

# Jewish Identity & Antisemitism:

---

Jewish History, Tradition & Rise of Antisemitism

Beth Rom-Rymer, Ph.D., Lenore Walker, Ed.D. &  
Judi Steinman

Florida Psychological Association

September 13, 2025



- **Jewish Identity and Antisemitism:  
Understanding Jewish History, Tradition,  
Therapeutic Applications, and the  
Contemporary Rise of Antisemitism**
- *Presenters:*
- *Lenore Walker, PhD*
- *Beth Rom-Rymer, PhD*
- *Judi Steinman, PhD*

---

**Scan this QR code to sign in for  
this session OR use the sign in  
sheet at the door.**



# Introduce ourselves

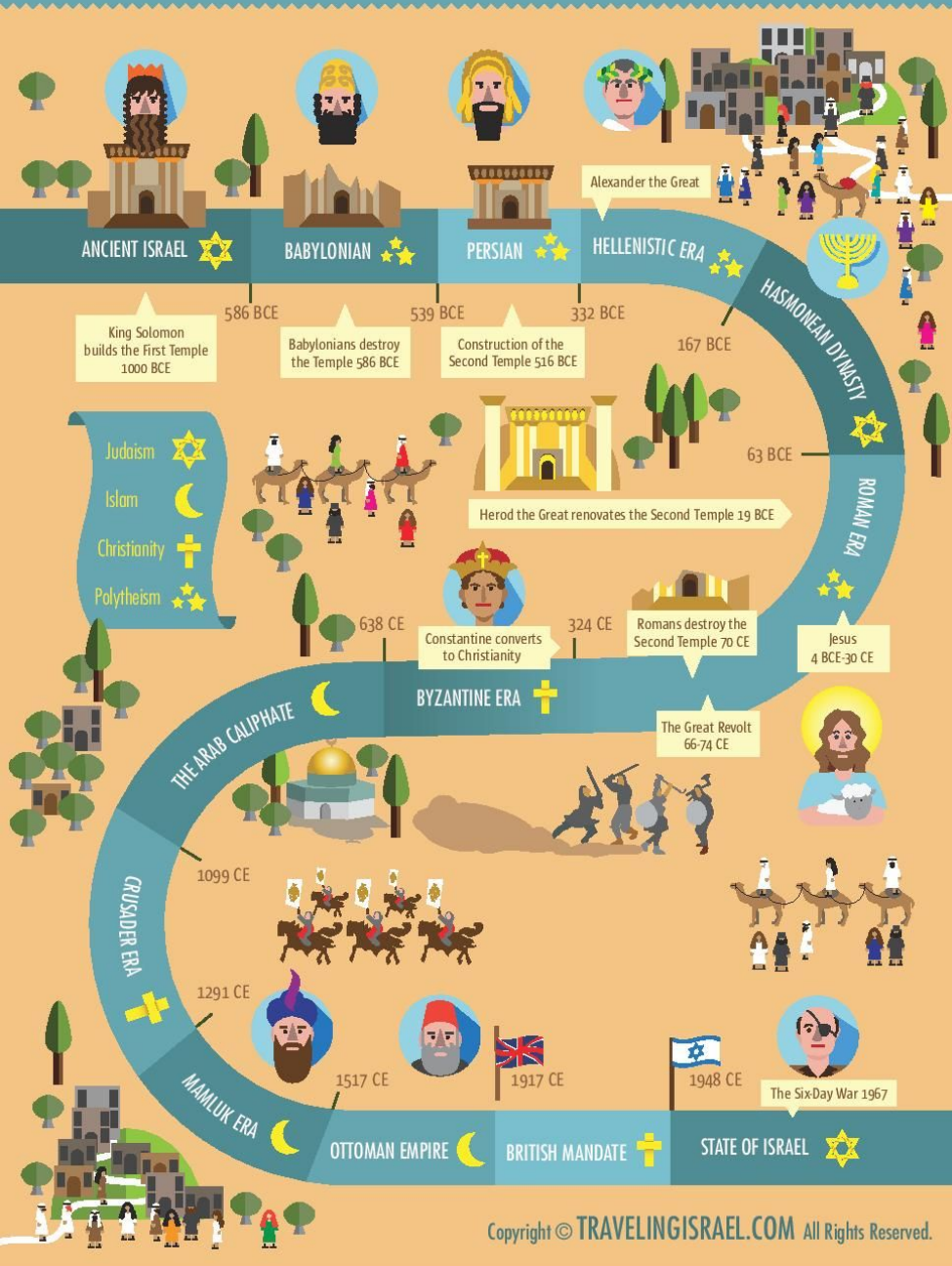


# Who is a Jew?

---

- Jews say they are a diverse people who are tied together by history, culture, language (Hebrew & Yiddish), religion, prayers, & holiday celebrations according to the Hebrew calendar.
- Most Jews believe historically we originated from the area where Israel is located today, thus our ancestral homeland.
  - 83% according to PEW Research Center (2023).
- However, due to expulsions, many were dispersed all over the world, but some Jews remained in the region.
- We have different skin color, facial features, and how we speak.
- Most believe in similar values in how we live our lives.
- Some of our foods are similar while others are very different depending on where we live.

## TIMELINE OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL



## 2025 Population Statistics

- ❑ There are **7.6 million** Jewish people living in the U.S. That is **2.4%** of the US population.
- ❑ There are **7.2 million** Jews living in Israel. That is **73%** of Israel's population.
- ❑ There are **15.8 million** Jews worldwide with 1 million Jews living outside of the US and Israel, mostly in France, Canada, Argentina, Russia, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and South Africa. That is **0.2%** of the world's population of **8 billion** people.





# Jewish Religion

---

- Many Jews believe in one G-d although may have different names.
- There are different organized religious groups of Jews such as Orthodox, Conservative, Reform & Reconstruction.
- Orthodox Jews follow certain strict rules (Halacha) & are also organized into subgroups such as Haredi & Chabad.
- Orthodox Jews are more likely to follow the Sabbath on Saturday but all Jews may wish each other, Shabat Shalom.
- Jews who do not follow religious procedures may be called secular.
- Many pray in synagogues requiring 10 people for a minyan although others pray in their homes.
- Even those who do not consider themselves religious often celebrate the high holy days, Rosh Hashanah (new year), Yom Kippur (forgiveness for sins), and Passover.

# Ethiopian Jews

---



# Singing Of The Shehechianu

---

Insert Video “Singing Of The Shehechianu”

# Shabbat Candle Lighting

---

Insert Video “Shabbat Candle Lighting”

# Jewish Culture

---

- Holidays are often celebrated in a similar way with special food, dance & music.
- Weddings often have the 'hora' played by the band with all joining in the dancing.
- Ashkanazi Jews come from Europe and have similar culture including some speaking Yiddish. Most have pale skin color.
- Sephardic & Mizrahi Jews from the Middle East are more likely to be dark skin color and have different culture but similar prayers.
- There are numerous Jewish organizations around the world that raise funds for different types of programs.
- American Jews may send their children to Jewish Day Schools, Jewish after-school programs or summer camps for culture.
- Typical Jewish foods include chicken soup with matzo balls, lox, cream cheese & bagels, and deli meats, all without shellfish and pork although non-Orthodox Jews may eat those foods also.

# Matzah Ball & Collard Greens Chicken Soup

---



# Passover Seder Plate



# Break the Yom Kippur Fast

---



# Mizrahi & Sephardim Food

---



# Hannukah

---



# Teaching the Hora to Children

---

Insert Video “Teaching the Hora to Children”

# Dancing the Hora

---

Insert Video “Dancing the Hora”

# Ashkenazi Wedding Music

---

Insert Video “Ashkenazi Wedding Dance”

# Iraqi Wedding Music

---

Insert Video “Iraqi Wedding Dance”

# Jewish Values

---

Many Jewish values come from the Halacha (613 Jewish laws & rules).

Some of the most common ones are:

- Value of the family and community (Mishpacha)
- Responsible to engage in social action to make world better (Tikkun Olam)
- Life is sacred and must be protected as best as one can (Pickuach Nefesh)
- Kindness (Chesed)
- Justice (Tzedek)
- Honor (Kvod)
- Joy (Simcha)
- Peace (Shalom)
- Charity (Tzdekek)
- Truth (Emet)
- Respect & decency (Derech Eretz)

# What is Antisemitism?

---

- Historical prejudice or hatred towards Jews just because they are Jewish.
- Most people acknowledge it is rising. Some say doubling and tripling each year.
- Controversy over definitions of antisemitic actions.
  - IHRA – International Holocaust Remembrance Association includes some speech biased against Israel in its definition
    - 31 countries signed on to this definition
  - Jerusalem – does not call speech against Israel as antisemitic
    - 370 scholars signed on
- Oldest form of hatred against a group that is expressed with violence, destruction of property, exclusion from activities, and hateful speech mostly from more conservative members of the political right.
- New antisemitism includes hateful speech including anti-Zionism and anti-Israel as well as all Jews mostly from conservative members of the political left or progressives, many of whom are Jews themselves.
  - Ex: term ‘decolonization’ is seen as hurtful & thus antisemitic as Jews were originally part of the land according to history & not colonizers.



**PEDOPHILES ARE USING THIS  
SYMBOL TO IDENTIFY EACH OTHER**

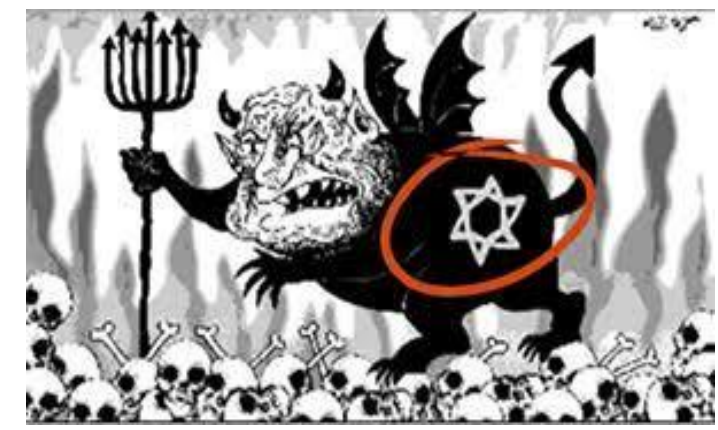


**PLEASE BE AWARE  
THE NEXT TIME YOU SEE THIS**

THE NATIONAL INTEREST | 5:06 PM

GOP Congresswoman  
Blamed Wildfires on  
Secret Jewish Space Laser

By Jonathan Chait



# The Definition of Antisemitism

## International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)

---

The Plenary in Bucharest (2016) decided to adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

**“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”**

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

1. the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, *criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.*
2. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

# Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA)

---

The **Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism** is a tool to identify, confront and raise awareness about antisemitism as it manifests in countries around the world today. It includes a [preamble](#), [definition](#), and a set of [15 guidelines](#) that provide detailed guidance for those seeking to recognize antisemitism in order to craft responses. It was developed by a group of scholars in the fields of Holocaust history, Jewish studies, and Middle East studies to meet what has become a growing challenge: providing clear guidance to identify and fight antisemitism while protecting free expression. Initially signed by *210 scholars*, it has now approximately *370 signatories*.

<https://jerusalemdeclaration.org>

# Examples of Antisemitism

---

- Walker, L. E. A., Cole, E., Friedman, S. L., Rom-Rymer, B., Steinberg, A., & Warshaw, S. (2024). The American Psychological Association and antisemitism: Toward equity, diversity, and inclusion. *American Psychologist*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0001369>
- Longest Hatred
  - Conspiracy theories
  - Blood libel allegations
- Racial – Jews are an inferior race such as perpetrated by the Nazis justifying violence
- Religious- Destruction of Synagogues. Attempts to change Jewish religion or believe Jews threaten other religions
- Social – Excluding Jews from universities, social groups, restaurants, neighborhoods
- Economic- Belief that Jews are greedy or have more money or influence a trade like motion pictures
- Political- Introducing antisemitism in political campaigns or believing Jews have undue influence on world or support Israel rather than US

# Some Current Examples of Antisemitism in APA

---

- Hate messages against Zionists or supporters of Israel posted on listservs.
- Conferences that announce topics that are biased against Jews.
- Exclusion by Diversity Groups from APA Policy Settings.
- Refusal to Believe Jews are Only 2.4% of the U.S. Population.
- Belief that Jewish psychologists are “overrepresented” in APA.
- Campus protests that are harmful.
- Isolation of Israeli Colleagues in Publications & Conferences.

# APA Committee Response To NBI

---

- AJP submitted an NBI to COR in 2023 to become an affiliate similar to other marginalized people's psychological associations.
- Response from committee denying the petition illustrated ignorance & misinformation about Jews:
  - Called 6 million Jews murdered from holocaust as “structurally marginalized.”
  - Accused petitioners as non-representative of Jews' opinions in areas clearly stated in published research: i.e. PEW, Brookings, AJC.
  - Claimed petitioners inappropriately focused on Arab rather than European countries indicating ignorance of the large migration of Jews from Arab countries to Israel in 1948.
  - Claimed there was no antisemitism against US Jews because they are white invalidating Jewish history of antisemitism including within APA as in our published AP article.
- These examples only serve to support our demand for more education of psychologists about Jewish Identity and Culture.

# 2007 APA Resolution on Antisemitism & Anti-Jewish Prejudice

---

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the American Psychological Association condemns all antisemitic attitudes and actions, both overt and covert, and will use its influence to promote fairness, respect, and dignity for all people, regardless of religion or ethnicity, in all arenas in which psychologists work and practice, and in society at large.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Psychological Association will take a leadership role in opposing antisemitism.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Psychological Association encourages all psychologists to act to eliminate all discrimination of an antisemitic nature.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Psychological Association encourages research to better understand the characteristics, causes, and consequences of both overt and covert antisemitic and Anti-Jewish prejudice.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Psychological Association will include appropriate information on antisemitism in its multicultural and diversity training material and activities, and that diversity and multicultural efforts will take cognizance of antisemitism, whether subtle or not, and will attempt to overcome it.

# What is the Harm from Antisemitic Speech?

---

- Traumatic Invalidation
- Loss of Jewish Identity
- Missed Opportunities
- Reawakening Fear from Intergenerational Trauma
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder & Other Trauma Disorders
- Need to Rebuild Resilience by Sticking Together Only with Other Jews & Allies

# Antisemitism as a Traumatic Event

---

- Antisemitism Can Produce Psychological Harm
- Psychology has Evidence About Harm From Trauma
- Education Can Prevent or Reduce Harm from Trauma
- Leadership Training Can Avoid or Identify Charismatic but Dangerous Leaders
- Psychology has Evidence-Based Interventions to Heal from Trauma
  - Individuals
  - Groups and Organizations



# Ethical Behavior Expected From Psychologists Towards Jews

---

**AUTONOMY:** Right to define one's own experience & make own decisions

**IDENTITY VALIDATION:** Respecting Jew's Diverse Culture & Honoring Self Concept

**JUSTICE:** Not marginalizing the Jewish voice or lived experience

**BOUNDARY RESPECT:** Not imposing external definitions or denying majority & minority opinions

**CULTURAL HUMILITY:** Honoring lived experiences without imposing one's own or outside interpretations

# How Can We Stop Antisemitism?

---

- Educate Ourselves & Our Colleagues About Jewish Identity & History
  - View webinars & videos
  - Read publications
  - Add Jewish Diversity & Culture to Psychology Training Curricula
- Do not Use Antisemitic Speech Yourself
- Be Aware & Speak Up when Appropriate & Safe
- Support Jewish Groups
- Nurture & Support Allies

Q & A



# Evaluation Forms

You can fill out the evaluation form using the app. Look for the evaluation form link at the bottom of each session. (preferred)

**OR**

You can fill out the evaluation sheet by hand and give it to a staff member or the moderator of the session.

You need to fill this form out to receive full credit for the session.

---

Thank you!