a Canadian educator whose website is dedicated to the use of Web 2.0 in the classroom. See http://paul-murray.org/infografical/infographic-digest-world-religions-edition/.
- Pinterest features many infographics on Judaism and other faiths. https://www.pinterest.com/nleresources/jewish-infographics/.
- Vennage is an online tool for the creation of Infographics. They offer a free trial for teachers. See https://infograph.venngage.com/p/62768/ Judaism for examples.

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