

The main religions in isreal

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



The Main Religions in Israel Israel is the home to many religions. Unlike most countries, they try to provide a home with equal civil rights to all citizens, no matter their ethnicity, religion or heritage. There are three major religions that exist in Israel. The main religion, which consists of 77% of Israel's population, is Judaism. This follows with 16% Islam and 2. 1% Christian ("Wikamedia Foundation" 1) With their similar backgrounds, the followers of these monotheistic faiths have come to view God with some attributes that are common throughout them all to some degree or another. In Judaism, the most ancient of these religions, the books of the Old Testament are a set of compositions describing God's actions in our world, both directly and indirectly. The Jewish name for their God is Yahweh. Jews believe that Yahweh has chosen them as his people and believe that they share a sacred covenant with him. By following the rules that have been passed down to them by God, they believe that they acquire a divine protection that is unique to them. In this we see that the Jewish concept of God is able to rationalize, favor, and protect man. Through the laws, the Torah, given to the Jews by God, we see that their God also has a sense of justice, which implies the ability to enforce the laws being handed down. In Judaism, the concept of God has led to several beliefs. The belief that Jews are the chosen people has led to the development of an inferiority complex on the part of the Jews when looking at other faiths. They tend believe that since these people are irreverent, they do not share God's favor and therefore are inferior." The concept of God being male has also led to the marginalization of women in Jewish society, taking much of their prestige that was enjoyed in other religions that stressed the female role in fertility and creation. The emulation

of God's actions, such as resting on the Sabbath, has been a major practice among the Jews. The concept of justice as delivered to them by Yahweh has inspired in the Jewish population a sense of morality and social justice. This even led to the Jews creating one of the first welfare systems in their state of Israel that was greatly admired and copied by other ancient civilizations. Jews believe their God is a vengeful, jealous God, outraged by idolatry and worshipping of other Gods. The Old Testament is filled with stories of God punishing the Jews when they strayed from His path, using armies and natural disasters as means to destroy their state and scatter them into exile. Another belief is that God speaks through unique men who act as his prophets. There are numerous records of such men, and what is notable about each of their messages is directed from a personal level and perspective. In this way, prophets tend to have a very personal experience and interpretation of God, creating Him in their own image. Prophets gave social commentary based on their experiences, and described their point of view and concerns as Yahweh's. This has led to a belief that theology is a private matter among Jews, and no theological idea of God is enforced upon the Jewish population.(Tannenbaum 5) The second big religion in Israel is Islam. The Islam originated among nomadic Arabic tribes during a time of great economic and cultural upheaval. The prophet of Islam was Muhammad, a man deeply concerned with the changes in his culture and who believed that traditional values needed to be preserved in order to keep Arabic society intact. The God of Muhammad is known as al'Lah. Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam has also written work to correspond with their faith. This book is known as the Qu'ran, it is unique from the other two religions in that

it is believed to be the actual words of God departed to Muhammad, rather than an interpretation of events or a collection of metaphors and laws to correspond with their beliefs. In Islam, al'Lah is able to speak directly through the prophets, and take action in inspiring them and affecting the world of man. Once again, because of a prophet's considered " favored" by God, Muslims believe that by emulating Muhammad they can become closer to al'Lah and more receptive to his word. Since Muhammad took such an active part in organizing government and restructuring the Arabs into a fledgling empire, politics became entwined with religion. From this, Muslims throughout history have participated in an active criticism of their government, believing that religion and government should always be entwined, which goes against our secular thinking of separation of church and state. While believing that al'Lah was found in everything, much like the other two religions, it is thought that we could know God only through his manifestations in our world, not his physical actions. Muslims would find the Christian doctrine of a God incarnated in a man blasphemous to the extreme. Muslims believed that their God was one of ultimate reason, and they were influenced by Hellenistic thought more than any of the other religions. Because reason and truth were thought to be essential, Muslims believed that to an extent they could know God better through knowledge of our physical world, and thus embraced science and mathematics. Indeed, Muslims are responsible for many great advances in medicine and other sciences. The God once again encouraged an adoption of humanistic ideas and in Islam it was a central moral message that each Muslim had a duty to create a just society where the less fortunate were expected to be treated

decently. It was viewed as wrong to develop personal wealth at the neglect of society as a whole, and alms-giving became one of the central pillars of the faith of Islam. This belief served as another reason for Muslims to question their governments, especially in cases when it was believed that they had become too rich and powerful at the expense of others. This belief in equality, once again, led to the good treatment of women in a religion. Once again, this privilege and belief was modified and eventually taken away to marginalize women and put them in conditions as harsh as any other monotheistic religion. Islam views theirs as the rational, final evolution of the monotheistic religions, and while they believe that their belief system is superior, they view both Judaism and Christianity with tolerance and consider them related in that they have the same God, just with different prophets and revelations. Because of this, they do not actively pursue converts to their religion, and believe that one can join them only if they wish to. Muslims believe, unlike some other religions, that it is one's choice if they wish to convert to their religion. (Abdulsalam 1) The third religion in Israel is Christian. Christians share a similar belief of God as the Jews, but believe that he personified himself in his son, Jesus Christ. This view was thought to be scandalous by the Jews, and this is what makes Christians distinct from Jews. The Christians have added to the holy books of the Jewish Old Testament by compiling the revelations of Jesus Christ and his disciples into a New Testament. The concept of Jesus Christ seems to be the ultimate anthropomorphism of God among the monotheistic religions, in that he is His son and also him. The Christians believe that God is a loving entity that cherishes its creations. In this we see that God is capable of human

emotions, and that God has certain values which Christians aspire to. As in Judaism, this has led to a sense of morality and social justice, which can be seen in the Christian beliefs. The emulation of God appears in this religion as well, but in this case, most Christians believe that they must emulate Jesus Christ in order to become divine or closer to God themselves. Because all are considered equal under God, Christianity started off as a positive religion for women. However, due to the concept of a male God, and the development of the concept of Original Sin, women are eventually marginalized and begin to be treated badly in Christianity later on. The very confusing nature of Christ and the many problems it presents in Christianity as a belief structure has led to the development of a passion for theological debate in Christianity. Because Christianity evolved from Judaism, Christians had no set distinctive system of thought towards religion and found it hard to list their beliefs apart from Judaism. Christians thought and think of themselves as distinct from the Jewish Temple. The mysteries and difficulties brought about by the explanation of Christ as God has led to a general feeling of defensive anxiety among Christians, and can be seen throughout their history arguing their point of view, and coming up with new ways to justify it. (Keating, 2) The three main religions are each related in many ways, forming the beliefs and practices in Judaism today. Since 77% of Israel's population is Judaism it plays the biggest role in Israel. There are many different levels of Judaism that people believe in. 5% of all Israeli Jews define themselves as Haredim, which means they are ultra orthodox. This is the most extreme form of belief. The biggest portion of the population consists of traditionalists and secular. Traditionalists and secular make up 78% of the Jewish population.

Another 12% consists of religious Jews and 5% that are anti religious.

Although a huge percentage of Jews have some religious belief, only 65% believe in god. Despite the numerous types of beliefs, there is one thing all Jews believe in and that is the belief in " one god, creator of the universe". (" Wikimedia" 2) Israel is designated as a home for all Jewish people. It is safe from persecution to those of the Jewish religion as well as all other religions. Even though Israel is open to all religions, there is preferential treatment given to those that immigrant to Israel. This is their way of increasing the Jewish population. There are many special programs available for those of the Jewish descent to either immigrant or visit Israel. Unlike most religions that are divided into two separate groups, Judaism is actually divided into four. These four groups consist of the ultra-orthodox (haredim), religious Zionists (datiim), traditional Jews (masortiim) and secular (hilonmin). As discussed earlier, the majority of Jews are masortiim or hilonmin. The ultra-orthodox are upon strangely to the western eye. They are the black hated Jews that you see in books and in pictures. Religious Zionists are more modern orthodox Jews. They maintain orthodox observance of Jewish religious law and traditions. The majority of Jews are masortiim (traditional). Although these Jews are from many backgrounds, a majority come from Mediterranean or Islamic worlds. Masoritiim's value Jewish life and traditions but modify practices if they believe it is necessary. The biggest difference in Masoritiim Jews and Orthodox Jews is the Sabbath. Masoritiim Jews drive their cars on Sabbath and use electricity which is something orthodox Jews take part in. The fourth group, hilonmin (secular) Jews, follow the same practices as a Masoritiim, only they do it for family or national identity. They

do not practice for religious reasons. Judaism make up three-fourths of the population in Israel. Understanding the different groups and religious levels in Israel is important to understanding why it is not only the most popular religion in Israel, but all one of the top three in the world. All three of these monotheistic faiths, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, give God very particular attributes, which implies an anthropomorphic God. Because God can judge, hear, and see, he is given certain characteristics and qualities that affect how people apply their religion and beliefs to their lives. The Jewish concept of the " chosen people" affects how they look at people from other religions. The Christian concept of a God, Incarnated in man, has led them to believe that they should see and live in the world as Christ did, and they believe that they should treat all with love and respect. Islam, believing that God can be known through the world around us and a rational attempt to find God through his Creations, has led to a rigorous attempt to know our world through sciences and mathematics like no other religion. Religion not only affects Israel and their people, but it affects how its people treat each other and the world around them. Religion is a key part in the formation of beliefs not only in Israel but in the world.