



Exterior of a synagogue

kept everyday jobs and only acted as rabbis when working at the synagogue. About 2,000 years ago rabbis began to speak about the *Talmud*, or oral law. Jews believe the Talmud continues to unfold in every generation, meaning that God's teachings are a continuing revelation. Rabbis work to understand the ongoing revelation of God's laws and adapt them to the modern world.

The Torah's laws direct many aspects of Jewish religious and social life. For instance, the Torah commands all Jews to fast (refrain from eating and drinking) during the holiday of *Yom Kippur*, the day of atonement (being sorry for bad acts). The Torah also calls Jews to give alms to the needy to create justice in the world. The Torah includes the rules of *kashrut*, which outlines what a Jew can eat. Foods a Jew can eat are called *kosher* because they meet the Torah's requirements concerning the clean preparation of food. Food that is not kosher is called *tref*, and includes pork, shellfish, and meat prepared with dairy products. Today, Jews from different sects keep *kashrut* to varying degrees. The three main sects of Judaism are Orthodox, Conservative, and Reformed. All three have a special reverence for Jerusalem because it is the sacred city of the prophets.