



# *Abrahamic Monotheism*

The story of the Abraham, whose name means “Father of Many,” is the story of a considered to be the patriarch, or father, of the Israelite nation as well as the Jewish religion and subsequently the Christian and Islamic religions.

Abraham’s chief contributions to world history were the origination of the concept of a single, almighty God and the concept that God desires to have a relationship, or covenant, with humanity.

# *Core Beliefs*

There is one God.

God created everything, including human beings, which he made in his image and likeness.

God chose a people with to share his revelation and to carry his blessing through history – the are the descendents of Abraham.

God made a covenant with the Israelites. The covenant began with Abraham.



# *Abrahamic Monotheism*

Abraham's story takes place in the Fertile Crescent region of the Middle East. Abraham lived between 2,000 and 1,500 BCE in Mesopotamia in the city-states of Ur of the Chaldeans and later Haran.



After entering his covenant with God Abraham, whose name before the covenant was Abram, took his family, including his wife Sarah, his nephew Lot, and his many servants and flocks to the Promised Land, Canaan.



Abraham's son Isaac



Isaac's son Jacob  
(also known as Israel)



Jacob's son Joseph

## *Abrahamic Monotheism*

Abraham's beliefs about God and God's covenant were further developed by the other patriarchs.



## *Abrahamic Monotheism*

Moses is the most important developer of Abraham's beliefs about God. Moses has his own revelations of God in the burning bush and on Mt. Sinai. He gives the Israelites the Torah which includes the story of their faith and 613 mitzvot, or laws for living their faith.

וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשֶׁךָ  
וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ  
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה  
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם  
עַל לִבְבְּךָ  
וּשְׁנַנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ  
וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָם  
בְּשֹׁבְתֶךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ  
וּבְלִכְתֶּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ  
וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ  
וּבְקוּמְךָ  
וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ  
וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ  
וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת  
בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ.

*Deuteronomy 6:4-9 - The Shema (part 1)*

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

You shall love the Lord your God  
with all your heart, and with all your soul,  
and with all your might.

Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day.  
Impress them upon your children.  
Recite them when you stay at home,  
and when you are away,  
when you lie down and when you get up.  
Bind them as a sign on your hand  
and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead;  
inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

# The Names of God

The proper name for the god of the Israelites is rarely spoken out loud or written out completely by devout Jews, it is often simply called “the name of God” or the tetragrammaton, which means “four letters,” because the name God has four consonants in Hebrew which are transliterated as **JHVH** using the Latin alphabet or **YHWH** using the English alphabet.

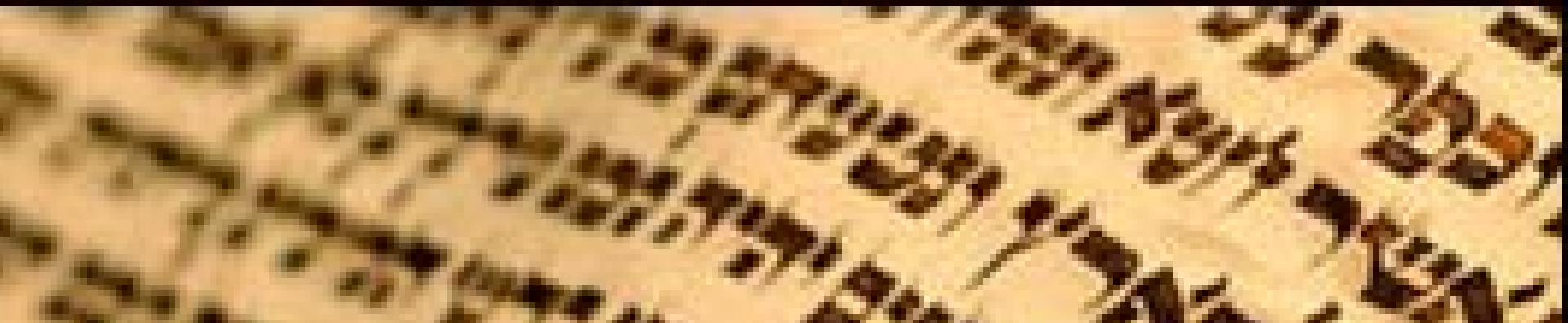
Jews do not speak the name of God out of a deep sense of respect for God and because taking their God’s name in vain is forbidden by the Ten Commandments. In ancient times, only the high priest used God’s proper name in special rituals in the Temple. In English, when the word God is written with a capital “G” it almost always indicates that we are speaking about the god of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions and we are not simply talking about any deity or powerful supernatural being. In fact God with a capital “G” is now typically considered a proper name of the god of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions. Some devout Jews will only write out God as “G-d” out of respect for the fact that it is the most common English name for their god.

In ancient times the writers of the Scriptures often used substitutes for the name of God when they referred to him in their writing.

## The most commonly used names for God used in the Hebrew Scriptures

Pronunciation	Hebrew	Usual Translation	Literal Translation	Times used
EL	אל	God	only used as name for God	250
ELOHIM	אלהים	God	He who is subject to reverence	2,570
EL SHADDAI	אל שדי	the Almighty	God Almighty	48
ADONAI	אדני	the Lord (note: lower case "ord")	master	300
YHWH	יהוה	the LORD (note: capitalized "ORD")	I am	6,823

\* Often written in English as Yahweh or Jehovah



# Jewish Bible

For Jews, the term Bible refers to the Sacred Scriptures of Judaism *only*. Today it is often referred to as the **Tanakh**. It is divided into three parts:

**Torah** (the Law or Teaching of Moses)

**Nevi'im** (the Prophets)

**Ketuvim** (the Writings)

# Torah

also called:

Chumash

Hebrew for five

Pentateuch

Greek for five

- I [Genesis](#) (*Bereisheet* בראשית),
- II [Exodus](#) (*Shemot* שמות),
- III [Leviticus](#) (*Vayikra* ויקרא),
- IV [Numbers](#) (*Bemidbar* במדבר)
- V [Deuteronomy](#) (*Devarim* דברים)

# Nevi'im

According to Jewish tradition, Nevi'im is divided into eight books. Contemporary translations subdivide these into seventeen books.

- I. [Joshua](#) or Yehoshua [יהושע]
- II. [Judges](#) or Shoftim [שופטים]
- III. [Samuel](#) or Shmu'el [שמואל]
- IV. [Kings](#) or Melakhim [מלכים] (often divided into two books)
- V. [Isaiah](#) or Yeshayahu [ישעיהו]
- VI. [Jeremiah](#) or Yirmiyahu [ירמיהו]
- VII. [Ezekiel](#) or Yehezq'el [יחזקאל]
- VIII. Trei Asar (The Twelve [Minor Prophets](#)) תרי עשר
  - [Hosea](#) or Hoshea [הושע]
  - [Joel](#) or Yo'el [יואל]
  - [Amos](#) [עמוס]
  - [Obadiah](#) or Ovadyah [עבדיה]
  - [Jonah](#) or Yonah [יונה]
  - [Micah](#) or Mikhah [מיכה]
  - [Nahum](#) or Nachum [נחום]
  - [Habakkuk](#) or Habaq'uk [חבקוק]
  - [Zephaniah](#) or Tsefania [צפניה]
  - [Haggai](#) [חגי]
  - [Zechariah](#) or Zekharia [זכריה]
  - [Malachi](#) or Malakhi [מלאכי]



# Ketuvim

These "Writings," were probably written during or after the Babylonian Exile

- I. Tehillim ([Psalms](#)) תהלים
- II. Mishlei ([Book of Proverbs](#)) משלי
- III. 'Iyyov ([Book of Job](#)) איוב
- IV. Shir ha-Shirim ([Song of Songs](#)) שיר השירים
- V. Ruth ([Book of Ruth](#)) רות
- VI. Eikhah ([Lamentations](#)) איכה
- VII. Kohelet ([Ecclesiastes](#)) קהלת
- VIII. Esther ([Book of Esther](#)) אסתר
- IX. Daniel ([Book of Daniel](#)) דניאל
- X. Ezra  
often divided into two books,  
[Book of Ezra](#) נחמיה and  
[Book of Nehemiah](#) עזרא
- XI. Divrei ha-Yamim ([Chronicles](#)) הימים דברי  
often divided into two books

# *Specific Terms to Know*

**Semitic** = term for any of the peoples of the Middle East who share a common linguistic heritage (i.e. Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Syriac, etc.). A person who speaks one of these languages can be called a **Semite**. Ancient Hebrew scholars believed that these peoples shared a common language because they were all descended from Noah's son Shem. Practically speaking, the negative of the term is usually only used today with those who speak Hebrew, the Jews ... as in anti-Semitic.

**Hebrew** = this term primarily refers to the language Hebrew, but can also be used describe the ethnic group that speaks Hebrew ... as in Moses gave God's law to the Hebrews.

**Israel** = this term is used for the modern day Middle Eastern country called Israel, but also for the ancient nation descended from Abraham's grandson Jacob, who was also known as Israel.

**Jew** = term derived the name of the tribe of Israelites descended from Jacob's son Judah. Today, the term is used for anyone who practices the religion developed by Abraham and Moses, called **Judaism**.

# *Specific Terms to Know*

**“Religious Jews”** or **“Observant Jews”** = terms used for those Jews who practice both the religion and culture of Judaism – *example*: a person of Jewish heritage who observes the laws of kosher food.

(similar to the term “Practicing Catholics”)

**“Cultural Jews”** or **“Nonobservant Jews”** = terms used for those Jews who only practice the culture of Judaism but do not regular involve themselves in the religious aspects of Judaism – *example*: a person of Jewish heritage who doesn’t observe Jewish laws but has a menorah at Chanukah because it is a family tradition.

(similar to the term “Non-Practicing Catholics”)