



GROUPS WITHIN JUDAISM

ORTHODOX (INCLUDING MODERN ORTHODOX)

Orthodox Jews are the largest group of Jews in the UK. They believe that the *Torah* and the accompanying oral law, which was told to Moses at the same time, are the direct word of G-d, and that *Halachah* (Jewish law) guides their daily lives. For this reason, education is highly valued, and everyone is encouraged to spend time studying and debating Jewish texts and tradition.

Modern Orthodox Jews actively and enthusiastically engage with the wider world, and Rabbis are frequently asked to provide guidance about how best to do so without detriment to Jewish life.

Traditions and traditional foods vary depending on background. The main ethnic groups are *Ashkenazi* (originating from Eastern Europe), *Sephardi* (originating from Spain and Portugal), and *Mizrachi* (originating from Arab countries), and there are also significant communities with Ethiopian, and Indian backgrounds.



CHAREDI (INCLUDING CHASSIDIC)

Sometimes called 'Ultra' or 'Strictly' Orthodox. Charedi Jews embrace traditional values, and emphasise the importance of joy and spirituality in religious life. Because they believe that the *Torah* is given directly by G-d, and that *Halachah* (Jewish law) provides direction for everything they do, they devote a lot of time to understanding it better by studying the *Torah* and rabbinical texts.

Many men have beards and sidelocks and are recognisable by the black coats and hats they wear. Charedi women wear modest clothing, and married women cover their hair with a scarf, hat, or wig.

Charedi families are often large, with many children. While women take the lead in running the home, they often work outside the home too. Some Charedi Jews speak Yiddish as a first language.

Charedi Jews tend to be wary of television and other media because of the negative influence it may introduce into their lives, which are focused around celebration of Shabbat and festivals, and family occasions such as weddings.



LIBERAL

Liberal Judaism affirms the dynamic, developing character of Jewish religious tradition, and is an authentic and modern form of Judaism, rooted in deep and meaningful engagement with Jewish texts, values, culture, and history. It believes in personal freedom and responsibility, and the shared and collective bonds that unite us as Jewish people and members of humanity.

Liberal Judaism is inclusive and egalitarian, giving equal status within Judaism to those who have traditionally been excluded.

It believes that *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) is a fundamental activity for Liberal Jews on personal, communal, Jewish, and global levels. It is welcoming, open and forward-looking, and engages with wider society, playing an active role in building collaboration across the Jewish community, and with other faiths and causes.



REFORM

Reform Judaism aims to help Jews to balance their Judaism and being a full national citizen in modern society.

In Reform Synagogues, prayers are said in English and Hebrew, men and women sit together for services and there are women Rabbis. The first women Rabbis were ordained in the 20th Century. In recent years, there has been a strong focus on equality, human rights and looking after the environment.

Reform Jews see the Torah as inspired by G-d but written down by people. Torah study and debate are considered very important and the Torah is read and discussed during Shabbat services.

Reform Judaism values both tradition and text as well as knowledge of the wider world. Both should help people create their own opinions and make informed choices about their Jewish practice. This allows Judaism to be relevant to each new generation.



MASORTI

Masorti means 'traditional'. Masorti Jews are committed to *Halachah* (Jewish law) but believe that it should gradually evolve to meet the needs of a changing world. Jewish education is regarded as very important, and Masorti Jews believe that every Jewish person should have the opportunity to read and explore Jewish texts to deepen their knowledge of Jewish thought, history, and culture.

Masorti Judaism is inclusive, welcoming, questioning, and open-minded. Women are recognised as Rabbis, and synagogue services, which use traditional Hebrew prayers, are egalitarian, providing opportunities for both women and men to lead and take part, although some Masorti communities choose to have more traditional prayer services led by men.

