

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF BANI ISRAEL

The twelve tribes of Bani Israel are identified by name in the Bible (Book of **Genesis : 49 : 3** to **27**), and their collective identity as the twelve tribes is validated in **Genesis : 49 : 28**. They are all descendants of **JACOB** (referred to as **Yaqoob in Islam**), who was **given the name ISRAEL** after contending with God, as noted with a capital 'G' for God in **Genesis : 32 : 22 to 28** and **Genesis : 35 : 10**, where it is declared: "**You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel**, for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed." **1. REUBEN 2. SIMEON 3. LEVI 4. JUDAH 5. DAN 6. NEPHTALI 7. GAD 8. ASHER 9. ISSACHAR 10. ZEBULUN 11. JOSEPH – a. Manasseh b. Ephraim 12. BENJAMIN**

Due to famine, **Jacob**, with **his twelve sons** moved to **Egypt**. Upon their arrival, they numbered around seventy individuals, but within four generations, they expanded to nearly 600,000 men of military age. Alarmed by their rapid growth, the **Pharaoh** first enslaved them and then ordered the execution of every newborn Hebrew male on being warned by the magicians of his palace that a boy child from the children of Israel will end the empire of Pharaoh.

Moosa (in Islam) / **Moses**, according to Biblical narratives, was the great-great-grandson of Levi, one of the sons of Israel. He was born during the time when **Pharaoh** had commanded the killing of all Hebrew male infants. To save him, his mother and elder sister placed him in a waterproof basket and set it adrift on the Nile. The basket reached the area near Pharaoh's palace, where it was discovered by the wife of Pharaoh.

From that point onward, the story of Moses progresses until his divinely mandated return to Egypt to deliver Islamic Da'wah to Pharaoh, Pharaoh's rejection of that message, the conversion of the magicians to Islam, and ultimately the rescue of Bani Israel by Allah's decree and the drowning of Pharaoh.

When Moses reached the border of Palestine which was then known as Canaan, Allah commanded **Moses** to enter the city and fight its corrupt and treacherous inhabitants, as mentioned in Al-Qur'an, Sura Ma'ida 5:20–27. During the period of divine punishment imposed on these Jews/Bani Israel in the wilderness, Moses passed away before they entered the Promised Land. Thereafter, **Yusha bin Nun**, known as **Joshua** in the Bible, regrouped Bani Israel and urged them forcefully to unite and struggle. With Allah's support, they prevailed, living as twelve distinct tribal kingdoms that outwardly claimed unity yet constantly competed with one another. Over time, rivalry bred jealousy and hostility, which escalated into destructive internal wars and increasing rebellion against Allah. Some tribes sought support from neighboring powers and, in the course of trade and diplomacy, adopted various pagan and gentile customs, compromising the religious tenets revealed by Allah in the Torah given to Musa Alaihas Salaam.

With the leadership of **Saul (Talut in Al-Qur'an, Sura Baqra 2 : 246 to 251)**, widely regarded by Jews, Christians, and Muslims as the **first king** of a united Israel, the **United Kingdom of Israel** was established (**1030 B.C. to 930 B.C.**). This kingdom unified all twelve Israelite tribes within a territory roughly corresponding to present-day modern Israel and the Palestinian regions.

Allah then appointed **David (Da'wood in Islam)** as king of Bani Israel after Saul. Under David, the first organized effort began to construct a dedicated place of worship, later known as Beiyt al Maqhdish (Hebrew), commonly rendered in English as the **Temple of Solomon** and in Arabic as Baiyt ul Muqhaddas or **Masjid al-Aqsa** in Palestine. After David's death, his son **Solomon (Sulaymaan in Islam)** assumed rule over the United Monarchy, under whom Bani Israel enjoyed exceptional divine favor and completed the construction of the **Temple of Solomon – Baiytul Muqhaddas**.

Soon after **Solomon's death**, around 930 B.C., serious disputes arose among the twelve tribes. Nine of the eleven landholding tribes rejected the succession of **Rehoboam**, son of Solomon, as king, while the Levites and the tribe of Benjamin (BinYaameen

in Islam), who had not been allotted land and instead served as priests among the other tribes, occupied a distinct status. These tensions escalated into open conflict, splitting the United Kingdom of Israel into two states: a **Northern Kingdom**, with most of the territory and nine tribes, and a **Southern Kingdom**, with a smaller territory associated with Judah and Benjamin.

The **Assyrian Empire**, a major regional power bordering the northern territories of Israel, invaded and decisively destroyed the Northern Kingdom in about 722 B.C., inflicting immense loss of life and property. Later, as referenced in the **Qur'an** in **Sura Bani Israel 17 : 4 to 8**, a pro-Egyptian faction came to power in Judah. **Jehoiakim**, king of Judah, rebelled against **Babylon** around **598 B.C.**, prompting **Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon** to **besiege Jerusalem**, devastate the city, and deport many Jews into exile, enslaving others.

Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the **Temple of Solomon / Baiyt ul Muqhaddas**, leaving no stone intact, and razed the houses entirely so that the roofs were levelled with the ground. This devastation was intended to deter any resettlement, and even animals were not spared.

Emperor Cyrus, founder of the **Persian Empire**, later emerged as a benefactor by **permitting the Jews**, around **530 B.C.**, to **return to the Palestinian region** and to **rebuild the Temple of Solomon / Baiyt ul Muqhaddas** from which they had been displaced and enslaved by the Assyrians.

Under the guidance of **Ezra / Uzair** (in Islam) they regrouped and reconstructed **Temple of Solomon / Baiyt ul Muqhaddas** also called as **Masjid e Aqsa**. Uzair Alaihas Salaam is noted in **Al-Qur'an**, Sura **Baqra 2 : 259** and Sura **Tauba : 9 : 30**

Uzair Alaihas Salaam became their spiritual leader, restoring many religious teachings they had lost and compiling them into a unified form. He organized the **Great Assembly** called in the **Greek** as **Synagogue**, comprising about 120 scribes responsible for teaching various religious disciplines to the *bani* Israel that is the children of Israel. Under this renewed leadership, the children of Israel also once again enjoyed prosperity and developed into a strong nation.

However, over time they again degenerated into an evil and adulterous generation, violating the laws of Allah. Consequently, Allah subjected them to successive "lesser" punishments at the hands of **Alexander the Great**, the **Ptolemaic dynasty**, and the **Seleucid Empire**, each of whom repeatedly weakened *bani* Israel's political power and prevented them from re-emerging as a unified force.

Identity of being referred as Jews belonging to the family of Judah, living in the entire land of Canaan what is today the combined area of Palestine + Israel became diluted as a national entity; communities could preserve certain customs but not fully implement the comprehensive **laws of Tora't** that was given as a Revelation to Moses / Musa.

Subsequently the **Roman rule** commenced when General **Pompey** entered the region around **63 B.C.**, and **Roman authority** was **consolidated** under **Herod of Rome**.

Herod of Rome **undertook** a **major renovation** and **expansion of Temple of Solomon / Baiyt ul Muqhaddas** that later came to be known as the **Second Temple of Solomon**, including a significant enlargement of the Temple Mount platform, around 19 B.C. The **Romans allowed the Jews a degree of autonomy in personal and religious matters but required them to adhere to Roman law** as the **law of the land**.

This expanded Second Temple of Solomon / Baiyt ul Muqhaddas was supposed to have been on a part of the land **measuring about 33 acres** on which **in our modern times** stand the **Masjid al Aqhsa**, the golden **Dome of the Rock** important to Muslims, the **Wailing Wall** of the **Jews** and the **Sepulchre of the Church of Nativity of Jesus Christ** important to **Christians**.

But, once again the Jewish tribes of the twelve children of Israel started to fight and kill each other and confused themselves by creating several versions of what they called the Tora't of Moses. Pharisees and Sadducees and the Scribes were the main representatives of the main face of the Jewish community under Roman Empire.

The **Pharisees** were more popular among the common people and were strongly committed to preserving Jewish law and identity, which **often** put them **at odds with Roman cultural and political pressures**. While some Pharisees could be pragmatic and work with Roman power when necessary, **their movement was much less accommodating to Roman rule and was associated with resistance**, even inspiring more radical **anti-Roman groups** like the Zealots.

The **Sadducees** were **largely** drawn from **priestly** and **aristocratic elites** who **controlled** the **Temple** and **held** many **official positions under Rome's** oversight. Because their status and power depended on the existing political order, they tended to **cooperate** with Roman authorities. They were considered collaborators supporting Roman rule to maintain their privileges.

In this context appeared the **miraculous child Jesus Christ / Eesaa ibn e Maryam**, meaning Jesus the son of **Mary**, born without any male intervention. **His mission** required him to address **three principal challenges**:

1. Convincing the Jews that he was not **walad uz zina** [May Allah forbid] but was miraculously born by Allah's will.
2. Reaffirming the actual teachings of the Tora't of Moses and conveying the Injeel (Gospel of Jesus) revealed to him.
3. Ensuring he was not perceived as a political rebel against Roman authority.

The *bani* Israel of his time, however, opposed **Jesus Christ / Eesaa ibn e Maryam** from his birth, refusing to accept his miraculous nativity. Seeking to present themselves as secular and loyal subjects of Rome, they tried to portray Jesus Christ as a traitor and insurgent against the Roman government. Eventually, they succeeded, and the Roman governor **Pontius Pilate**, as named in the Bible, condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion. (Muslims firmly reject this claim, emphasizing that even the Biblical narrative lacks an indisputable eyewitness, and, affirming the **Qur'an** as the infallible Word of Allah, they uphold the account in **Sura Nisa 4:157 to 159**, which denies that **Jesus Christ / Eesaa ibn e Maryam** was killed or crucified and believe that he was risen up alive miraculously by Allah and he will surely come at the end of the times to correct those who rejected him as imposter and false Christ and to correct those who falsely called him and associated him with the Al Mighty Allah).

Constantine of Rome declared himself a Christian around **300 C.E.**, giving Christianity a powerful global impetus. Within about the **next three decades**, **Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire**. Under the Roman Rule the Romans controlled Jerusalem, Masjid e Aqsa / Solomon's Temple remained under their authority until **Umar[r]** captured Jerusalem in **637 C.E.** The site later fell to the **Christian Crusaders** around **1090 C.E.** and **remained under** their control until **Salahuddin Ayyubi** recaptured it in **1187 C.E.**

In **1967 C.E.**, it was seized by the Israeli army during the **Six Day War**, after which the site was entrusted to the Muslim Waqf, with Israel stipulating conditions on access. A political movement called as the **Zionist movement** emerged among secular Jewish financiers and activists determined to restore Jewish national glory and recover lost territory. Initially manifesting as anti-tax protests and attacks on Roman citizens, it later evolved into a broader set of religious and ethnic tensions between Greek, Roman, and Jewish communities.

SECOND TIME PUNISHMENT OF ALLAH

Between **66 C.E.** and **70 C.E.**, a major revolt culminated in 70 C.E. when **Roman** forces under **Titus**, who would later become emperor, **launched a devastating campaign against the Jews**. He virtually emptied the lands of the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah of their Jewish population and demolished Masjid e Aqsa—the Second Temple—leaving only supporting structures, including the **Western Wall**. This wall, known among **Jews** as the **Wailing Wall** and among Muslims as **al-Buraq**

Wall. It is believed by Muslims to be the place where the conveyance of Muhammad [s] was tethered during the **Mi'raj** from that site which is today under the golden dome of the structure called as Dome of The Rock.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, after leading the assembled prophets in prayer at Masjid e Aqsa, Muhammad [s] is believed to have ascended bodily to the heavens, as stated in **Qur'an**, Sura **Bani Israel 17 : 1** and authentic Ahadees in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. In **691 C.E.**, **Abdul Malik bin Marwan**, an Umayyad caliph, built a dome over the rock from which Muhammad [s] ascended, now known as the **Dome of the Rock**, the iconic golden dome visible in contemporary images of Masjid e Aqsa.

For many centuries thereafter, the Jews could not re-establish themselves as a cohesive nation. Only in **1917 C.E.**, after the British conquest and colonization of Palestine, were Jews again officially permitted to settle there under the **Balfour Declaration**. On **15 May 1948 C.E.**, the Jews proclaimed the **State of Israel** as an independent Jewish state, which the United States, under President Truman, recognized within minutes. When asked whether such immediate recognition might offend millions of Arabs in the region, Truman reportedly replied that *there were no Arabs in his electoral constituency*.

THE TEN LOST TRIBES OF BANI ISRAEL

The notion of the "**Ten Lost Tribes**" is **debated**, as the **Hebrew Bible does not explicitly use this expression**. The **concept** is **mainly inferred from the Bible** from the verses such as **1 Kings : 11 : 31** and **11 : 35**, where the term "**ten tribes**" appears.

Contemporary groups claiming descent from the Lost Tribes include:

1. Bani Ephraim of southern India
2. Nazarenes of Kerala, India
3. Bani Israel communities near Mumbai, Pune, and Ahmedabad in South Asia
4. Bani Menashe of India
5. Beta Israel of Ethiopia
6. Bukhari-an Jews of Central Asia
7. Persian Jews in Iran
8. Igbo Jews of Nigeria
9. Samaritans residing in present-day Israel and Palestine, today numbering only about 600

Historians have observed notable similarities between Pashtun customs in Afghanistan and Pakistan and ancient Jewish practices. Some scholars report a historic **Jewish presence in Kaifeng, China**, from medieval times to the present, and the **Chiang Min** people of northwest China claim descent from Prophet Abraham. The **British Israelism** advances the claim that the British are descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. The **Makuya** group in Japan makes similar assertions. The **Bakwa Dishi** in Congo and the **House of Ghana** likewise claim Israelite ancestry, though not as specific descendants of any one tribe.

Historically, whenever the Jews again lapsed into rebellion and sin against Allah's law, divine punishment was renewed. Thus, various rulers repeatedly subdued them and prevented them from securely reuniting as a single nation.

WHAT IS THE GREAT ASSEMBLY

(Hebrew: אֲנֶשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה), or **Anshei KNESSET HaGedolah** (אֲנֶשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה, "**The Men of the Great Assembly**"), also known as the **Great Synagogue**, is described in **Jewish tradition** as an **assembly of 120 scribes, sages, and prophets**. They operated in the transitional period between the end of Biblical prophecy and the rise of **Rabbinic Judaism**, marking the shift from the era of prophets to that of rabbis and spanning roughly two centuries **until about 70 C.E.**

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Developments in Judaism attributed to this body include the consolidation of the Jewish **Biblical canon**, incorporating: Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, and the Twelve Minor Prophets; the **threefold classification of the Oral Law**, dividing the study of the **Mishnah** (in its broader sense) into **Midrash**, **Halakot** and **Aggadah** the institution of the **Feast of Purim**; and the establishment of the **Shemoneh 'Esreh** (Amidah) and other synagogue prayers, rituals, and benedictions. Some modern scholars, not eminent though, sometimes doubt the very existence of Great Assembly precisely as described.

MISHNAH is generally regarded as the earliest major work of Rabbinic literature. Over approximately four centuries, its legal, narrative, and ethical material was examined and debated in the two main centres of Jewish life—Israel and Babylonia—producing the **Gemara**.

TALMUD is the compilation of the **Mishnah** together with the **Gemara**, comprising discussions and debates over the authority and application of the oral law as the foundational corpus of Rabbinic literature.

MIDRASH, literally “to investigate” or “to study,” in the context of the Oral Torah, denotes the art of persuasive biblical exegesis. It seeks to communicate meaning through logical reasoning (logos), personal or communal experience (pathos), and moral or ethical principles (ethos), functioning as a homiletic method for teaching philosophy and psychology through scriptural interpretation.

Jewish Biblical exegesis is often described by the acronym **PaRDeS**:

P – **Peshat**: the plain or literal meaning

R – **Remez**: the deeper, allusive meaning

D – **Derash**: to inquire or seek interpretive insight

S – **Sod**: the hidden or mystical “secret.”

HALAKOT (from the Hebrew root “to go” or “to walk”) is often translated as “Jewish law” and encompasses Biblical commandments (the 613 mitzvot), as well as later Talmudic and rabbinic legislation, customs, and traditions. Historically, **Halakha** functioned as both civil and religious law for many Jewish communities. Under contemporary Israeli law, certain areas of family and personal status fall within the jurisdiction of rabbinic courts and are thus governed according to Halakha.

AGGADOT is a collection of rabbinic non-legal teachings that includes folklore, historical narratives, moral exhortations, and practical guidance in fields ranging from commerce to medicine. It represents the non-legalistic, persuasive exegesis within classical Rabbinic literature, especially in the **Talmud** and **Midrash**, and forms a key component of Judaism’s narrative and ethical tradition.

Modern Israel

Following the **Founding Of The Modern State Of Israel** in **1948**, the leaders of the first sovereign Jewish state in nearly two millennia, aware of the historical **Great Assembly of 120 members**, chose to name their new national legislature the **Knesset** (“Assembly” or “Gathering”). The modern **Parliament of Israel** thus **comprises 120 elected representatives**, echoing the number associated with the Great Assembly and symbolizing the continuity of Jewish communal governance from antiquity to the present.

Similarly, “**Beit Knesset**” (בית כנסת), the Hebrew term for **Synagogue**, literally means “**house of gathering**,” reflecting the same concept of communal assembly and worship.