WOLPER
JEWISH HOSPITAL


# About Judaism

# Welcome to the world of Judaism

Welcome to Wolper Jewish Hospital. Thank you for choosing our services, and for your interest in Jewish traditions and customs. This booklet is intended to help you understand Judaism.

The Hospital first envisioned after World War II was one that would meet the needs of Jewish people in Sydney, hence its name. Today, though our patients come from a broad range of religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, we still adhere to the customs and practices of Judaism. Concern for community wellbeing is at the centre of Judaism. And community wellbeing is at the heart of Wolper's services, programs and values.

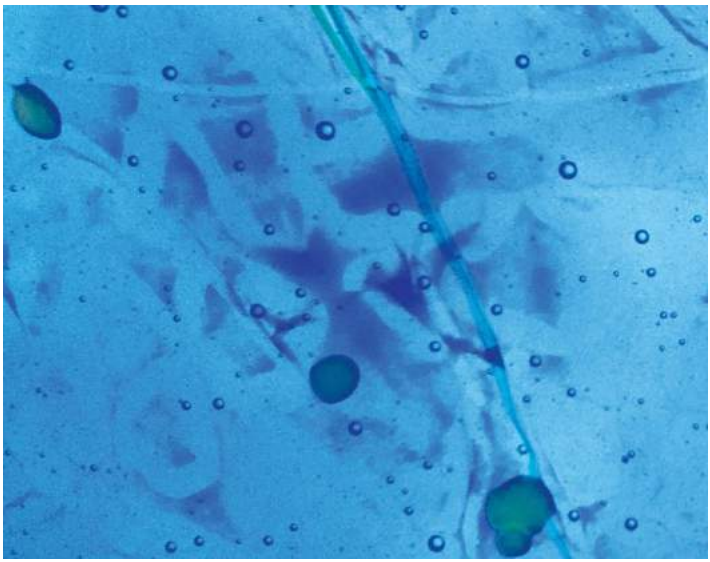
This may be your first experience of spending time among people practising Judaism. As with many religions today, Judaism encompasses a range of beliefs, and varying degrees of adherence to observance, traditions and cultural practices. This booklet focuses on the core elements of Judaism as well as outlining the spectrum of Jewish belief and practice. It is not intended to be an exhaustive reference, but rather to provide an overview. If you want to explore further, the 'Sources' section is a good place to begin.

## Some explanations

*In this book, 'G-d' is used for the name of God, in line with traditional Jewish custom, to avoid erasing the name should the book be destroyed.*

*Hebrew is the traditional language of the Jewish people. It is the official language of Israel, and, as it has been since ancient days, the language of worship for Jews. Most Jewish people refer to observances and festivals by their Hebrew names. Some of these names are provided in this book. As Hebrew words used in English texts are transliterated from the Hebrew alphabet, variant spellings are possible. For example, Chanukah – see p. 23 – can also be spelt Hanukah or Channukah. You may notice other variants in your wider reading.*

*Terms highlighted in bold and italics in the text appear in the Glossary with their definitions.*



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The online version of this publication, with links to further details on the topics discussed in this book, can be found at www.wolper.com.au

# The Jewish people

## A race, a nation, a religion

Jews are not a single race; they come in all colours, from the lightest to the darkest. Jews are from many countries, but collectively they are a nation. Judaism has many forms, but it is a single religion. Jews resolve the question of definition by calling themselves a people.

Indeed, the Jewish people see themselves as a family, tracing their origins to the biblical patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, from around 1900 BCE. Two thousand years later, the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and the present Jewish Dispersion began.

As the Jewish people dispersed throughout the world, they brought with them particular spiritual and ethical values, a body of inspired literature and a sense of continuing history, embodied in the religion of Judaism.

The Ten Commandments list the principles for living a righteous life. The prophet and leader Moses received the Law in the form of the Ten Commandments at Mt Sinai. See p. 20.

1 I am the L-rd your G-d.
2 You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3 You shall not take the name of G-d in vain.
4 Remember and observe the sabbath and keep it holy.
5 Honour your father and mother.
6 You shall not murder.
7 You shall not commit adultery.
8 You shall not steal.
9 You shall not bear false witness.
10 You shall not covet your neighbour's wife or house.

## Who is a Jew?

Orthodox Jewish law defines a Jew by the religion of the mother, not the father; if the mother is Jewish, the child is regarded as Jewish. Some Progressive communities also accept a child as Jewish if the father is Jewish and the child is raised as a Jew. Jews do not seek to convert others to Judaism. This is because the Jewish religion accepts that there are many paths to G-d. However, it is possible to become Jewish through a lengthy process of conversion, which involves a commitment to Jewish observance.

## Denominations of Judaism

**Hassidic** Judaism is an Orthodox Jewish movement. It emphasises spiritual intensity and joy in Jewish worship, as well as Messianic expectation. Chassidim are sometimes differentiated from other Orthodox Jews by their wearing of distinctive clothing.

**Orthodox** Judaism is distinguished by its maintenance of the traditional forms of worship and of the traditional observances as prescribed by biblical law. The Orthodox view is that the biblical law may be developed and interpreted only by processes of reasoning that maintain respect for the Law's Divine origin. Prayer is conducted in Hebrew. Men and women sit separately to worship in the synagogue, and men and married women keep their heads covered. Within Orthodoxy we also find the Modern Orthodox movement, which is more engaged with the world and open to secular studies but still committed to the observance of Jewish law.

**Conservative**, also called **Masorti**, Judaism is midway between Orthodoxy and Reform, intellectually liberal in belief, but conservative in religious practice. Like Modern Orthodoxy, it combines a positive attitude to modern culture, critical secular scholarship on Judaism's sacred texts, and a commitment to Jewish observance. Study of the holy texts is grounded in the belief that Judaism is constantly evolving to

meet the contemporary needs of the Jewish people. The Conservative service follows the traditional liturgy, and is mainly in Hebrew and similar to Orthodox services. As in Progressive Judaism, men and women sit together to worship and share equally in synagogue services, prayers and rituals; both men and women are ordained as ***rabbis***, Jewish spiritual leaders (also see p. 8).

**Progressive** Judaism (also 'Reform' or 'Liberal' Judaism) believes in the religious autonomy of the individual. Reform Jews believe that Jewish law (***Torah*** – see pp. 11, 12) was written by human authors with Divine inspiration and that Judaism continues to evolve to adapt to changes in society.

Progressive Jews therefore follow the rules and observances they regard as having contemporary relevance, but with a strong emphasis on maintaining Jewish tradition. In Progressive synagogues prayers are sometimes abridged, and some of the service is in English. Men and some women cover their heads during prayer. Men and women take part equally in synagogue services and in all rituals, and sit together during worship. Women as well as men are ordained as ***rabbis***.

Some Jews, despite not being committed to religious belief, still feel a connection to Jewish history, culture and ethics, and identify with a cultural Jewish heritage.

## Communities and cultures

The difference between the various Jewish traditions lies in the cultures developed in the countries in which Jews have lived. The ***Mizrachi Jews*** are the descendants of those who lived in Babylon, Persia and Arabia. The ***Ashkenazi*** tradition originated in the Franco-German region in Western Europe and developed further in Eastern Europe and Russia.

In contrast, the formative experience of the ***Sephardim*** originates in Spain, North Africa, Greece and Turkey. Each community has a distinctive pronunciation of Hebrew, with the ***Sephardi*** pronunciation being adopted in the modern spoken language of Israel.

There are also a number of other distinctive Jewish communities throughout the world, such as the Ethiopian and Indian Jews, many of whom have settled in Israel.

***Yiddish***, Ladino and Judeo-Arabic have developed as unique languages. ***Yiddish*** (first used 9th century) is a German dialect infused with Hebrew and Aramaic as well as Slavic languages and traces of Romance languages. Some ***Yiddish*** words have made their way into everyday language — for example, 'chutzpah', 'schmooze', 'nosh', and 'klutz'.

# The principles of Judaism

"What is hateful unto you, do not do to another. This is the whole ***Torah***. All the rest is commentary." (Hillel the Elder, c. 60 BCE – c. 10 CE)

## Monotheism

Judaism is the world's oldest monotheistic religion. Followers believe that G-d revealed himself through the Prophets of ancient times, as the creator and ruler of the universe and the source of moral law.

Practices and degrees of observance vary between followers, but the core focus is on the relationship between G-d and humankind. For many, the Land of Israel is also a central focus.

Jews believe in a single G-d, without shape or form, who is both the creator and ruler of the universe and prescribes a moral law for humanity. The concept has been described as ethical monotheism, since it joins a Divine concern for the perfection of humanity with the idea of a single omniscient G-d. It is a concept that has been adopted by Christianity and Islam with various modifications. The monotheistic idea has its foundation in the biblical account of Abraham dedicating himself and his descendants to G-d. (Christianity and Islam also describe themselves as Abrahamic faiths.)

## A way of life

In Judaism, both belief and actions are considered important. Unlike many other religions, Judaism does not focus much on abstract concepts. Although Jews have certainly given long consideration to the nature of G-d, existence, the universe, life and the afterlife, there is no mandated official, definitive belief on these subjects, outside of very general concepts. And there is substantial room for personal opinion on all of these matters.

Rather than just a set of beliefs, Judaism is a comprehensive way of life, filled with rules and practices that can affect every aspect: what you do when you wake up in the morning, what you can and cannot eat, what you can and cannot wear, how to groom yourself, how to conduct business, whom you can marry, how to observe the holidays and Shabbat, and, perhaps most important, how to treat G-d, other people, and animals. This set of laws and practices is known as ***halakha***. It is the Jewish style of living. Jews follow these laws and practices to varying degrees, depending on preference and the stream they follow.

Some (Orthodox Jews) say the laws are absolute, unchanging laws from G-d; some (Conservative Jews) say they are laws from G-d that change and evolve over time, while others (Reform Jews, Reconstructionist Jews) say that they are guidelines you can choose to follow or not.

## The role of the rabbi

Jewish spiritual leaders are called ***rabbis***. A ***rabbi*** is a teacher, a person sufficiently educated in ***halakha*** (Jewish law) and tradition to instruct the community and to answer questions and resolve disputes regarding ***halakha***.

Becoming a ***rabbi*** requires the study of Jewish texts and ***semikha*** (ordination) by another ***rabbi***. A person who has completed the necessary course of study is given a written document or diploma, which confirms his or her authority to make such decisions.

Not all ***rabbis*** act as leaders of congregations, but many have other roles in the community, and other professions.

## Women in Judaism

In traditional Judaism, women are for the most part seen as separate from but equal to men, with different roles. In other forms of Judaism, there is little or no distinction seen between the roles of men and women.

The equality of men and women begins at the highest possible level: G-d. In Judaism, G-d has never been viewed as exclusively male or

masculine. G-d is referred to in masculine form simply for convenience sake, because Hebrew has no neutral gender. Women have held positions of respect in Judaism since biblical times. Miriam the Prophet (13th/14th century BCE) is considered one of the liberators of the Children of Israel, along with her brothers Moses and Aaron. One of the 12 Judges of the Israelites in pre-Monarchic times was a woman — Deborah (c. 1200 BCE–1124 BCE). Seven of the 55 Prophets of the Old Testament were women.

The Ten Commandments (see pp. 3, 43) require respect for both mother and father. Both parents are equally entitled to honour and reverence.

Before the 20th century the rights of women in traditional Judaism were much greater than in the rest of Western civilisation. Women had the right to buy, sell and own property, and make their own contracts, rights women in Western countries did not have until about 100 years ago.

### Women's roles in different streams of Judaism

**Orthodox Judaism** is based on gendered understandings of Jewish practice — that is, that there are different roles for men and women in religious life. There are different opinions among Orthodox Jews concerning these differences. Most claim that men and women have complementary roles in their religious life, resulting in contrasting religious obligations. Others believe that some of these differences are a reflection not of religious law, but rather of cultural, social and historical traditions. In Orthodox Judaism women are not counted in the quorum for prayers and are not eligible to lead prayers in the synagogue.

**Conservative/Masorti Judaism:** The position of this stream towards women originally differed little from the Orthodox position. However, in recent years, based on Conservative interpretation of traditional texts and legal precedents, this stream has empowered women to fully participate in all aspects of Jewish ritual life. This has provided for women's active participation in many areas traditionally reserved for men.

**Reform (Progressive) Judaism** believes in the equality of men and women. The Reform movement rejects the idea that ***halakha*** (Jewish law) is the sole legitimate form of Jewish decision making, and holds that Jews can and must consider their conscience and the ethical principles inherent in Jewish tradition when deciding upon a right course of action. There is widespread consensus among Reform Jews that the traditional distinctions between the role of men and women are antithetical to the deeper ethical principles of Judaism.

This has enabled Reform communities to allow women to perform many rituals traditionally reserved for men and to become ***rabbis***.

# Jewish texts

## The Hebrew Bible

Jewish moral law originated in around 1490 BC, when the Jewish people received the Ten Commandments (see pp. 3, 43). The principles were incorporated in the central text of Judaism. This is the Hebrew Bible, described by Christians as the Old Testament. The Jewish people also received an unwritten elaboration called the Oral Law, which was later recorded in writing.

It was collated by the 120 members of the Great Assembly – a group of scribes, sages and Prophets who assumed the rein of Jewish leadership in the Second Temple period (see pp. 45, 46). They brought together the sacred literature which had been written during the preceding thousand years.

The Hebrew Bible is described by the Hebrew acronym ***Tanach***, as it is divided into three sections: ***Torah*** (Five Books of Moses), ***Nevi'im*** (Books of the Prophets) and ***Ketuvim*** (Holy Writings). There are 24 books altogether. The ***Torah*** contains 613 commandments, including the Ten Commandments (see pp. 3, 43).

The Hebrew Bible is a library of inspired literature, comprising a great storehouse of history, law and legend, poetry, philosophy and prophetic insight. It represents a significant Jewish contribution to human civilisation.

Over time, the term ***Torah*** has come to stand for the teachings and traditions of Judaism as a whole. It gave rise to many commentaries and interpretations, and eventually, the codification of the Oral Law. This culminated in the ***Mishnah*** (lit. 'repetition') in Galilee. The ***Mishnah*** is a collection of the legal and ritual rulings of the leading commentators, interspersed with history, legend and moral and religious philosophy.

## The literature of the Prophets

After the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE (see p. 45), the majestic literature of the Prophets emerged in response.

These works thunder against immorality, visualising peace on earth and foreseeing the end of the conquering empires and the restoration of Zion, a synonym for Jerusalem and for the Land of Israel as a whole.

## The Talmud

Ongoing commentary on the ***Mishna*** culminated in the ***Talmud***, a work of 63 volumes, the central text of Rabbinic Judaism. It is a combination of law, commentary and stories, the primary source of Jewish religious law and theology. Study of this work has been ongoing since its origins.

### The Ethics of the Fathers

"If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" (Ethics of the Fathers 1.14)

This is one of the sayings of Hillel the Elder (c. 60 BCE–c. 10 CE) included in the collection of aphorisms known as *The Ethics of the Fathers*. This is a tractate, or section, of the ***Talmud***, comprising a few hundred wise sayings by 72 ***sages*** between the first century BCE and the second century CE.

## A living tradition

A body of Jewish literature of liturgical poetry and religious commentary continues as part of a living tradition.

# Jewish prayer and worship

Jews worship in a synagogue, also called a ***shul***. The synagogue is the centre of the Jewish religious community, a place of prayer, study and education, welfare and charitable work, as well as a social centre. In the synagogue, prayer takes place facing Jerusalem.

While solitary prayer is viewed as valid, attending synagogue to pray with a ***minyan*** (10 adults — men, in Orthodox synagogues) is considered ideal. Observant Jews pray three times a day, although spontaneous prayer may be offered at any time. In many communities men and women sit separately in the synagogue — see p. 4.

In Judaism G-d accepts prayer in any language, but Hebrew, the sacred language of the Jews, is often the language of prayer. The amount of Hebrew used in the prayer service depends on the stream of Judaism.

In the synagogue, the ***rabbi*** and a ***chazzan*** lead the congregation in prayer.

The scrolls of the ***Torah*** (illustrated p. 12), the holiest objects in a synagogue, are kept in an alcove called the Ark. The ***Torah*** and the Book of the Prophets are read on the ***bimah***, an elevated podium visible to everyone in the synagogue.

In most synagogues, it is considered a sign of respect for all male attendees to wear a head covering, usually a dress hat or ***yarmulke***/***kippa***, usually provided near the front door for people who don't bring their own. Some women in Reform or Progressive synagogues may choose to wear them. Many married women will choose to cover their heads while in the synagogue.

# Jewish celebrations and festivals

## Shabbat

***Shabbat***, the observance of the Sabbath in Judaism, is the highlight of the Jewish week. Judaism distinguishes between two essentially different forms of time: ***kodesh*** (holy) and ***chol*** (secular). Jews consecrate the seventh day of the week as the epitome of sacred (holy) time.

***Shabbat*** is a day of rest, lasting from sunset on Friday to nightfall on Saturday. 'Rest' has complex definitions: absence of work is the central feature. Sabbath candles are lit before sunset at a family gathering in the home, and prayers of sanctification are recited over wine and bread. Sabbath services and celebrations are held in the synagogue. With prayer, song and study, the main features of ***Shabbat*** are ***menuchah*** (rest) and ***oneg*** ('joy'). ***Oneg Shabbat*** is the traditional Sabbath gathering of members of the community.

We read in the Book of Genesis that G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. ***Shabbat*** is one of the Ten Commandments that G-d transmitted to Moses at Mt Sinai several weeks after the ***Exodus*** from Egypt (see p. 43). ***Shabbat*** therefore commemorates both the creation of the world and the time that G-d took the Jews out of slavery.

***Shabbat*** is a time to spend with family and also to refrain from many things that make the work week so hectic, while embracing beautiful customs and rituals. This booklet sets out the basis for the way ***Shabbat*** is observed. There is a wide range in the manner that Jews today approach ***Shabbat*** and the many laws that accompany it. But it is customary for many Jews to gather with family and friends on Friday nights, to eat delicious food, and spend joyous time together. This concept is at the heart of the Jewish family and makes ***Shabbat*** different from the rest of the week.

### Lighting candles

Jews do not light fires on ***Shabbat***, so the Jewish ***sages*** declared that every Jewish home should have candles lit before the onset of ***Shabbat***. It is customarily the woman of the house who kindles the lights. A special blessing is said after the lighting.

### Wining and dining

The ***Torah*** commands Jews to "remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it." The ***sages*** understood this to mean that people must verbally declare the Sabbath a holy day, so on Friday night Jews say a special prayer over wine in a ritual known as ***kiddush*** (sanctification, or blessing). After ***kiddush***, ***Shabbat*** is celebrated with a hearty meal.

On ***Shabbat*** day, Saturday, ***cholent***, a traditional Jewish stew, is often eaten for lunch. The dish is cooked before Shabbat and then kept warm overnight 16 hours or more, so that hot food will be enjoyed without having to heat the food and break the prohibition of heating food on ***Shabbat***.

It is permissible to keep food warm on a gas flame or electric burner which has been turned on before Shabbat, as long as the source of heat is covered. This is usually done by covering the stovetop with a thin sheet of aluminium referred to as a 'blech' (***Yiddish*** for 'tin'). The meal begins with two loaves of bread, called ***challah***, as a reminder of the double portion of ***manna*** that fell every Friday when the Jews were in the desert.

## Shabbat service

On Friday night, before the evening services, Jews welcome in the ***Shabbat*** Queen with a special collection of psalms. The following morning's service includes the reading of the weekly portion of the ***Torah*** applicable to that week. Morning services are typically followed by a communal reception where the blessings on wine and bread are recited together. This may be followed by a light lunch, particularly if a congregant event has been celebrated during the morning service: a ***bar*** or ***bat mitzvah***, or the naming of a child.

Just as ***Shabbat*** was welcomed in with wine, it is ushered out with another cup of wine in a special ceremony known as ***Havdalah*** (separation). ***Havdalah*** includes blessings recited over fragrant spices, to revive souls that are feeling the loss of the special gift of ***Shabbat***, and a blessing for fire, to commemorate the first fire Adam and Eve lit after the very first ***Shabbat***.

## Forbidden on Shabbat

The ***sages*** enumerate 39 activities forbidden on ***Shabbat***. These prohibitions are very complex. Strictly Orthodox Jews observe them all, and other Jews do so to varying degrees. As named for modern times by religious leaders, they include driving, turning lights on or off or operating electrical appliances (including phones), cooking, carrying items while in the public domain, and doing paid work.

## Operating a Jewish hospital on Shabbat

The operation of a Jewish hospital on ***Shabbat*** would seem to be highly restricted by the laws of ***Shabbat*** and other prohibitions laid down by Jewish law. However, in Judaism the concept of ***pikuach nefesh***, 'to save a life', is a

priority, allowing a hospital and its staff to work on ***Shabbat***, use electricity, prepare food etc. Jewish law requires that we look after all the needs of our patients (whether Jew or non-Jew) in the same manner as we do during the week, and ensure their comfort and swift recovery.

### Caring for the sick on Shabbat and festivals

There is consensus among ***halachic*** authorities that life-saving actions override Sabbath and holiday prohibitions. For example, anyone in hospital or in labour, or in any situation in which fasting would endanger life, is not permitted to fast on ***Yom Kippur*** (see p. 21). When caring for a person who is dangerously sick, all Sabbath prohibitions can be overridden, even when the action isn't itself essentially life-saving. Care for the sick and the sanctity of life have always been a priority in Jewish life and law.

When it comes to someone in pain or otherwise sick, but not at risk of death, there are varying opinions about what is permitted and what is not, but it is important to note that the sages made considerations for such people and situations, and there are often solutions within Jewish law to provide care and comfort to anyone in need. If there is no imminent harm to patients, some Jews may postpone various forms of treatments or activities until after ***Shabbat***.

People working in this Hospital can check in with patients who observe ***Shabbat*** and find out what they can do to help them adhere to their preferred observance.

In the context of medical care, Jewish law allows for men and women to touch, but some observant Jews will request to have an aide or nurse of their own sex if possible. Safety and health are always the first priorities, so if these requests can't reasonably be met, this is acceptable according to Jewish law.

## Jewish festivals and holidays

Jewish holidays fall on different dates of the secular calendar from year to year. However, in the Jewish calendar they actually fall on the same day every year. Like the Chinese calendar, this is a lunar, not a solar, calendar, and loses about 11 days relative to the solar calendar every

year. Then, to make up for this, a month is added every two or three years. As a result, holidays will always fall within the same month or two.

## When does a Jewish holiday start and end?

A Jewish 'day' starts at sunset, so, like ***Shabbat***, a festival will start the evening before the day on the secular calendar. For example, if the date for Passover is April 24, families will be getting together for Passover dinner on the night of April 23.

In ancient times, before the use of a fixed calendar, in the ***diaspora*** an extra day was added to some holidays to ensure that the festival would be observed at the correct time. This custom is still followed by traditional Jews.

Here are the most commonly observed Jewish festivals and holidays, in the order in which they occur each year according to the secular calendar.

***Purim*** is a partying holiday celebrating the rescue, by Queen Esther and Mordechai, of the Jews from an evil figure called Haman, who was bent on genocide. This occurs in February or March, a month before Passover, and lasts for one day. On ***Purim***, people exchange gifts of food and drink, wear fun costumes, and read the story of Esther.

**Passover (*Pesach*)** marks the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Passover is celebrated for eight days in the month of ***Nissan***, which corresponds to March or April.

Almost all Jews observe Passover to some extent, often getting together at a relative's home for a ritual dinner (called a ***seder***) on the first and second nights of the holiday. The ***seder*** includes foods that symbolise the bitterness of slavery and the sweetness of freedom, and the story of the ***Exodus*** from Egypt is retold. Leavened bread or

other leavened food may not be eaten or owned during the eight days of the festival, in memory of the fact that the ancestors left Egypt in a hurry to escape slavery, not having time to wait for their bread to rise. On the first two and last two days of Passover, observant Jews do not work, go to school or carry out any business.

***Yom Hashoah*** was established in Israel in 1959 by law — a day set aside for Jews to remember the Holocaust, on the 27th of the Jewish month of ***Nissan***, the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. '***Shoah***' means 'catastrophe' in Hebrew. Israel comes to a stop at 10am as the siren is sounded around the country for two minutes. Cars on the highways stop and drivers and passengers get out and mark the two minutes.

***Yom Hazikaron*** is the day of national remembrance in Israel to mourn and remember all soldiers and others who lost their lives in the struggle to defend the State of Israel. The day begins with a siren at 8pm for 1 minute, and a 2-minute siren sounds the next day at 11am. As soon as it is heard, Israeli citizens stop whatever they are doing, and stand to honour those they have lost. People driving on highways stop their cars in the middle of the road to stand in remembrance.

This day is followed by ***Yom Ha'atzmaut*** ("Day of Independence"), the national day of Israel, commemorating the Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948. It is marked by official and unofficial ceremonies and observances to recognise that Israelis owe the existence of the state to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives.

***Shavuot*** falls in the month of ***Sivan***, which coincides with May or June. It commemorates the giving of the ***Torah*** and the Ten Commandments at Mt Sinai and is an occasion for renewed dedication to the ***Torah***. It falls seven weeks after ***Pesach***. The period of 49 days between these two festivals marks the transition from slavery to the freedom to choose to serve G-d. ***Shavuot*** was also the first day on which individuals could bring the ***bikkurim*** (first fruits of the harvest which were taken to the Temple in Jerusalem to express their gratitude to G-d). Today the festival

is observed by reading a special poem, an exaltation of G-d, in the morning synagogue service, celebrating with meals that feature dairy products, decorating homes and synagogues with greenery, and engaging in all-night ***Torah*** study.

***Tisha B'Av:*** A fast day commemorating the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and other tragedies. Occurs in late July or August. Work is not forbidden on this day. Jews abstain from many pleasurable activities on the night and day of Tisha B'Av, as they are in mourning for the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Israel.

***Rosh Hashanah*** is the Jewish New Year, the start of the new year in the Jewish calendar, at the beginning of the month of ***Tishrei*** (September or October). A two-day holiday, even in Israel, it is the anniversary of Creation, a solemn, spiritual holiday spent in prayer. It is also traditionally a time when families gather for large family meals.

This is the time that G-d reviews the world and examines the deeds of humans. The ***shofar*** (a ram's horn) is blown as a call to spiritual wakefulness. ***Rosh Hashana*** and ***Yom Kippur*** and the days in between are known as The Days of Awe or the Ten Days of Penitence, are a time for personal resolutions and healing relationships.

***Yom Kippur*** is the Jewish Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, a 25-hour day of fasting and repentance in order to reconcile with the Creator for the mistakes made over the past year. It is a time of abstinence, largely spent in praying for forgiveness of sins against humans and G-d. Prayer, repentance and charity lead to forgiveness from G-d, while restitution is also required to achieve forgiveness from other people.

***Sukkot*** begins on the fifth day after ***Yom Kippur***, in late September or October, and lasts for 7 days. The "festival of booths", this holiday recalls the temporary shelters and the vulnerability of the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. It is commemorated by building a temporary shelter (called a ***succah***) in the garden or on the balcony, and eating meals in it. The ***succah*** symbolises the fragility of life and the need for G-d's protection. Some people spend considerable time in the ***succah***, even sleeping there.

The **four species** are mentioned in the ***Torah*** (*Leviticus* 23:40) as relevant to ***Sukkot***. Three types of branches and one type of fruit are held together — the ***etrog*** (citron fruit), ***lulav*** (frond of date palm) ***hadass*** (myrtle bough) and ***aravah*** (willow branch) — and waved in a special ceremony during this festival.

The waving of the plants is a ***mitzvah*** (commandment) prescribed by the ***Torah***, containing symbolic allusions to a Jew's service to G-d. Jewish unity is one of the central ***Sukkot*** themes. The four kinds of plants symbolise four types of Jews, with differing levels of ***Torah*** knowledge and observance. Bringing them together represents Jews' unity as a nation, despite external differences.

***Shemini Atzeret*** and ***Simchat Torah*** fall immediately after ***Sukkot***. ***Shemini Atzeret*** is an extra day tacked onto the end of ***Sukkot***. The prayer for rain, ***Tefilat Geshem***, is the only ritual that is unique to ***Shemini Atzeret***.

***Simchat Torah*** celebrates the completion of the annual cycle of ***Torah*** readings in ***Shabbat*** services. Celebrations include dancing with the ***Torah***. Observant Jews take both of these days off from work.

***Chanukah*** The Festival of Lights, a minor holiday in December, commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after the Maccabees successfully revolted against the Hellenic oppressors who had conquered Judea and defiled the Temple.

For the rededication, the victorious Jews needed to light the Temple's candlestick, the ***Menorah*** (see p. 40), but had only enough oil to last one day; it would take eight days to prepare more. Miraculously, the small supply lasted eight days, symbolising the survival of the monotheistic Jewish tradition despite the onslaught of paganism.

Eight days of lighting candles commemorate this holiday. The miracle of the oil is also remembered by eating potato pancakes and doughnuts, which are foods made with oil. Many Jewish parents give their children gifts during ***Chanukah***.

**Minor fasts:** There are four other fast days, observed from sunrise to sunset, at various times in the year. Jews observing these fasts usually just require sensitivity to the fact that they are not eating or drinking.

# Jewish life cycle events

Like the Jewish year, which is marked by the commemoration of important times, the life of a Jewish person is characterised by religious commemorations of milestones. Family and community come together to mark special times from birth to death with prayer and celebration.

## Birth

Through the ***Brit Milah,*** male circumcision, a Jewish boy is said to enter the Covenant of Abraham, the founder of the Jewish religion. Abraham was commanded by G-d to circumcise himself and all his descendants as a sign of the covenant with G-d. It takes place on the eighth day after birth unless health considerations make this timing unfavourable; if so, it is postponed until a physician gives permission.

Following the circumcision, the child's Hebrew name is announced. The connection between circumcision and naming derives from when Abraham was given the law of circumcision, and had his name changed by G-d from Abram to Abraham. Jewish girls are given their name in the synagogue following their birth and are sometimes welcomed into the community at home ceremonies, often held within a month after birth.

## Bar and Bat Mitzvah

Orthodox Judaism teaches that the "age of maturity" — the time young people have developed enough understanding to be responsible for their actions — is 13 for boys and 12 for girls. In other branches of Judaism, it is 13 for both boys and girls. At this time a young person becomes responsible for the performance of Jewish obligations and can no longer rely entirely on their parents. To mark this change of status, celebrations are usually held. When a boy reaches 13, for example, he

celebrates his ***Bar Mitzvah*** by receiving an ***aliyah*** — he is called to the ***bimah*** to make a blessing over the ***Torah*** in synagogue. He often recites part of the service that day too.

For Conservative, Progressive and Reform Jews, the same celebration is held for girls who turn 13. For Orthodox girls celebrating their ***Bat Mitzvah***, traditions vary — some simply hold a party, and others are engaged in part of the service in the synagogue. For girls in Progressive congregations, the ***Bat Mitzvah*** is held in the synagogue and takes the form of the boy's ***Bar Mitzvah.***

## Marriage

Judaism sees marriage as the next significant stage of life after adolescence. Making the decision to leave the parental home and to share one's life with another person, in love and respect, is seen to be critical to the ongoing success and continuity of the Jewish people. There are a series of rituals and ceremonies to mark this milestone.

The marriage ceremony takes place beneath a ***chuppah***, a canopy representing the new home of the ***kallah*** (bride) and ***chatan*** (groom). The term ***chuppah*** is also used to refer to the actual wedding ceremony.

Immediately before the ceremony, the ***chatan*** authorises two people to act as witnesses to his marriage. These witnesses then sign the marriage document, known as the ***ketubah***.

The ***chatan*** is then led to where the ***kallah*** is waiting. He lowers her veil over her face as a sign of the modesty expected from a married woman. This ceremony, which includes a poignant blessing from father to daughter as she embarks on married life, is known as the ***bedekin***. Some also believe this ceremony is for the ***chatan*** to check the identity of his future wife, and not make the same mistake as Jacob:

he married Leah instead of Rachel, because her face was covered and he couldn't see her true identity.

Soon after these rituals are completed, the various parties to the wedding find themselves beneath the ***chuppah***. A series of blessings are recited, the ***rabbi*** gives a short address, the wedding ring is handed over, the ***ketubah*** is read out, more blessings are pronounced, and the groom breaks a glass under foot. This is to remind everyone present that, in spite of the joy of the moment, Jewish history in general and the history of Jerusalem in particular have contained many sad moments.

The priestly blessing is then recited and, following a brief interlude when bride and groom share time alone with each other, all the participants and their guests make their way to the reception. Eating and drinking, singing and dancing, speeches and toasts are the order of the day.

For observant couples, the wedding festivities are extended over a whole week and special banquets are organised by friends and family in their honour. This week has a title. It is known as ***Sheva Brachot*** (Seven Blessings), because seven additional blessings are added to the prayers said after a meal during the first week of the marriage when the bride and groom are in attendance.

## Death

In Judaism, life is valued above almost all else. It is said that 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 in the ***Torah***, 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. Doctors are permitted to answer emergency calls on ***Shabbat***, even though this may violate many ***Shabbat*** prohibitions. The ***Mishnah*** teaches that abortions are mandatory where necessary to save the life of a mother.

Because life is deemed so valuable, Jews are not permitted to do anything to 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, everything possible is done to ease pain and suffering, and Jewish law gives permission to cease artificially prolonging life: this would not be considered as hastening death, but merely as ceasing a therapy.

In Judaism, death is seen as a natural process: like life, it has meaning, and both life and death are part of G-d's plan. In addition, Jews have a firm belief in the existence of an afterlife, a world to come, although Judaism does not focus on the details of the afterlife.

Mourning practices in Judaism are extensive, but they are not an expression of fear of or distaste for death. Jewish practices relating to death and mourning have two purposes: to show respect for the dead and reverence for their dignity (***kavod ha-met***), and to comfort the living ***(menachem availim)***, who will miss the deceased.

**Care for the dead**

As a sign of respect, the body is not left alone from the time of death until after burial. The people who sit with the dead body are called ***shomerim***, meaning 'guards' or 'keepers'. As respect for the dead body is paramount, the ***shomerim*** may not eat, drink, or perform any commandment in the presence of the dead. This would be considered mocking the dead person, because they can no longer do these things.

Most Jewish communities have an organisation to care for the dead, the ***Chevra Kadisha*** (the 'Holy Society'), a volunteer burial society. The volunteers' work is considered extremely meritorious, because they are performing a service for someone who can never repay them.

In Judaism the deceased person is buried as soon as possible. Burial takes place once the ***Chevra Kadisha*** has prepared the body. The volunteers wash the body, wrap it in a plain linen shroud and place it in a simple wooden coffin. In death, rich and poor are treated alike. The dress of the body and the coffin should be simple, so a poor person doesn't receive less honour in death than a rich person. No profit may be made from funerals, and any surplus is given to charity.

Even after death, the body must be treated with reverence. ***Kavod ha-met*** governs the manner in which the body is washed and dressed, purified and guarded until the burial. Burning the body is seen as a desecration of what was once holy. The body is not embalmed, and no organs or fluids may be removed. However, Jewish law permits and encourages donation of an organ from a living person to save another's life (***pikuach nefesh***), where the donor's health will not suffer notably. Donation of an organ from a dead person is also permitted because the subsequent burial of the donee will satisfy the requirement of burying the entire body. Autopsies in general are discouraged as desecration of the body, but are permitted to save a life or as required by local law.

Burial of the body is seen as a biblical imperative: G-d created Man from dust, and people should be returned to dust. Cremation involves destruction of the body, so it is impossible to fulfil this commandment. Jewish mystical tradition holds that the soul separates gradually from the body after death, and burial allows for this. Of Judaism's three main branches, Conservative, Orthodox and Reform/Progressive, only the latter permits cremation**,** but without enthusiasm.

The presence of a dead body is considered a source of ritual impurity. People who have been in the presence of a body must wash their hands before entering a home. This is done to symbolically remove spiritual impurity, not physical uncleanness, and applies regardless of whether or not you have touched the body.

Jewish law forbids open casket ceremonies: exposing a body is considered disrespectful, because it allows not only friends but also enemies to view the dead. Flowers should not be sent to a Jewish funeral or to the home while a family is in the seven-day mourning period (***shiva***, see p. 29): flowers fade away and die but the soul lives on. It is customary to leave a small stone on the grave (illustrated on p. 26) whenever visiting the cemetery, a reminder that when we are faced with the fragility of life there is permanence amidst the pain. This also serves as a sign to others that someone has visited the grave, and symbolises the lasting impact of the life and memory of the deceased.

**Mourning**

Jewish mourning practices can be broken into several periods of decreasing intensity, allowing full expression of sorrow while discouraging excessive grief and allowing the mourner to gradually return to a normal life.

When a close relative (parent, sibling, spouse or child) first hears of the death of a relative, it is traditional to express the initial grief by ***keriyah***, tearing one's clothing. This symbolises the way the death has torn, or broken, the mourner's heart. The tear is made over the heart if the deceased is a parent, or on the right side of the chest for other relatives.

From the time of death to burial, the mourner's sole responsibility is caring for the deceased and preparing for the burial. In this period, known as ***aninut***, the mourners are exempt from all positive commandments ('thou shalt' statements), because the preparations take first priority. This period usually lasts a day or two; Judaism requires prompt burial. The family should be left alone and allowed the full expression of grief. No condolence calls or visits should be made.

At the start of the funeral ceremony, everyone in the immediate family has a ***keriyah*** made in one of their outer garments. The mourner recites the blessing describing G-d as 'the True Judge', an acceptance of G-d's taking of the life of a relative. After the burial, a close relative, neighbour or friend prepares the first meal for the mourners, ***se'udat havra'ah*** ('meal of condolence'). This traditionally includes eggs (a symbol of life), and bread, which also indicates that life continues. The meal is for the family only, not visitors. After this time, condolence calls are permitted. The next period of mourning is known as ***shiva*** ('seven', because it lasts seven days, from the day of burial to the morning of the seventh day after burial).

***Shiva*** is observed by parents, children, spouses and siblings of the deceased, preferably all together in the home of the deceased. Mourners sit on low stools or the floor instead of chairs. They should not wear leather shoes or cosmetics, shave or cut their hair, work, or do anything for

comfort or pleasure, such as bathe, have sex, put on fresh clothing, or study ***Torah*** (other than ***Torah*** related to mourning and grief). They should wear the clothes they tore when they learnt of the death, or at the funeral. Mirrors in the house are covered to show vanity is rejected.

Family, friends, co-workers and neighbours come to console the bereaved and share memories of the departed, customarily bringing food to spare the family the burden of cooking. Prayer services are held at the ***shiva*** site, with friends, neighbours and relatives making up the ***minyan***. When leaving a house of mourning, it is traditional to say, "May the L-rd comfort you with all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem."

The next period of mourning is known as ***Sheloshim*** ('thirty'), because it lasts until the 30th day after burial. During this period, mourners don't attend parties or celebrations, shave or cut their hair, or listen to music.

The final period of formal mourning, ***avelut***, is observed for a parent only, for 12 months after the burial. Mourners avoid parties, celebrations and concerts. For 11 months of that period, from the time of burial, the son (and in some communities also the daughters) of the deceased recites the mourner's ***Kaddish*** (hymn of praise to G-d) three times daily.

After ***avelut*** is complete, the family of the deceased is not permitted to continue formal mourning; however, the deceased person continues to be acknowledged. Every year, on the anniversary of the death, family members observe the deceased's ***Yahrzeit*** (***Yiddish***, lit. 'anniversary'). On the ***Yahrzeit***, sons, and in some communities the daughters also, recite ***Kaddish*** and make an ***aliyah*** in synagogue if possible, and all mourners light a 24-hour candle at home in honour of the decedent. During synagogue services on ***Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret***, the last day of Passover, and ***Shavuot***, after the ***haftarah***, close relatives recite the memorial prayer, ***Yizkor*** ('May He remember ...'). ***Yahrzeit*** candles are also lit on these days.


A core Jewish principle is the belief in a spiritual afterlife. The place the soul goes to is called the World to Come. The Jewish soul wants to be close to G-d, a privilege earned by performing G-d's Will while on Earth.

# The joy of Judaism

*Top*: Making *hamantaschen*, traditional food to celebrate *Purim*

*Bottom*: The Purim tradition of *mishloach manot* — gifts for friends and family: Wolper Jewish Hospital receives *Purim* gifts for patients donated by a Jewish day school

*Top*: Celebrating *Sukkoth* in a traditional *succah*
*Bottom*: *Shabbat* dinner for patients and community at Wolper Jewish Hospital, a regular event. This photo was taken before *Shabbat* came in

*Top*: Jewish wedding celebrations feature communal dancing and high spirits
*Bottom*: (left) The *Rosh Hashanah* symbols of apples and honey, and (right) individual honey cakes for Wolper patients to celebrate the Jewish New Year during the COVID-19 pandemic

# Jewish dietary laws

***Kashrut*** is the term for the set of Jewish religious dietary laws. Food that may be consumed according to ***halakha*** (Jewish law) is termed ***kosher***. This means that a given product is permitted and acceptable.

The laws and principles of ***kashrut*** are given in the ***Torah*** and are classified as 'statutes' — Jews are commanded to uphold the laws though not given a reason for them.

**At Wolper Jewish Hospital, Jewish dietary laws are applied to the highest degree so that every member of the Jewish community, no matter their level of observance, can feel comfortable as a patient.**

## Meat

The ***Torah*** says that Jews are only allowed to eat meat from certain animals, and there are very strict laws concerning how the animal is slaughtered and what happens afterwards. Red meat can only be eaten from animals that have cloven hooves and chew the cud, including goats, sheep, cattle and deer.

In addition to the rule that meat is ***kosher*** only if it comes from a ***kosher*** species, there is also a requirement for proper ritual slaughter (called ***shechita***) of the animal. This applies to land animals and birds only, not to fish. It is forbidden to eat an animal that died on its own, for example, from disease or injury. Also, certain parts of the animal are not allowed to be eaten:

- the blood
- fat called ***helev*** (the dense fat around the internal organs, 'suet')
- the ***gid hanashe***, the sciatic nerve. This is very difficult to remove.

**Why are Jews forbidden to eat blood?**
The ***Torah*** says that eating blood is not allowed because it is the soul and the life force of the animal. An egg with blood in it must be thrown away.

**Performing shechita**
***Kosher*** meat and poultry must be prepared by ***shechita,*** believed to be the most painless means of slaughter, by a trained and certified ***shochet***, involving a swift cut by a razor-sharp knife. The knife used must be very sharp, and free from notches that might tear the flesh.

**Soaking and salting**
After ***shechita***, the meat is soaked and salted to ensure that any blood is removed from it before consumption. The meat is rinsed off under water, then left to soak for 30 minutes in lukewarm water. This opens up the pores of the meat so that any blood may more easily be absorbed out of it. This process, usually carried out by a ***kosher*** butcher, is known as ***kashering*** (making ***kosher***) since it draws out the blood from the meat. Once it is completed, the meat is considered ***kosher*** and fit for consumption.

## Milk and meat

A law prohibiting the mixture of meat and milk is stated three times in the ***Torah***, resulting in its being taken particularly seriously, although no reason is given. To ensure that accidental mixtures of even traces of these foods are avoided, ***kosher*** households have separate sets of utensils for meat and milk. This extends to having separate sinks and dishwashers, pots and pans, cutlery and crockery. Food that does not have any meat or milk in it is said to be ***pareve***. This means that the food is neutral and can be eaten with either meat or milk. Examples include fruit and vegetables, eggs, fish and drinks other than milk.

**Eating milk after meat**
After eating meat, a waiting period is required until foods containing milk are allowed to be eaten. Customs vary as to the length of the waiting period, but most people wait either three or six hours.

**Eating meat after milk**
Milk products are digested much faster than meat products, therefore the wait does not have to be as long as it is for meat. The custom is to wait for half an hour after eating milk before eating meat. After eating dairy one needs simply to wash the hands and mouth before eating meat. Some have the custom of waiting either 30 minutes or an hour before doing so.

## Fish and meat

Another rule of ***kashrut*** is not to eat fish and meat together, but for a different reason than that for separating the consumption of meat and milk. It is simply that the **rabbis**, in support of a healthy lifestyle, believed it would be physically harmful to the body to eat the two types of food together. It is perfectly acceptable to eat meat immediately after fish, and vice versa.

## *Kosher* food types

**Birds**
There are no specific rules for which birds are permitted to be eaten and which are not. Instead, the ***Torah*** provides a long list of forbidden birds: eagles, ossifrages, ospreys, kites, vultures, bats, storks, ibis, ravens, pelicans, swans, herons, magpies and hoopoes. As a result, birds of prey are considered not ***kosher***. Species such as chickens, ducks, turkeys and quail are considered to be ***kosher***.

**Fish**
There are certain rules about which fish are ***kosher***. An important rule is that a fish needs both fins and scales in order to be ***kosher***. Shellfish, eels, shark and leatherjackets are all examples of non-***kosher*** fish. Fish should be bought only from a ***kosher*** certified store, unless it has the skin attached, to confirm that it is from a ***kosher*** species.

**Milk**
Milk is ***kosher*** only if it comes from a ***kosher*** species of animal. So, for example, cow or goat milk is ***kosher***, but pig or horse milk is not.

**Cheese**

Cheese can be ***kosher*** only if made from ***kosher*** milk — that is, from milk from a ***kosher*** species of animal. Further, cheese is ***kosher*** only if made from vegetarian rennet. Rennet, an enzyme that speeds up the setting process, was originally obtained from the stomach of an animal and hence is considered meat.

**Wine and grape juice**
Both must come only from a rabbinically approved source.

**Fruit and vegetables**
These are ***kosher*** in their fresh state, but the ***Torah*** prohibits the consumption of all insects. Therefore, when preparing fruit and vegetables, great care must be taken to ensure they don't shelter or contain any insects.

**Baked goods**
Many biscuits, cakes and breads are baked in ovens used to bake non-***kosher*** products. The butter or margarine in these items may also not be ***kosher***, as for the fat used to grease the tins or trays, as it may come from animals. The ingredients list will not show this, so only purchasing ***kosher***-certified biscuits, cakes or breads offers certainty.

**Margarine**


This can contain fats and emulsifiers of animal origin. Only margarine produced under Rabbinical supervision is ***kosher***.

**Processed foods**

Increasingly, more products carry a ***kosher*** label, like the KA (Kashrut Authority) logo. For this label to be applied, every ingredient in every product has to go through a thorough inspection for the presence of non-***kosher*** substances.

Even where ingredients are considered acceptable, the product may still be non-***kosher*** because of other unlisted agents used in its manufacture, such as agents used to grease the production line.

Even when a product is said to be vegetarian, it may have been prepared on a piece of equipment previously used for making meat, without sufficient washing.

**Utensils**

Utensils (pots, pans, plates, cutlery, etc.) must also be ***kosher***. A utensil picks up the ***kosher*** 'status' (meat, dairy, ***pareve***, or ***treif*** — not ***kosher***) of the food that is cooked in it or eaten off it, and transmits that status back to the next food cooked in it or eaten off it.

Therefore, if you cook chicken soup in a saucepan, the pan becomes meat. If you thereafter use the same saucepan to heat up some warm milk, the ***fleishik*** *(meat)* status of the pan is transmitted to the milk, and the ***milchik*** (dairy) status of the milk is transmitted to the pan, making both the pan and the milk a forbidden mixture.

# Jewish signs and symbols

## Chai


This symbol, commonly seen on necklaces and other jewellery and ornaments, is the Hebrew word ***chai*** (life). Some say it refers to the Living G-d, others that it reflects Judaism's emphasis on the importance of life. Whatever the reason, the concept of ***chai*** is important in Jewish culture. The typical Jewish toast is ***l'chayim*** (to life). Each Hebrew letter has a numerical equivalent, and the letters of ***chai*** together add up to 18. As a result of its connection to the word for life, the number 18 is considered a special number in Jewish tradition. For this reason, Jews frequently make gifts or charitable contributions in multiples of $18.

## Hamesh hand/hamsa

The ***hamesh*** hand or ***hamsa*** is a popular motif in Jewish jewellery. In any Judaica gift shop you will find necklaces and bracelets bearing this inverted hand with thumb and pinkie pointing outward. The design commonly includes an eye or various Hebrew letters in the centre of the hand.

There is nothing exclusively Jewish about the ***hamesh*** hand. Arab cultures often refer to it as the Hand of Fatima, which represents the Hand of G-d. Similar designs are common in many cultures. In many cultures, this hand pattern represents a protection against the evil eye (a malignant spiritual influence caused by the jealousy of others), and the evil eye has historically been a popular superstition among Jews.

## Magen David

The ***Magen David*** (the Shield of David, or, as more commonly known, the Star of David) is the symbol most commonly associated with Judaism today. This is a relatively new Jewish symbol, supposed to represent the shape of King David's shield (or perhaps the emblem on it). But there is no support for this claim in early Rabbinic literature.

The symbol of intertwined equilateral triangles is common in the Middle East and North Africa, and is thought to bring good luck. It appears occasionally in early Jewish artwork, but never as an exclusively Jewish symbol. At that time the nearest thing to an 'official' Jewish symbol was the ***Menorah*** (see below).

The ***Magen David*** gained popularity as a symbol of Judaism when it was adopted as the emblem of the Zionist movement in 1897, but continued to be a controversial symbol for many more years. When the modern State of Israel was founded, there was much debate over whether this symbol should be used on the flag. Today it is the universally recognised symbol of Jewry. It appears on the flag of the State of Israel, and the Israeli equivalent of the Red Cross is known as the Red ***Magen David***.

## Menorah

One of the oldest symbols of the Jewish faith, a seven-branched candelabrum used in the Temple. The ***kohanim*** *(*priests) 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 the mission of Jews is to be 'a light unto the nations' (*Isaiah* 42:6). The ***sages*** emphasise that light is not violent: Israel is to accomplish its mission by setting an example, not by using force.

## Mezuzah

'And you shall write [the words that I command you today] on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.' (Deuteronomy 6:9, 11:19)

On the doorposts of Jewish homes there is a small case like the one pictured here, commonly known as a ***mezuzah*** (doorpost). The ***mezuzah*** is not, as some suppose, a good luck charm, and does not have any connection with the lamb's blood placed on the doorposts of the Jews in slavery in Egypt. Rather, it is a constant reminder of G-d's presence and ***mitzvot***.

The words of the ***Shema*** are written on a tiny scroll of parchment, along with the words of a companion passage. Many Jews say the ***Shema,*** an important Jewish prayer declaring the belief that there is only one G-d, every morning and evening, The Name of G-d is written on the back of the scroll, which is then rolled up and placed in the case, so that the first letter (the letter ***Shin***) is visible. Alternatively, ***Shin*** is added on the outside of the case. The case and scroll are then nailed or affixed at an angle to the doorpost on the right side of the entry to the building or room.

Every time an observant Jew passes through a door with a ***mezuzah*** on the doorpost, they touch the ***mezuzah*** and then kiss the fingers that touched it, expressing love and respect for G-d and his ***mitzvot*** (commandments) and reminding themselves of the ***mitzvot*** contained within the ***mezuzah***.

## Tallis or tallit, tzitzit

A ***tallit*** is a fringed shawl worn by Jewish men during morning prayers. ***Tzitzit*** are specially knotted ritual fringes, or tassels, worn in antiquity by Israelites and today by observant Jews, attached to the four corners of the ***tallit*** or ***tallis***. They are also worn on the four corners of a special small ***tallit*** called a ***tallit katan***, which observant Jews wear under their clothes. Some traditional Jews let the ***tzitzit*** from their ***tallit katan*** hang out, while others tuck them in.

## Yarmulke/kippa/skullcap

The most commonly recognised Jewish garment is actually the one with the least religious significance. This is the skullcap, ***yarmulke*** in ***Yiddish***, ***kippa*** in Hebrew.

It is an ancient practice for Jews to cover their heads during prayer, showing respect for G-d. This probably derives from the belief in Eastern cultures that covering the head is a sign of respect (in Western cultures, it is a sign of respect to *remove* one's hat).

Further, in ancient Rome servants were required to cover their heads while free men were not. Jews covered their heads to show they were servants of G-d. In medieval times, Jews covered their heads as a reminder that G-d was always above them.

Whatever the reason, however, covering the head has always been regarded as more a custom than a ***mitzvah***.

# A (very brief) history of Judaism

Judaism could be described as a religious culture, originating in the historical narrative of the Jewish people. This timeline outlines milestones in the history and religion of the Jewish people.

## c. 20th century BCE

The Biblical history of the Jews began with Abraham, who rejected the worship of idols, and declared the adherence of his people to a single incorporeal G-d.

Abraham journeyed from Mesopotamia (Iraq today) to the land known as Canaan, and received the Divine promise of descendants and a land. Canaan was situated in the territory of the southern Levant, which today encompasses Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, and the southern portions of Syria and Lebanon.

This covenant was renewed with his grandson Jacob, renamed 'Israel ('he who struggles with G-d', following a metaphorical wrestling with an angel). Hence the names "The Children of Israel" and "The Land of Israel".

## 13th century BCE

The ***Exodus*** of the Jews: under the leadership of the prophet and leader Moses, the people of Israel were liberated from slavery in Egypt and began their 40-year journey across the desert to the land of Canaan.

Moses received the Law in the form of the Ten Commandments at Mt Sinai. The Jews settled in the Land of Israel, as described in the Books of Joshua, Judges and Samuel.

## 3rd century BCE

Jewish communities began to spring up in the Aegean islands, Greece, Asia Minor, Cyrenaica, Italy and Egypt. The proportion of Jews in the diaspora in relation to the size of the nation increased steadily

throughout the Hellenistic era (321–31 BCE) and was very high in the early Roman period, particularly in Alexandria.

### c. 1st century BCE

Jewish life reached a peak of achievement with the kingdoms of David and Solomon. The First Temple was built in Jerusalem by King Solomon and dedicated in about 950 BCE.

A liturgy comprising the poetry of the Psalms was sung in the Temple. The Temple was administered by priests, scribes and musicians. In order to become a priest, one had to be the son of a priest and be pure in mind and body. Training for priests included not only religious matters but also Jewish law, literature, and tradition.

At this time the court system was run by the Sanhedrin, assemblies of elders appointed to sit as a tribunal in every city in the ancient Land of Israel. They followed rules of evidence which ensured that leniency prevailed and that the death penalty was rarely, if ever, imposed. Sophisticated rules protected women's rights and prevented exploitation in property and financial transactions.

Judaism now celebrated festivals of national pilgrimage: ***Pesach***, ***Shavuot***, and ***Sukkot*** (see also pp. 19, 20, 22). The ancient Israelites living in the Kingdom of Judah would make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem, as commanded by the ***Torah***. In Jerusalem, they would participate in festivities and ritual worship in conjunction with the services of the priests at the Temple. Since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Jews have not been obliged to make pilgrimages.

After Solomon's death the land was divided between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, as described in the Books of Kings and Chronicles.

### 722 BCE

Jewish spiritual leaders had to contend with the rise of the imperial powers of Assyria and Babylon, both centred in what is now Iraq. In this year the northern kingdom was destroyed and the Assyrian conqueror deported the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to Assyria. At this time the earlier Books of the Prophets were written.

### 586 BCE

The first Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, and most of the population was exiled to Mesopotamia, which became a renowned seat of Jewish learning. A significant Jewish community remained in the area, now Iraq, until most of its Jews fled from persecution in 1948.

After the overthrow of the Kingdom of Judah, the Jews had two principal cultural centres: Babylonia and the Land of Israel.

### c. 530 BCE

After King Cyrus of Persia defeated the Babylonians, the Jews were allowed to return from exile. King Cyrus permitted the rebuilding of the Temple, which was called the Second Temple.

Ezra the Scribe established the public reading of the ***Torah***, and this still continues as a central part of the synagogue service.

### c. 410 BCE – c. 310 BCE

The Hebrew Bible (the 'Old Testament') was compiled by the 120 members of the Great Assembly (see p. 11).

### 169 BCE

The Jewish Maccabees revolted against the successors of Alexander the Great. This conflict reflects the contest between Hellenism and the Jewish tradition at the time.

Under the rule of the descendants of the Maccabees, the concept of biblical commentary was developed.

### 6 CE

The Romans annexed Judaea, and only the Jews in Babylonia remained outside of Roman rule. Unlike the Greek-speaking Hellenised Jews in the

west, the Jewish communities in Babylonia and Judea continued using Aramaic as a primary language.

## 70 CE

After a four-year war in which the Jews revolted against Roman oppression, the Romans destroyed the Second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. This is the traditional date for the start of Jewish dispersion.

## 135 CE

A second Jewish revolt was defeated by the Romans. It is recorded that 580,000 Jewish soldiers were killed and over 900 villages and towns destroyed. The Emperor Hadrian decreed that the name 'Judea' be replaced by 'Syria Palestina' or Philistine Syria (though the Philistines had ceased to exist 700 years earlier.) A temple to Jupiter was built in Jerusalem, which was renamed Aelia Capitolina, and the dispersion of the Jewish people as captives, slaves and refugees accelerated.

## 2nd to 6th centuries CE

The post-Temple concept of worship in the synagogue and the form of the liturgy developed during this period. The liturgy, still followed today, includes daily prayers for the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem. An order of prayer was established by the ***sages***, who came to be known as ***rabbis***, and Rabbinic Judaism became predominant.

The ***rabbis*** began teaching that there was an Oral Law in addition to the written law, Jewish religious law believed to have been passed down by oral tradition. This was eventually codified in the ***Talmud.***

The written compilation of the ***Mishnah*** was completed around the third century, and the ***Talmud*** in the 6th century CE.

## 711 CE

Jews arrived in Spain following the Muslim conquest, and enjoyed a "golden age" of prosperity and intellectual achievement. This continued until forced conversions to Islam begin in the twelfth century. The Christians "reconquered" Spain over the next three centuries.

## 800 CE

Emperor Charlemagne invited Jewish communities to settle in France and Germany to develop international trade. Jewish trade routes reached to India and China, and Jews were later invited to settle by emerging medieval kingdoms in Europe, including Norman England. The Medieval ***rabbis*** in the Rhineland were active in biblical commentary and the development of Jewish law, making important improvements in the status of women.

## 1099

Jews were massacred as the Crusaders marched through the Rhineland. As outsiders in Western Europe, they were oppressed by discriminatory laws and subjected to persecution, expulsions and slaughter.

## 1492

Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella ordered the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. This followed the final defeat of the Moors in Spain and the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition in 1478 against "heretics" (mainly Jews forcefully converted to Christianity and accused of secretly practising Judaism).

## 1555

Continuing a trend of anti-Jewish decrees that commenced in 1215, a Papal decree ordered the Jews to be confined to ghettos. There were Jewish ghettos in Western Europe until the emancipation of the Jews in the 19th century.

Lithuanian and Polish rulers invited Jews to settle in Eastern Europe, promising self-government and freedom from the ghettos.

## 1789

With the French Revolution, Jews received equal rights as citizens. This was eventually followed by similar emancipation in Britain and the German states and most of Western Europe.

Emancipation during the 19th century led some Jews to seek to adapt Judaism to the prevailing European cultures. In Germany this marked

the beginning of Progressive Judaism and greater participation in German cultural life.

In Russia the Haskalah ('Enlightenment') revived the use of Hebrew as a secular language, leading to a new Hebrew literature. At the same time the Bund ('organisation' in ***Yiddish***) promoted the ***Yiddish*** language and culture, and socialism.

As German Jews settled in the USA, Progressive and Conservative Judaism became more influential. Modern Orthodoxy also developed. This form of Judaism reflects Anglo-Jewish tradition.

## 1881

Anti-Jewish laws were revived in Russia (which then included much of Poland). These required the conscription of 12-year-old Jewish boys for 25 years in the army, and restricted Jews to living in designated areas. The laws were accompanied by 'pogroms', violent attacks on Jewish neighbourhoods.

Nearly three million Jews emigrated from Russia and Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914, mainly to America, but also to Britain, Canada, South Africa and Australia.

An organised political Zionist movement arose in response to the renewed oppression in the Russian empire and the growth of nationalism in Europe. This movement translated the ancient and continuing religious longing for the restoration of the Jewish homeland into a practical program, commencing with the establishment of settlements in Turkish Palestine in the 1880s.

## 1897

Zionism became an international political movement with the first World Zionist Congress.

## 1933

Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. Anti-Jewish laws were introduced two years later, and by 1945 six million Jews had been murdered in Europe.

### 1945 to the present

There was mass movement of the Jewish population as survivors of the Holocaust (see pp. 51, 53) and refugees from Arab and other lands settled in Israel and other parts of the world. Many came to Australia (see p. 54).

### 1947

On 29 November the United Nations General Assembly resolved to partition the territory of British-mandated Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states (see p. 56).

### 1948

The State of Israel was established as the restored homeland of the Jewish people (see pp. 57).

### 1949-1951

Around 600,000 survivors of the Holocaust settled in Israel, bringing the Jewish population to 1.4 million.

### 1949-1972

Around 840,000 Jews fled or were expelled from Arab countries after the establishment of Israel, and 580,000 settled in Israel.

### 1990s

When Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union, about 1 million arrived in Israel. During this period, 100,000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to safety and new lives in Israel.

# Jews across the world today

## The legacy of persecution

As outsiders and strangers in many societies, and determined to maintain their separate identity with its ancient culture and tradition, Jews have been subject to persecution in almost every generation. The manifestations of this hatred of the stranger have varied from mild discrimination to mass murder.

The advent of Christianity and Islam as successor religions of Judaism intensified the experience of persecution. Medieval Europe in particular was the scene of a fiercely anti-Jewish mythology, resulting in blood libels, forced conversions, expulsions, discriminatory laws, confinement to ghettos and repeated massacres. Blood libel or ritual murder libel is an antisemitic canard that accuses Jews of murdering Christian children in order to use their blood as part of religious rituals. Historically, these unfounded claims — alongside those of well poisoning and host desecration — have been a major theme of the persecution of Jews in Europe. In Tsarist Russia after 1881, anti-Jewish laws were revived. Twelve-year-old Jewish boys were conscripted into the Imperial Army for 25 years; outbreaks of violence and terror against Jewish communities, known as pogroms, swept through the countryside with government connivance, and millions of Jews fled Russia.

In 1933 the National Socialist German Workers Party, led by Adolf Hitler, was elected to power in Germany with the aim of restoring the nation's glory through the armed conquest of Europe. The party adopted a government policy in which Jews were defined as a separate, sub-human race.

As the Germans came to occupy most of Europe, they sought to round up and murder every Jew. Their methods included working and starving Jews to death in ghettoes, labour camps and concentration camps, and mass murder by various means, including shooting squads and gas chambers. Extermination camps such as Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka and Auschwitz–Birkenau were established specifically to annihilate Jews in a more efficient manner.

In less than six years, six million Jews — one-third of the world's Jewish population, including almost 1.5 million children — were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators in Europe. In addition to the six million Jews, more than five million non-Jews were murdered under the Nazi regime. Among them were gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, blacks, physically and mentally disabled people, political opponents of the Nazis, including Communists and Social Democrats, dissenting clergy, resistance fighters, prisoners of war, Slavic peoples, and many individuals from the artistic communities whose opinions and works Hitler condemned.

For all people, the Holocaust not only marks the tragic loss of six million people, but also reminds humanity to be forever vigilant against the circumstances that can lead to genocide. Unfortunately, recent history has shown that humanity has not learned from this tragic event; other genocides have been perpetrated in Rwanda, Cambodia, Darfur and elsewhere.

## Global Jewish context

There are around 14.7 million Jews worldwide, about 0.2 per cent of the global population. The majority of world Jewry live in either Israel or the USA.

The Jewish diaspora that developed over two millennia has led to the formation of separate ethnic communities with a shared tradition but distinct practices. European-descended ***Ashkenazi*** Jews comprise over 75 per cent of the world's Jewish population, and Iberian-descended ***Sephardic*** Jews comprise up to 20 per cent.

Australia has the ninth-largest Jewish population in the world, with an estimated 116,000 Jewish people; around 50,000 live in Sydney, 55,000 in Melbourne, and 9000 in Perth. There are smaller communities in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart and Launceston.

## Jews in Australia

The position of Jews in Australian society has been rather different from that of Jews in other places. As historian W. D. Rubinstein has written, one of the most outstanding features has been "the normalcy of Jewish life". Jews were among the first Europeans to arrive in NSW and so have "never been considered to be aliens to quite the same extent as elsewhere". There were at least eight, and perhaps as many as 14, Jewish petty criminals among the convict cargo on the First Fleet.

These are some of the more noteworthy Jewish convicts and early free settler. John Harris became the first Australian policeman in 1789. Esther Abrahams married Lt Governor George Johnstone and was the First Lady of the Colony. Edward Davis, known as the 'Jewboy bushranger' of Maitland, was hanged in 1840.

Barnett Levey came to Australia as a free settler and built the Theatre Royal, the first Australian theatre, in 1832.

Most of the early free settlers were Anglo-Jewish, middle-class immigrants who transposed the English patterns of Jewish practice to Australia. Synagogues were modelled on the Anglican Church, with great stress on decorum and formality. In 1878 the Great Synagogue in Sydney was consecrated, and its imposing structure remains an historic feature of the Sydney landscape.

During this period small numbers of Jewish refugees fleeing pogroms in Russia and Poland began to arrive. The new arrivals spoke ***Yiddish***, were distinctively dressed and were less attuned to British or Western European customs. The Jewish establishment feared that the newcomers would provide the wider Australian community with a negative image of what Jews were like, and impressed upon the immigrants the need for rapid assimilation.

Indeed, by the turn of the 20th century, Jewish society was becoming highly assimilated into the majority Australian culture. During World War I, 13 per cent of the Jewish community enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces, compared to 9.2 per cent of the general population. Fifty-seven Jewish ANZACS were killed in action at Gallipoli.

## Immigration

Since 1938 the Australian Jewish community has quadrupled in size, due largely to four main phases of immigration. Before World War II Australia absorbed between 7000 and 8000 refugees from Nazism, many from Austria. Of these, more than 5000 arrived in 1939, so that they became known as the "thirty-niners". In 1940, a further 2000 were deported to Australia by the British government on the infamous ship the *Dunera*, and were interned at Hay in NSW as enemy aliens, despite the fact that they had fled to Britain as refugees from Nazi Germany.

In the aftermath of World War II, about 27,000 survivors of the Holocaust migrated to Australia. Survivors and their families have been very active in both the Australian Jewish and wider communities, making significant contributions in the professions, the arts, business and politics. They value the freedom, opportunities and democracy that are the cornerstones of Australian life, particularly given their experiences in the Europe of the Holocaust.

The largest number of immigrants arrived in the period after the war, between 1946 and 1961, most of them Holocaust survivors. Between 1946 and 1954 more than 17,000 Jews arrived from Europe and more arrived after the Hungarian uprising of 1956.

A small number of Egyptian Jews also arrived in that period as refugees from the persecution that followed the overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy and the subsequent Suez Crisis. The next phase, 1961–1981, was a period of consolidation, attracting a smaller number of immigrants. Most came from South Africa and the USSR. Since 1981 immigration increased again, with most immigrants still from South Africa and the former USSR, and a small number coming from Israel.

## Jews in Australian life

As Jews are traditionally an immigrant community, it is interesting to note that a majority (51.1%) of Jewish Australians are now native born (2020 figures).

Jews have been represented in all sections of Australian life. There have been two Governors-General: Sir Isaac Isaacs, the first Australian-born Governor General (1931–36), and Sir Zelman Cowan (1977–82).

Other prominent Jewish Australians include Major-General Sir John Monash, Commander-in-Chief of the Australian forces in Europe at the end of World War I; former NSW Governor Gordon Samuels, former NSW Chief Justice James Spigelman, and 9th World Bank President James Wolfensohn, and Mahla Perlman, the first woman to become a Chief Justice of NSW. Josh Frydenberg, a Federal Liberal MP, became treasurer and Deputy Liberal Leader in 2018.

After World War I, Major-General Sir John Monash became the Honorary President of the newly formed Australian Zionist Federation.

Australian Jewry contributes to many aspects of Australian life and adds to the richness of Australian's cultural diversity. Australia's political and social acceptance of multiculturalism allows Jews to live in a country generally free of religious discrimination and without persecution.

Jews participate in all major political parties, in commerce, medicine, law and all the professions, in the arts, sciences, academia and sport. Although some high-profile individuals have achieved great success in Australia, most Jews experience the same problems, enjoy the same

rewards and live the same lifestyle as the general Australian public, and are represented within all socio-economic groups.

## Israel: Centre of the Jewish world

*"To live as a free people*
*In our own land*
*The land of Zion and Jerusalem"*

These are the concluding words of the national anthem of Israel, ***Hatikvah*** — 'The Hope'. It tells of 2000 years of hope for the restoration of the Land of Israel and for a life of freedom and peace for the Jewish people. Modern Zionism, which emerged as a practical organised movement in Russia in the 1880s, reflects the biblical longing for the restoration of Zion. In 1897 Theodore Herzl called the first Congress of the World Zionist Organisation, which provided a political structure for the program of restoring the Jewish homeland. Roads were built, land was purchased, communal settlements appeared, funds were raised and in 1909 the city of Tel Aviv started to rise from the sand dunes.

As the defeat of Turkey approached in 1917, the British Government issued the Balfour Declaration: "His Majesty's government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish national home". On the basis of that declaration, the League of Nations granted Britain a Mandate for the administration of Palestine as part of the post-war arrangements for the disposition of the Turkish Empire.

As World War II approached and the threat to the Jews of Europe became increasingly apparent, national borders were progressively closed to Jews fleeing persecution. Severe restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine were maintained by Britain until the end of the Mandate in 1948.

On 29 November 1947 the United Nations General Assembly resolved to partition the territory of British-mandated Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. The neighbouring Arab countries rejected the

United Nations resolution and openly declared that they would commence using military force at the first opportunity to prevent the resolution being implemented. The first organised attacks against the Jewish population by armed Arab militias occurred within 24 hours of the passing of the resolution.

In May 1948 the British Mandate was terminated and the State of Israel was proclaimed. The armies of five Arab states immediately invaded Israel. In a protracted war known by Jews as the War of Independence, Israel defeated the attacking Arab armies and in 1949 signed agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria which established armistice lines. However, these lines were not recognised as legal borders. During the establishment of the State of Israel, more than 850,000 Jews who had lived in Arab lands were expelled from their homes, and approximately 700,000 Arabs left Israel as a result of the war.

A state of continuous hostility followed. Israel was again subjected to major Arab aggression in the 1967 (Six-Day) and 1973 (Yom Kippur) wars. Neither the Palestinians nor any Arab state recognised the legitimacy of Israel's existence until the momentous visit to Jerusalem by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1977. Eventually peace treaties were signed with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994), and the Oslo Accords of 1993 now provide for self-government by the Palestinian Authority and the future negotiation of a final-status agreement. But tensions remained.

## Israel today


Today Israel, the world's only Jewish-majority country, is home to nearly 40 per cent of the world's Jews. The USA has about as many Jewish citizens as Israel.

Many Arab and Islamic countries remain openly hostile to Israel and promote terrorism in the hope of destroying it. Twenty-two Arab and Islamic countries, with a combined population of over 250 million, surround Israel.

Israel is a small country, with a total population of around 9 million at April 2021. It is 424 km in length, and its east–west width varies from 114 km at its widest to 14 km at its narrowest point. In an Australian context, Israel's land area would occupy an area from Sydney to Port Macquarie in length and Sydney to Parramatta in width.

Israel's borders are critical for its defence as there is no land mass to act as a buffer zone from which to repel an aggressor before Israeli population centres are reached.

In 2019 Israel's population comprised about 79.05% Jews and 20.95% Arabs. Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens enjoy equal voting rights and complete equality before the law. There are Arab political parties, several Arab members of parliament and an Arab judge on the Supreme Court bench.

Only a remnant of the western wall of the Temple remains standing today in Jerusalem. It is called the ***Kotel*** ('Wall'), pictured left, and it is the most sacred site in Judaism. For the last 19 centuries Jews have prayed for the restoration of the Temple. When the modern State of Israel was founded in 1948, the *Kotel* came under Jordanian control and no Jew was allowed to pray there or to enter East Jerusalem.

Since the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel reunified Jerusalem, the places sacred to each of the three monotheistic faiths have been freely accessible to their followers. However, the religious use of the Temple Mount (now the site of the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque) is, under Israeli law, controlled by the Islamic Authority.

The sands are shifting in the Middle East. The Abraham Accords, reached on 13 August 2020, are US sponsored agreements between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco. The Accords mark the first public normalisation of relations between an Arab country and Israel since those with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. On 23 October 2020 Israel and Sudan agreed to normalise ties as well. It is hoped the Abraham Accords will bring geopolitical, economic and security benefits to the region.

Today Israel is recognised as a world leader in innovation in areas of science, technology, space, medicine, agriculture — and more. And Israelis have achieved high-level awards in other fields, such as economics, literature and peace making.

To both Israelis and world Jewry, Israel's survival and security are of paramount emotional and spiritual significance. It is the universal hope of the Jewish people that Israel will eventually be able to live in peace.

# Glossary of terms

***Aliyah*** the calling of a member of a Jewish congregation to the ***bimah*** for a segment of reading from the ***Torah***

***Aninut*** the first stage of mourning, 'intense mourning'; lasts from the death until the burial is over

***Arba'a minim*** *(arba'at ha-minim)* four plants mentioned in the ***Torah*** (Leviticus 2340) as relevant to ***Sukkot***

***Ashkenazim*** central and eastern European Jews and their descendants

***Avelut*** encompasses the mourning customs of ***shiva***, ***sheloshim*** and, when a parent has died, the next 11 months

***Bedekin*** the veiling ceremony during a wedding. A procession headed by the groom goes to the bridal reception room, where the groom covers the bride's face with a veil

***Bikkurim*** first fruits

***Bimah*** the podium or platform in a synagogue from which the ***Torah*** and Book of the Prophets are read.

***Brit Milah*** male circumcision

***Challah*** leavened bread, usually braided or twisted before baking, traditionally eaten by Jews on ***Shabbat***

***Chanukah*** Festival of Lights, a minor holiday commemorating the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after the Maccabees successfully revolted against their Hellenic oppressors

***Chatan*** bridegroom

***Chazzan*** a cantor, a Jewish musician or precentor trained in the vocal arts who helps lead the congregation in songful prayer

***Chevra Kadisha*** 'Holy Society', an organisation of Jewish volunteers who see to it that the bodies of deceased Jews are prepared for burial according to Jewish tradition and protected from desecration, wilful or not, until burial.

***Chol*** secular/mundane (opposite of holy)

***Chuppah*** a canopy under which a Jewish couple stand during their wedding ceremony; also the wedding ceremony

***Diaspora*** Dispersion of people from their original homeland; in the Jewish context, people living in countries other than Israel

***Exodus*** Liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt in the 13th century BCE

***Fleishik*** made of, prepared with, or used for meat or meat products

***Gid hanashe*** sciatic nerve

***Haftarah/haftorah***, A series of selections from the books of ***Nevi'im*** of the Hebrew Bible read in the synagogue, following the ***Torah*** reading on each Sabbath and on Jewish festivals and fast days

***Halakha (halachah)*** Jewish law

***Hatikvah*** literally 'The Hope', Israel's national anthem

***Havdalah*** ceremony that marks the symbolic end of Sabbath and ushers in the new week

***Helev*** the dense fat (suet) found around the internal organs of animals, not considered ***kosher***

***Kaddish*** a hymn of praise to G-d found in Jewish prayer services

***Kallah*** bride

***Kasher*** to make fit for consumption

***Kashrut*** a set of dietary laws dealing with the foods that Jews are permitted to eat and how those foods must be prepared according to Jewish law. Food that may be consumed is deemed ***kosher***

***Kavod ha-met*** Honouring the Dead, of the utmost importance the body of a deceased person must be treated with respect and care from the time of death until the burial is completed

***Keriyah*** obligatory tearing of one's garments as an act of mourning when one's relative has passed away

***Ketubah*** marriage contract

***Ketuvim*** the third and final section of the ***Tanakh***, after ***Torah*** and ***Nevi'im***

***Kiddush*** sanctification, blessing

***Kippa, kippah*** brimless cap used as head covering for Jewish males; see ***yarmulke***

***Kodesh*** holy

***Kohanim*** Hebrew word for 'priests', used in reference to the Aaronic priesthood. The priestly covenant is the biblical covenant that G-d gave to Aaron and his descendants, as found in the Hebrew Bible and Oral ***Torah***

***Kotel*** the Wailing Wall or Western Wall in Jerusalem

***L'chayim*** 'to life', Jewish toast

***Magen David*** Shield of David, more commonly known as the Star of David

***Manna*** the substance miraculously supplied as food to the Israelites in the wilderness (*Exod*. 16)

***Menorah*** candelabrum

***Menuchah*** rest

***Mezuzah*** a piece of parchment called a ***klaf*** contained in a decorative case, inscribed with specific Hebrew verses from the ***Torah*** and placed by Jews on their doorposts

***Milchik*** containing milk products or used in the preparation of milk products

***Minyan*** quorum of 10 adults at a Jewish religious service or ceremony (males in Orthodox belief, but males and females in Progressive belief)

***Mishnah*** the first major written collection of the Jewish oral traditions; known as the 'Oral ***Torah***'

***Mitzvah,*** plural ***Mitzvot (Mitzvoth)*** commandment

***Mizrahi*** Jews from Western Asia and North Africa, descendants of those who lived in Babylon, Persia and Arabia

***Nevi'im*** Books of the Prophets

***Oneg*** joy; ***Oneg Shabbat —*** joy of Sabbath

***Pareve*** food that does not have any meat or milk in it

***Pikuach nefesh*** to save a life

***Purim*** A joyous holiday that celebrates the saving of the Jews from a threatened massacre in ancient Persia

***Rabbi*** Jewish spiritual leader (literally 'my teacher')

***Sage*** a Jewish wise or holy figure of the Mishna, Tosefta and Talmud eras, c. 250 BCE–c. 625 CE, whose wisdom still has contemporary relevance for Judaism

***Seder*** for the Jewish holiday of Passover, a ritual feast that marks the beginning of the holiday

***Semikhah*** giving of authority to be a ***rabbi***

***Sephardim*** descendants of the Iberian Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal in the late 15th century

***Se'udat havra'ah*** meal of condolence

***Shabbat*** Sabbath (from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday)

***Shechita*** ritual slaughter

***Sheloshim (shloshim)*** Hebrew, meaning 'thirty'; refers to the traditional 30-day period of mourning following burial. Includes the seven days of ***shiva***

***Shemini Atzeret*** final day of celebration of ***Sukkot*** and also seen as a celebration on its own

***Sheva Brachot*** seven blessings or wedding blessings

***Shiva*** week-long mourning period for first-degree relatives

***Shoah*** Nazi Holocaust

***Shochet*** the man who performs the ***shechita***

***Shofar*** an ancient musical horn typically made of a ram's horn, used for Jewish religious purposes

***Shomer*** (plural ***shomerim***) ***guardian*** the honour due to the dead calls for the appointment of a guardian or ***Shomer*** to stay alongside the body until the burial takes place

***Shul*** synagogue

***Succah*** a temporary hut constructed for use during the week-long Jewish festival of **Sukkot**

***Tallit*** prayer shawl

***Talmud*** the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law and theology

***Tanakh*** the entire Hebrew Bible. An acronym for ***Torah***, ***Nevi'im***, and ***Ketuvim***, meaning Law, Prophets and Writings respectively

***Mizrahi*** Jews — Eastern Jewish communities

***Torah*** the Five Books of Moses; the Old Testament. Often translated as 'the Law' and also as 'teaching'; provides Judaism's basic moral and ethical principles and its system of beliefs

***Treif Yiddish*** word for any form of non-***kosher*** food

***Tzitzit*** literally 'fringes'. Refers to the strings attached to the corners of the ***tallit*** and also to the poncho-like mini-***tallit*** that is worn throughout the day by observant males, often under a shirt

***Yahrzeit*** among Jews, the anniversary of someone's death, especially a parent's

***Yarmulke*** brimless cap, head covering usually worn by Jewish males; see ***kippah***

***Yiddish*** the language of the ***Ashkenazim***

***Yizkor*** a memorial service held by Jews on certain holy days for deceased relatives or martyrs

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