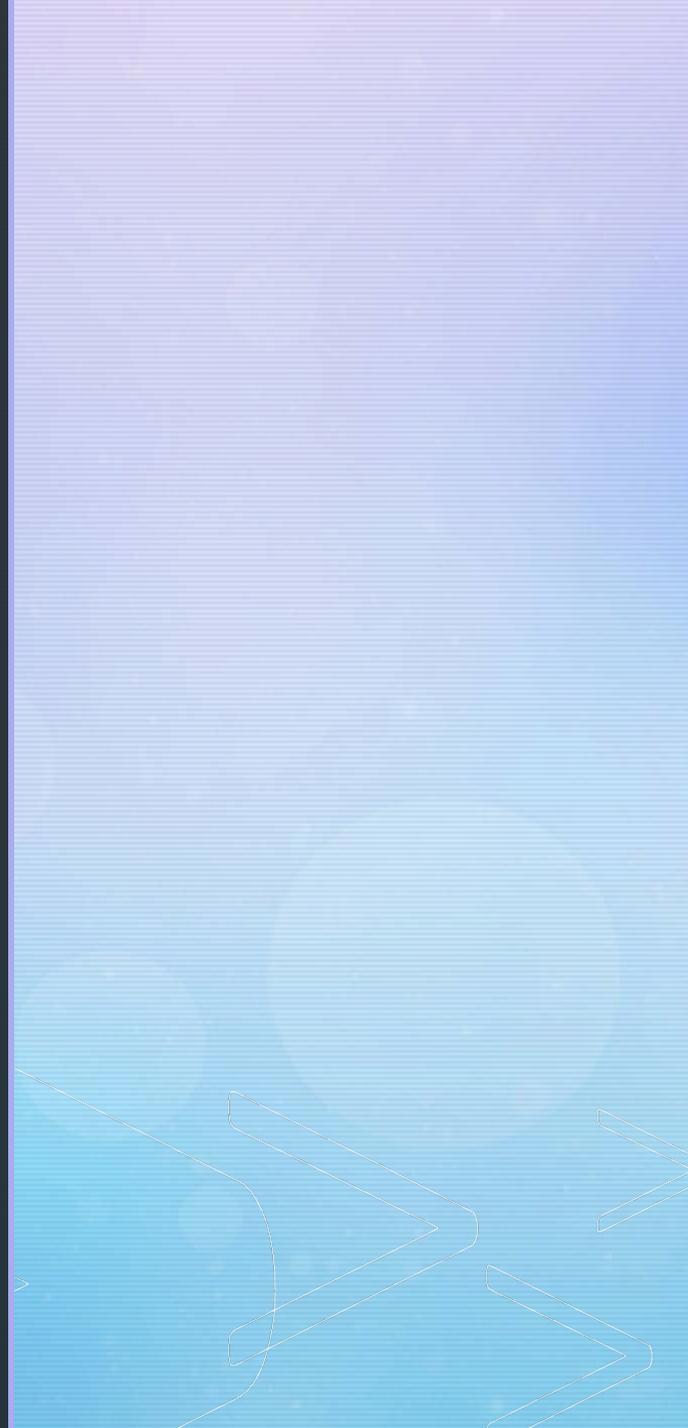


Temple Sinai, S. Burlington, VT.

Rabbi David Edleson



Introduction to JUDAISM

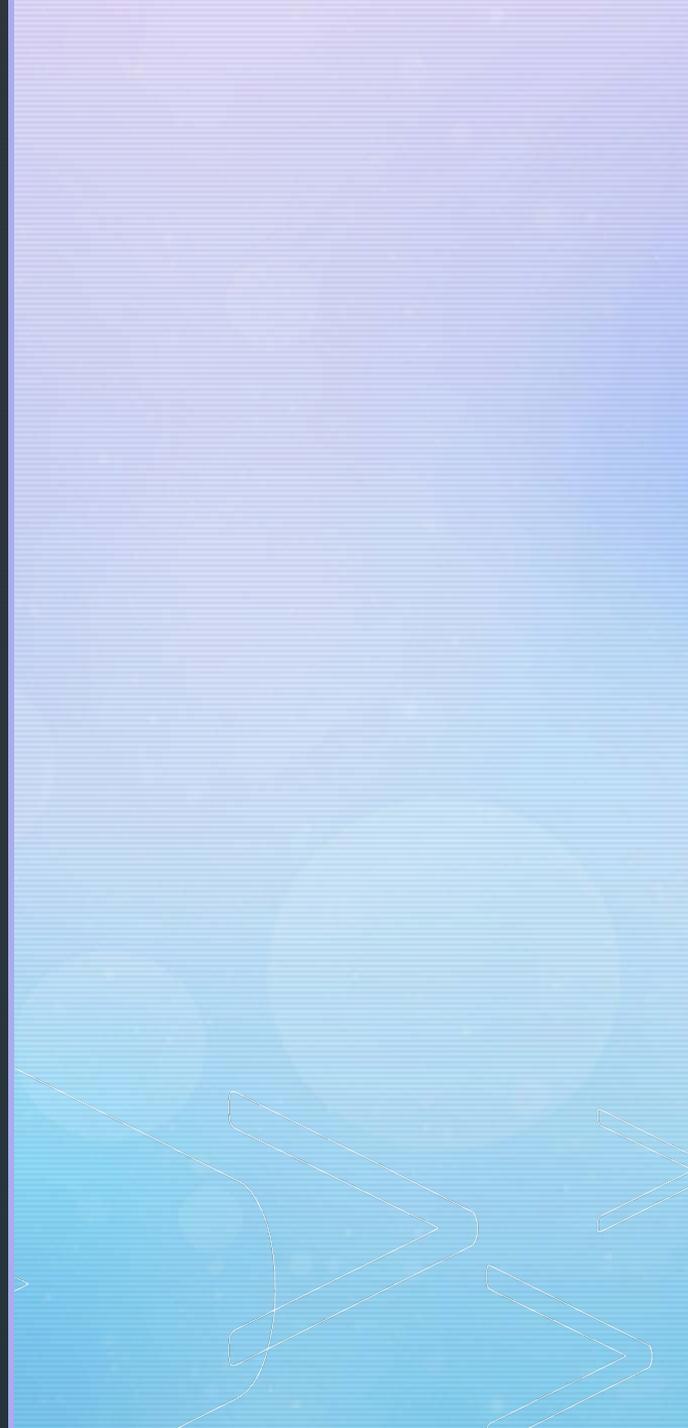


WEEK 3

GOD IS ONE

JEWISH VIEWS OF GOD

Adonai Echad





**Do you have to
believe in God
to be Jewish?**



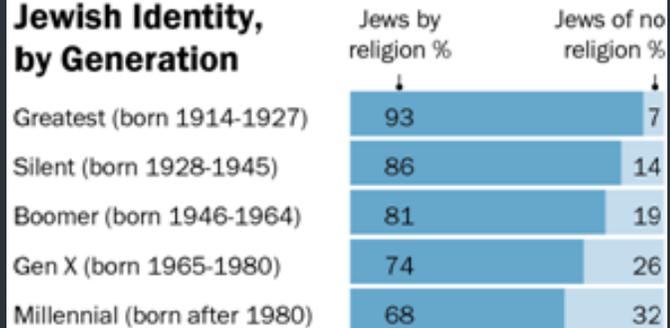
Jews and God by the Numbers

Pew 2013

U.S. Adult Jewish Population, 2013



Jewish Identity, by Generation

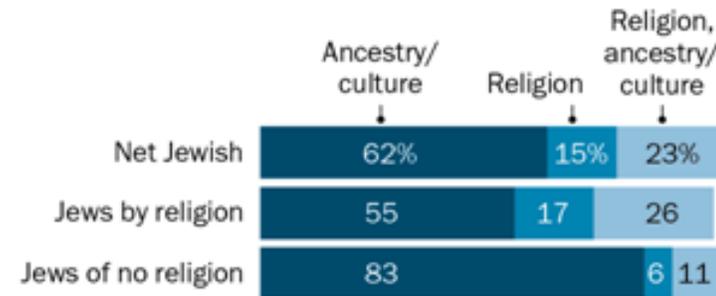


Source: Pew Research Center 2013 Survey of U.S. Jews, Feb. 20-June 13, 2013. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Being Jewish More About Culture and Ancestry than Religion

% saying being Jewish is mainly a matter of ...



Note: "Ancestry/culture" is the net percentage saying that being Jewish is mainly a matter of ancestry, mainly a matter of culture or volunteering that it is both ancestry and culture. "Religion, ancestry/culture" is the percentage volunteering that being Jewish is a matter of both religion and either ancestry or culture, or all three of these.

Source: Pew Research Center 2013 Survey of U.S. Jews, Feb. 20-June 13, 2013. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Other responses and those who did not give an answer are not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Jews and God by the Numbers

What is Compatible With Being Jewish?

<i>Can a person be Jewish if he/she ...</i>	Yes %	No %	DK %
... works on the Sabbath?	94	5	1=100
... is strongly critical of Israel?	89	9	2=100
... does not believe in God?	68	29	3=100
... believes Jesus was messiah?	34	60	6=100

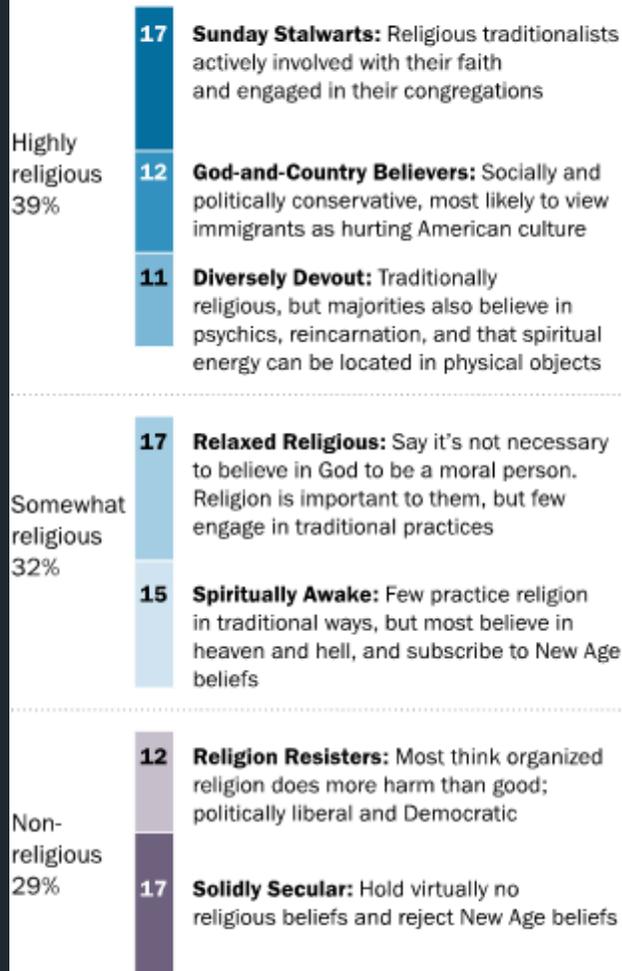
Based on the net Jewish population.

Source: Pew Research Center 2013 Survey of U.S. Jews, Feb. 20-June 13, 2013

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Pew 2018

The Religious Typology: The highly religious, nonreligious and in between



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 4-18, 2017, among U.S. adults. "The Religious Typology"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- Shabbat Stalwarts — *regular participation in prayer and other religious practices 21%*
- God and Country Believers- *express their religion through political and social conservatism 8%*
- Diversely Devout- *follow the Bible but also believe in things like animism and reincarnation. 5%*
- Relaxed Religious- *believe in God and pray but don't engage in many traditional practices 14%*
- Spiritually Awake — *hold some New Age beliefs 8%*
- Religion Resisters — *believe in a higher power but have negative views of organized religion 17%*
- Solidly Secular- *don't believe in God and do not self-define as religious 28%*

Jews and God by the Numbers

Pew 2018

45 percent of American Jews are listed in the two categories for the least religious: “religion resisters,” who believe in a higher power but have negative views of organized religion, or “solidly secular,” those who don’t believe in God and do not self-define as religious. The breakdown is 28 percent as “solidly secular” and 17 percent as “religion resisters.”

“Jewish Americans are the only religious group with substantial contingents at each end of the typology,” the study says.

Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith

Principle 1

I believe with perfect faith that:

God exists; God is perfect in every way, eternal, and the cause of all that exists. All other beings depend upon God for their existence.

- *[Some medieval authorities believed that God created the world from eternal matter (see Principle 4). Thus, according to these scholars, it would not be true to say that God is the cause of all that exists]*



Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith Principle 2

I believe with perfect faith that:

- God has absolute and unparalleled unity.

Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith

Principle 3

I believe with perfect faith that:

God is incorporeal—without a body, and is not affected by physical matter.

- *[Abraham ben David Posquieres (also known as Rabad) comments that people greater than Maimonides have believed that God has a physical form and objects to the claim that those who do are heretics.]*
- *Moses ben Hasdai Taku, a tosafist (medieval commentator on the Talmud), believed that God could take a physical form.*
- *Samuel David Luzzatto, a 19th-century scholar, defended the idea that God has a body, claiming that an embodied God was the only God conceivable to most people]*

Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith

Principle 4

I believe with perfect faith that:

God existed prior to all else. (In a later version he included that God created the world from nothing, creation *ex nihilo*)

- *Abraham Ibn Ezra suggests that the word bara (created) implies cutting or setting a boundary, and that God sculpted the world from eternal matter*
- *Gersonides also believed that the world was created from eternal matter.*

Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith Principle 5

I believe with perfect faith that:

God should be the only object of worship and praise. One should not appeal to intermediaries, but should pray directly to God.

- *There are prayers in Selichot, penitential prayers and in some songs that pray to angels. The Sabbath song, Shalom Aleichem, is one.*
- *Forms of mysticism focus on specific angels as vehicles to the Divine.*



Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith Principle 6

I believe with perfect faith that:

Prophets and prophecy exist and their words are true.



Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith

Principle 7

I believe with perfect faith that:

Moses was the greatest prophet who ever lived. No prophet who lived or will live could comprehend God more than Moses.

- *Nahmanides and Gersonides believed that the Messiah would gain more knowledge of God than Moses.*
- *Shneur Zalman of Lyady (1745-1813), the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, in his Likutei Amarim, notes that Moses' prophetic abilities weren't as great as those of Isaac Luria, the renowned medieval kabbalist.*

Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith Principle 8

I believe with perfect faith that:

The Torah is from heaven. The Torah we have today is the Torah that God gave to Moses at Sinai

- *Many rabbis have pointed out that there are verses of the Torah that must have been written by others, and that there are scribal errors in the Torah. Others wrote about different versions of the text and the inability to be certain that the version we have is correct.*



Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith Principle 9

I believe with perfect faith that:

The Torah will never be abrogated, nothing will be added to it or subtracted from it; God will never give another Law.

Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith Principle 10

I believe with perfect faith that:

God knows the actions of humans and is not neglectful of them.

- *Ibn Ezra, "The Whole [God] knows the individual in a general manner rather than in a detailed manner." God knows the general actions of humans, but not the particular details.*
- *Gersonides developed this idea fully: God knows universals, but not particulars.*



Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith Principle 11

I believe with perfect faith that:

God rewards those who obey the commands of the Torah and punishes those who violate its prohibitions.

Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith

Principle 12

I believe with perfect faith that:

The days of the Messiah will come.

[Rabbi Hillel the Later (Talmud) (not to be confused with the earlier Hillel) stated that: "There shall be no Messiah for Israel, because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah (Sanhedrin 99a)."]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQG1An3v4wA>

Why do Jews not believe Jesus was the Messiah?

- Because the Christian model of the Messiah through Jesus is one in which the Messiah's death atones for sin that can't otherwise be atoned for. Judaism has no original or inherent sin and strongly believes people can atone fully.
- Because the idea of God in three parts, or the idea of a human that is also God is blasphemous to Judaism's monotheism.
- Because in Jewish belief, the Messiah is a *this-worldly* ruler whose reign brings 1) national sovereignty to Israel, 2) gathering of Jewish exiles, 3) a period of peace and justice on earth. While certainly many religious Zionists see the state of Israel and the return of Jews to it as the 'first flowering of redemption', it is not at all seen as 'messianic.' That has not happened, and as Nachmanides pointed out in the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263, violence has only increased on earth since the time of Jesus.
- Because the passages in Isaiah that Christianity sees as messianic are not read by Jews in that way *at all*. The "suffering servant" in Isaiah 53 refers not to an individual, but collectively to all the Jewish people.

Jews, Jews for Jesus and Messianic Churches

- Throughout Jewish history, some Jews have chosen to convert to Christianity, and that has been a plan and a tool of anti-Semitic violence. “They believe so why can’t you?” It is a very sensitive issue.
- For Jesus to be divine runs counter to basic Jewish belief in monotheism, and human nature.
- Jews for Jesus specifically targets people with mental disabilities.
- Christians who adopt Jewish practice in “Messianic Churches” do not claim to be Jewish, so there is not as much tension with that. When they claim to speak for Judaism, we object.

Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith

Principle 13

I believe with perfect faith that:

The dead will be resurrected

This has a strong impact on Jewish burial customs.

Reform, progressive, and other forms of liberal Judaism do not hold this belief and instead say that we simply do not know what happens after death, and one should not live a good life for reward, but because it is our duty.

Reform prayer book no longer says, "who brings the dead to life" but instead read, "who gives life to all."

Judaism and the Afterlife (brief)

- Judaism does not hold strict beliefs about what happens after death.
- Biblical Judaism does not focus at all on an afterlife.
- Rabbinic Judaism posits a “world to come” (olam haba’ah) but its nature is fuzzy. For Orthodox Jews, it tends to be resurrection at the end of time. For other Jews it is a vague version of the spirit continuing and reuniting with their loved ones.
- Liberal Judaism tends to focus on this life, and the value of memory more than an afterlife. Many Jews do not believe in any sort of afterlife.

YIGDAL

- Yigdal Elohim chai ve'yishtabach,
nimtza v'ein et el metsiuto.
Echad V'ein yachid keyichudo,
ne'elam v'gam ein sof l'achduto.
- Magnified and praised be the living God: he is, and there is no limit in time unto his being. He is One, and there is no unity like unto his unity; inconceivable is he, and unending is his unity.

ADON OLAM

- Lord of the Universe who reigned before anything was created. When all was made by his will He was acknowledged as Ruler.

And when all shall end
God still all alone shall reign.
God was, is,
and shall be in glory.

And God is one, and there's no other,
to compare or join God..
Without beginning, without end
and to God belongs dominion and power.

Adon olam, asher malach,
beterem kol yetzir nivra.
Le'et na'asah vecheftzo kol,
azai melech sh'mo nikra.

V'acharey kichlot hakol,
levado yim'loch nora.
V'hu haya, v'hu hoveh,
v'hu yih'yeh b'tifara.

V'hu echad, v'eyn sheni
l'hamshil lo, l'hachbira.
B'li reishit, b'li tachlit,
v'lo ha'oz v'hamisrah.

Reform Movement 1999 Pittsburgh Statement of Principles: God

- We affirm the reality and oneness of God, even as we may differ in our understanding of the Divine presence.
- We affirm that the Jewish people is bound to God by an eternal *b'rit*, covenant, as reflected in our varied understandings of Creation, Revelation and Redemption.
- We affirm that every human being is created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God, and that therefore every human life is sacred.
- We regard with reverence all of God's creation and recognize our human responsibility for its preservation and protection.

Reform Movement 1999 Pittsburgh Statement of Principles: God

- We encounter God's presence in moments of awe and wonder, in acts of justice and compassion, in loving relationships and in the experiences of everyday life.
- We respond to God daily: through public and private prayer, through study and through the performance of other *mitzvot*, sacred obligations – between God and humanity (*bein adam laMakom*) and between human beings (*bein adam lachaveiro*)
- We strive for a faith that fortifies us through the vicissitudes of our lives – illness and healing, transgression and repentance, bereavement and consolation, despair and hope.

Reform Movement 1999 Pittsburgh Statement of Principles: God

- We continue to have faith that, in spite of the unspeakable evils committed against our people and the sufferings endured by others, the partnership of God and humanity will ultimately prevail.
- We trust in our tradition's promise that, although God created us as finite beings, the spirit within us is eternal.
- **In all these ways and more, God gives meaning and purpose to our lives.**



EMET v'EMUNAH

Conservative Judaism's Statement of Principles 1990

GOD. We believe in God. Indeed, Judaism cannot be detached from belief in, or beliefs about God. Residing always at the very heart of our self-understanding as a people, and of all Jewish literature and culture, God permeates our language, our law, our conscience, and our lore. From the opening words of Genesis, our Torah and tradition assert that God is One, that He is the Creator, and that His Providence extends through human history. Consciousness of God also pervades Jewish creativity and achievements: the sublime moral teachings of the prophets, the compassionate law of the Rabbis, the spiritual longings of our liturgists, and the logical analyses of our philosophers all reflect a sense of awe, a desire to experience God in our lives and to do His will. God is the principal figure in the story of the Jews and Judaism.



EMET v'EMUNAH

Conservative Judaism's Statement of Principles 1990

...God is also a source of great perplexities and confusions. Doubts and uncertainties about God are inevitable; indeed, they arose even in the hearts and minds of biblical heroes such as Abraham, Moses and Job, the biblical prophets and Wisdom teachers, among the greatest masters of rabbinic midrash, and in the writings of renowned Jewish thinkers and poets to the present day. One can live fully and authentically as a Jew without having a single satisfactory answer to such doubts; one cannot, however, live a thoughtful Jewish life without having asked the questions.



SECULAR HUMANIST JUDAISM

- The Secular Humanistic movement, a small denomination started by Sherwin Wine in 1963, caters to those Jews who wish to identify Jewishly but are opposed to God imagery.
- In 1994, the Union of Reform Judaism (then the UAHC) rejected an application for membership by a congregation that said they approached Judaism from a secular humanist perspective.

THEOLOGIES

- **Abraham Joshua Heschel: GOD IN SEARCH OF MAN** The wonder and radical amazement that we are here at all, that anything is here, calls us to ask ‘what is our duty to all this?’ That is the beginning of religious life. God searches for us and longs for connection, just as we do.
- *“Awe rather than faith is the cardinal attitude of the religious Jew. In Biblical language, the religious man is not called ‘believer,’ as he is for example in Islam (mu’min) but yare hashem (one who stands in awe of God).”*

THEOLOGIES

- **Martin Buber: I AND THOU** When people related to one another, not as objects and 'others' but as intimates who see one another deeply and connect at that level, God's presence emerges and is felt. We experience God in intimate respectful relationships with others.

THEOLOGIES

- **Mordechai Kaplan: JUDAISM AS CIVILIZATION.** God is a way of expressing our desire to be the best we can be as individuals and a society. God is not supernatural, but an integral part of the human condition.

THEOLOGIES

Emile Fackenheim: TO MEND THE WORLD

He and brother arrested on Kristallnacht, 1938, and was put in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. Escaped to England, then brought to Canada. Reform Rabbi, then Philosophy Professor, retired in Israel.

THE 614th Commandment: We must not give Hitler a posthumous victory by giving up on Judaism. We have a moral obligation to survive.

- *... we are, first, commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. We are commanded, secondly, to remember in our very guts and bones the martyrs of the Holocaust, lest their memory perish. We are forbidden, thirdly, to deny or despair of God, however much we may have to contend with him or with belief in him, lest Judaism perish. We are forbidden, finally, to despair of the world as the place which is to become the kingdom of God, lest we help make it a meaningless place in which God is dead or irrelevant and everything is permitted. To abandon any of these imperatives, in response to Hitler's victory at Auschwitz, would be to hand him yet other, posthumous victories*