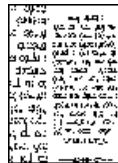


# Judaism and the Jewish People



[A Torah scroll...](#)



[A page from the  
Babylonian Talmud...](#)



[The Haggadah of Pessach...](#)



[Because of the  
Second Commandment...](#)

THE JEWISH PEOPLE descend from nomadic tribes in the Middle East. In the 13th century BCE they establish towns and villages in the present-day area of Israel. Jewish kingdoms and states are centered around Jerusalem, the site of the Temple. Judaism, the religion that evolves in this period, demands ethical behavior, individual responsibility, tolerance and social justice.

Jews believe in a single god, prohibit human sacrifice and practice communal worship. Many of the teachings of Judaism enter into Christianity and Islam and influence other religions and cultures. Judaism does not encourage conversions but has always accepted converts from other religions.

In the Diaspora, the two thousand years of Jewish life in dispersion, Judaism develops into many different trends: mystical movements like the Kabbalah that search

for hidden meanings and mysteries in the Biblical texts; pietistic movements like Hassidism that hold simple faith and intensity of religious experience higher than scholarship; and rationalistic schools of theology that explain the scriptures by the logic of reason and history. (CONT)

***Judaism and the Jewish People, cont.***



Rabbis from Yemen...



A bar mitzvah boy...



A group of male and female rabbis of the Reform movement...

Communities in the Diaspora provide the framework for Jewish life: synagogues, schools, bathhouses and kosher food. Communities are often isolated, having little or no contact with groups in other countries. But Jews continue to use the same Biblical texts and prayers and adhere to the same religious laws.

When Jews are granted equal rights and begin to live outside of Jewish communities, Judaism loses its unifying force. Modern religious movements develop, abandoning the common bases of traditional Judaism. In countries where no legal or social barriers exist, Jews begin to assimilate, and many embrace a secular identity. After the Holocaust, the idea of a common history and fate again gains strength among

Jews.

# The Jewish Diaspora and Israel



Roman soldiers carrying off  
the Menorah...



Stamp issued by the  
Indian post office...



Bukharan Jews around 1890...

**THE FIRST JEWISH** communities outside of Israel are established during the Babylonian Exile (700 BCE). Jews also settle on the Arabian Peninsula and in Egypt. After the Jewish revolts against the Roman occupation (66-135 CE), Jews are banned from living in Jerusalem and Judea. Under Byzantine rule (324-640 CE), Christianity is introduced in Israel and many anti-Jewish laws are enacted. By the 6th century, Jews have become a minority in their own land. After the Arab conquest, the Jewish population declines further. At the time of the first crusades (11th century), only a few thousand Jews remain in Israel.

Jews for many centuries form the only religious and ethnic minority in the countries they settled in. They live in their own communities separate from the general population under special laws and restrictions. They use the Hebrew language or dialects that combined Hebrew with the language of the country:

🌐 Yiddish among Ashkenasim, Jews who originally settled in Germany; Ladino among Sephardim, Jews who have migrated to Spain, and Judeo-Arabic among Jews in North Africa.

*(CONT)*

Map: The Jewish Diaspora

*The Jewish Diaspora and Israel, cont.*



A cantor reading from...



The Austrian-Jewish playwright and novelist...



Helena Rubenstein...



Russian Jews arriving at Ben Gurion Airport...

Despite their enforced separateness, Jewish communities in the Diaspora adopt many customs of the surrounding cultures. Integrating non-Jews into the community through marriage is common practice. Many also convert to Christianity or Islam. As a result, Jews in the Diaspora usually are members of two cultures (Jewish and Arabic, for example) and also resemble outwardly the surrounding population.

Jewish communities in Moslem countries, in Spain and Portugal, prosper culturally and economically, despite some restrictions. Jews in Christian Europe are subject to oppression, persecution and sporadic expulsions alternating with periods of relative peace and prosperity. Sephardim and Ashkenasim develop different customs and religious practices over the centuries.

With emancipation, the granting of equal rights, and the diminishing role

□ of religion, Jews begin to integrate fully into the societies they have lived in for hundreds of years. For many, Jewishness becomes a secular and national identity. In the 19th century, Zionism, a Jewish national movement, proposes a return to Israel and the re-establishment of a Jewish state. In 1948 this new state is founded. Millions of Jews emigrate to Israel, but a majority of the Jewish population continues to live in the Diaspora.

[Table: Countries with more than 10,000 Jewish citizens in 1991.](#)



## Christian Images of the Jews



[The Church versus the Synagogue...](#)



[The "Living Cross"...](#)



IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE, Christianity is the dominant religion. The Catholic Church not only holds the highest moral authority, but bishops also join the nobility in governing the Christian states. Because Christianity developed out of Judaism in the Middle East, the Church's attitude to Jews remains

A Biblical scene  
in a German church...



Although Pontius  
Pilate was the Roman  
governor...

ambivalent: To force or entice all Jews to convert to Christianity; or to let them continue to practice their faith under many restrictions at the margins of society as a constant reminder of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism.

In many churches, images appear that symbolize the "Victory of Christianity (Ecclesia) over Judaism (Synagoga)." Jews are portrayed as traitors and as murderers of God. They are often shown together with a pig - a particularly insulting image, as Jewish religion considers pigs unclean.

As Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire, many medieval Bible illustrations diminish the role of the Romans in the trial and crucifixion of Christ. Instead, they show Jews in medieval clothes as the main culprits. In a time when the great majority of the

population is uneducated and cannot read or write, these church images are the essential instruments in spreading a negative view of Jews and Judaism.



"Church versus Synagogue" in a French cathedral...



A variation on the "Church versus Synagogue"...

## The First Crusade



Pope Urban...

DURING THE FIRST 700 years of Christendom, Jewish communities in Europe are rarely placed in direct physical danger. But the situation changes when, in 1095, Pope Urban calls for a crusade to liberate Jerusalem from the hands of the Muslims.



Three Jews...

On their way to Jerusalem, the crusaders leave a track of death and destruction behind in the Jewish communities along the Rhine and Danube. "Because," as they exclaim, "why should we attack the unbelievers in the Holy Land, and leave the infidels in our midst undisturbed?"



Jews are seen burning...

On May 25, 1096, about 800 Jews are murdered in Worms, Germany, while many others choose suicide. In Regensburg, the Jews are thrown into



Not only the  
Jews  
themselves...

the Danube to be "baptized." In Mainz, Cologne, Prague and many other cities, thousands of Jews are killed and their possessions plundered. During the following hundred years, new crusades are accompanied by massacres and pillage among the Jewish population.

With the crusades, the status of the Jews as second class citizens becomes entrenched in Church dogma and state laws throughout Christian Europe. A period of oppression and insecurity follows that ends only in the 18th century.



Jews, and not  
the Romans...



A battle between Crusaders...

Map: The Jewish population of Germany in the 10th - 13th centuries.



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEARCH *BEYOND THE PALE: THE HISTORY OF JEWS IN RUSSIA*, J KNIESMEYER, AND D. BRECHER**

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Herzl Yankl Tsam, the only Jewish officer in the 19th century. Drafted into the army as a 17-year-old Cantonist, he was made a captain only after 41 years of service. In spite of pressures, he never converted to Christianity. See [The Russian Empire: Life in the Pale of Settlement](#)

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## LINKS TO RELATED SITES

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[Russian-Jewish Culture and Heritage](#)

[Russian Culture and History](#)

[Russian Language Sites](#)

[Judaism and Jewish Heritage links](#)

[General History links](#)

### RUSSIAN JEWISH CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

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#### [Virtual Jerusalem's Commonwealth of Independent States](#)

Virtual Jerusalem's information on Judaism in the C.I.S. (former Soviet Union), including [Jews in Russia](#) and the [Ukraine](#).

#### [Machanaim](#)

Torah and Jewish Heritage for Russian-speaking Jewry. Established in 1979 in Moscow as an underground network of Torah and Judaism learning. In 1987 it was re-established in Jerusalem to provide Jewish education for Russian speakers in Israel and over the world.

#### [YIVO Institute for Jewish Research](#)

Dedicated to the study and preservation of the Eastern European Jewish heritage.

#### [The Institute for Jewish Studies in the C.I.S.](#)

Website discussing the work of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, founder of Rabbi Steinsaltz's other pioneering efforts in Russia include the founding of [the Jewish University of Moscow](#) and the Jewish University of St. Petersburg.

### **Shamir - Russian Jewry**

A non-profit organization "dedicated to the professional and spiritual renaissance of Russian Jewry," and has published over 400 books on related subjects.

### **Union of Councils for Soviet Jews (UCSJ)**

A grassroots organization advocating for Jews and human rights in the former Soviet Union.

### **Jewish Heritage Society (Moscow)**

#### **Birobidzhan**

Part of the award-winning photojournalism site, "[The Russian Chronicles](#)" featuring information about the Jewish Autonomous Region founded in 1934 as a "homeland" for Soviet Jews. Of special interest is [The Last Jews of Birobidzhan: A Photo Essay](#).

#### **A Brief History of Khazaria**

Discusses the medieval Jewish kingdom of Khazaria in southern Russia.

#### **Into the Light - Images of Ukrainian Jewry**

A collection of photographs by Dmitry Peysakhov documents the Jewish people and places of modern Ukraine, and includes "Jewish Life in Kiev," "Stones of Sorrow" (Jewish Cemeteries in Ukraine), "Jewish Faces," "Babi Yar," and "Into the Light" (The Jewish Shtetl Today).

#### **The Jews of Bukhara**

An outline of the history of the Jewish community of Bukhara (also written Bokhara or Bochara), Uzbekistan, by Donna L. Carr.

#### **Vinnitsa Region Jewish Community**

David Dickerson documents the Jewish history and culture of the Vinnitsa region in the Ukraine.

#### **Russian-Jews archive and mailing lists:**

Topics of interest for Russian Jews.

#### **Eastern European Jewish History Discussion List (EEJH)**

Details on how to join the Eastern European Jewish History and Culture e-mail discussion list.

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**Russian History** links from Bucknell University's **Russian Studies Department**

**Russian News Navigator**

Links to Russian Newspapers and Magazines in Russian and English

**Russian Life** magazine.

**Friends and Partners**

Extensive information and Links to Russian culture and heritage and relations with the United States.

Library of Congress' **Soviet Archive Exhibit**

**Russian Sites and Links Galore!**

**Russia Alive!**

**Glasnet:**

A Russian web server/ISP that contains a number of links to Russian culture and heritage sites, including a **Virtual Tour of Russia**.

**Slavic Interest Links**

Oleh Baran's **Ukraine** page connects you to all things Ukrainian on the Web.

**Virtual Guide to Belarus**

Yahoo's **Russian links**

## RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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**Glasnet:**

The Russian web server/ISP has a number of links to Russian culture and heritage. In English also.

**Glasnet Judaism Page**

**Cursor:**

Israel internet magazine in Russian.

**[Jewish Heritage Society \(Moscow\)](#)**

**[Machanaim](#)** : Torah and Jewish Heritage Center for Russian Speaking Jewry. Also in English.

**JUDAISM AND JEWISH CULTURE**

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**[Virtual Jerusalem](#)**

Andrew Tannenbaum's **[Judaism and Jewish Resources](#)**

**[Jewish Communication Network \(JCN\)](#)**

Also see their directory and search engine at **[J C Navigate](#)**

David Dickerson's **[Jewish Cultural Links](#)**

**[Heshye Engelsberg's Jewish Links](#)**

**[Jewishnet](#)**

Yahoo's **[Judaism links](#)**

**GENERAL HISTORY LINKS**

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The University of Kansas' **[Index of World History Links](#)**

University of California, Riverside's **[Horus History Links](#)**

Research Institute for the Humanities' **[History links](#)**

Rhodes College's **[History Internet Resources](#)**