

The Nishma Research 2023 Jewish Community Profile: Survey Questionnaire

**Beliefs, Practices, Attitudes and Priorities Across the Jewish Community
With a Focus on U.S. Modern Orthodox and Haredi (Chasidish and Yeshivish) Sectors**



Conducted by Nishma Research
West Hartford, Connecticut
<http://nishmaresearch.com>

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The Nishma Research 2023 Jewish Community Profile

Questionnaire Finalized January 1, 2023.

The online survey did not display the section headings.

Questions are asked of all respondents, except where otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

What issues should be the priorities of the Jewish community? We want to know what you think about an array of issues affecting the Jewish community!

Nishma Research conducts this broad communal profile every five years. This confidential survey is for all Jewish individuals aged 18 and older, and takes about 15 minutes. Among couples, we encourage both spouses to each take the survey. Only a few early questions require a response (indicated by an asterisk), but we hope you will respond as fully as possible.

At the end of the survey, you will be able to enter to win one of ten \$100 Amazon Gift Cards.

Nishma Research, an independent research firm, is conducting this survey, which is sponsored by Micah Philanthropies. We are members of the Orthodox community, with a shared mission of enhancing overall Jewish religious and communal life. If you have any questions, email Mark Trencher at mark@nishmaresearch.com.

JEWISH IDENTIFICATION

Q1. Which of the following categories best describes how you identify Jewishly? [Response Required]

- Modern / Centrist Orthodox
- Yeshivish, Litvish, Agudah
- Chasidish, not including Chabad-Lubavitch
- Chabad-Lubavitch
- Other Orthodox, traditional, halachic – Describe (optional) [Text Box]
- Not Orthodox
- Not Jewish [Terminate with message: Thank you for your response, but sorry, you do not qualify to take this survey. You may close this web browser window or tab to exit the survey. Thank you.]

[Ask if Modern / Centrist Orthodox]

Q2a. Where do you see yourself within the range of Modern / Centrist Orthodoxy?

- “To the left” ... Liberal Modern Orthodox
- “In the center” ... Centrist Modern Orthodox
- “To the right” ... More stringent (*machmir*) Centrist Orthodox
- Not sure

[Ask if Yeshivish / Litvish / Agudah]

Q2b. Would you describe yourself as “Modern Yeshivish”?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

[Ask if Chasidish]

Q2c. Would you describe yourself as “Modern Chasidish”?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q3. Is your Jewish background ...

- Ashkenazi
- Sephardi or Mizrahi
- Mixed or Other – Please describe [Text Box]
- Not sure

[Ask if Not Orthodox]

Q4. Which of the following best defines how you identify Jewishly?

- Conservative
- Reform
- Reconstructionist
- Renewal
- Secular Humanist
- Culturally or ethnically Jewish, or just Jewish
- None of the above

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DEMOGRAPHICS PART 1

Q5. What is your gender? [Response Required]

- Male
- Female
- Non-conforming or would rather not say

Q6. What is your age?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75+

Q7. Where do you live? [Response Required]

- United States
- Israel
- Canada
- Great Britain
- France
- Latin America
- Other – Please enter [Text Box]

[Ask if live in United States]

Q7a. What are the first three digits of your zip code? __ __ __

Q8. What is your marital/relationship status?

- Married
- Single, never married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Living with a partner or in an exclusive relationship

[Ask if marital status is not Single]

Q9. How many children do you have?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or 5
- 6 or more

BELIEFS

Q10. To what extent do you believe the following statements?

- Hashem (G-d) created the world.
- Hashem gave the written Torah to the Jewish people, through Moshe, at Mt. Sinai.
- The authority of the Oral Torah (Torah she-b'al peh ... Mishna, Talmud, etc.) traces back to Mt. Sinai.
- Hashem is involved in all of the world's day-to-day activities.

Response Options:

- Fully believe / Tend to believe / Neither believe nor disbelieve, or don't know / Tend to disbelieve / Disbelieve

PRACTICES

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q11a. How would you rate your personal observance in the following areas?

- I am shomer shabbat.
- I keep kosher.
- I daven Shacharit every day.
- [Ask if Male] I daven with tefillin every weekday.
- [Ask if Male] I daven with a minyan at least once a day.
- I daven mincha/maariv during the week.
- [Ask if Male] I wear a kippah or hat in public.
- [Ask if Female] I cover my hair in public.
- [Ask if Married and age 18 to 54] My spouse and I observe the laws of taharat ha'mishpacha (family purity, mikveh). (No response is needed if this is not relevant.)
- I say a bracha before eating or drinking.
- I bentch or say a bracha acharona after eating.
- I have asked a rabbi/rov a halachic question in the past year.
- I fast all day on the "minor" fast days (Tzom Gedaliah, Asara b'Tevet, Taanit Esther, 17th of Tamuz). (Note: if medical or other conditions don't allow this, please skip this question.)

Response Options:

- Always / Usually / Sometimes / Rarely or never

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[Ask if Not Orthodox]

Q11b. How would you rate your personal observance in the following areas?

- I am shomer shabbat.
- I keep kosher.
- I daven (pray) Shacharit every day.

Response Options:

- Always / Usually / Sometimes / Rarely or never

OVERALL JEWISH FEELING

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q12. On a typical weekday, how much do you feel Hashem's presence in your life?

- Pretty much all of the time
- Very often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Not at all

Q13. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Overall, my life is Jewishly fulfilling.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

OBSERVANCE

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q14. Would you say you are currently more or less religiously observant than you were ten years ago?

- I am much more observant now
- Somewhat more observant
- No real change
- Somewhat less observant
- Much less observant
- Not sure

[Ask if much more or somewhat more observant]

Q15a. Why do you see yourself as more observant now? What kind of changes have you made, in terms of things you are doing or not doing? Why? [Open-Ended]

[Ask if much less or somewhat less observant]

Q15b. Why do you see yourself as less observant now? What kind of changes have you made, in terms of things you are doing or not doing? Why? [Open-Ended]

DENOMINATIONAL OPTIMISM

[Ask if Modern / Centrist Orthodox]

Q16a. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of Modern Orthodoxy?

- Very optimistic
- Somewhat optimistic
- Neutral, neither optimistic nor pessimistic
- Somewhat pessimistic
- Very pessimistic
- Don't know

Ask if Chasidish]

Q16b. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of Chasidish Jewry?
[Same response options as Q16a]

[Ask if Yeshivish]

Q16c. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of Yeshivish Jewry?
[Same response options as Q16a]

[Ask if Conservative]

Q16d. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of Conservative Jewry?
[Same response options as Q16a]

[Ask if Reform]

Q16e. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of Reform Jewry?
[Same response options as Q16a]

[Ask if Non-Orthodox and not Reform or Conservative]

Q16f. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of your denomination (the group with which you define yourself Jewishly)?
[Same response options as Q16a]

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TZNIUT

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q17. Are the current practices of tzniut (modesty in dress and behavior) in your community ...

- Appropriate
- Too extreme
- Too lenient

[Ask if too extreme]

Q18a. Why do you say that the current practices of tzniut in your community are too extreme? [Open-Ended]

[Ask if too lenient]

Q18b. Why do you say that the current practices of tzniut in your community are too lenient? [Open-Ended]

SHUL

Q19. Is there a shul that you consider to be your primary shul, the one you often or mostly go to, and/or where you are a member?

- Yes
- No

[Ask if has a primary shul]

Q20. To what extent do you agree with these statements as they relate to your primary shul?

- I attend shul at least once a week.
- I feel welcome in shul.
- My shul cares about me.
- My shul values my opinions.
- I go to my shul rabbi for halachic guidance.
- [Ask if Orthodox female] I go to my shul rebbitzin for guidance.

Response Options:

- Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Disagree somewhat / Disagree not apply

ROLE OF WOMEN

[Ask if has a primary shul]

Q21. Does your primary shul currently have any women in ...

- Lay leadership positions (president, officers, board of directors, committee heads)?
- Paid staff positions (such as clerical, administrative, financial, etc.)?
- Paid “clergy-related” types of positions (doing things like providing religious guidance, Torah teaching, pastoral care, *Yoetzet Halachah*, etc.)?

Response Options:

- Yes / No / Not sure

[Ask if Female and shul has women in clergy-related types of positions]

Q22a. Are you yourself personally involved in a shul “clergy-related” type of position, as described in the preceding question?

- Yes – What is your title? [Open-Ended; Response Required]
- No

[Ask if no women in shul clergy-related types of positions]

Q22b. How would you feel about your shul having women in shul “clergy-related” types of positions, as described in the preceding question?

- I would support this
- I am neutral, or I leave this up to the rabbi's decision
- I am against this
- Not sure

[Ask if Modern / Centrist Orthodox and has a primary shul]

Q23. Which of the following is currently being done in your primary shul?

- Women are eligible to be shul president.
- Religious classes on a high intellectual level are available to women.
- Women are eligible to officiate at a funeral.
- Women are eligible to say Mourner’s Kaddish or Birkat Gomel out loud, even if no men are saying it.
- Women have opportunities to read appropriate megilot for Jewish holidays, in a women’s service.
- Women have opportunities to read from a Sefer Torah, in a women’s service.
- Women have opportunities to dance with a Sefer Torah on Simchat Torah, in a women’s section.

Response Options:

- Yes / No / Not sure

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[Ask if Modern / Centrist Orthodox]

Q24. Now please think of the Modern/Centrist Orthodox community as a whole (not just your shul). What are your thoughts on the following?

- Women should be eligible to be shul president.
- There should be religious classes available to women, that are on a high intellectual level.
- Talmud classes should be available to women.
- Women should be eligible to officiate at a funeral.
- Women should be eligible to say Mourner's Kaddish or Birkat Gomel out loud, even if no men are saying it.
- Shuls should provide opportunities for women to read appropriate megilot for Jewish holidays, in a women's service.
- Shuls should provide opportunities for women to read from a Sefer Torah, in a women's service.
- Shuls should provide opportunities for women to dance with a Sefer Torah on Simchat Torah, in a women's section.

Response Options:

- I favor this / I am neutral, or I defer to what the rabbis decide / I oppose this / Don't know or not applicable

[Ask if Modern / Centrist Orthodox]

Q25. Do you agree with the following statement: Looking at my Orthodox community overall, women should have opportunities to be in "clergy-related" types of shul positions.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- Does not apply

[Ask if Modern / Centrist Orthodox and agree fully or somewhat that women should have opportunities in shul clergy-related type of position]

Q26. With respect to women in your Orthodox community who are in clergy-related positions, how important is it that they be given some type of title that indicates that their position is in the "clergy" realm?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not too important
- Not at all important
- Don't know

[Ask if woman who is personally involved in a shul "clergy-related" type of position]

Q27. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, as they relate to the "clergy-related" type of position that you hold?

- My interactions with the shul rabbi are positive.
- I am a good fit for the shul.
- I am having a positive religious impact.
- I am respected.
- My position attracts people to shul.

Response Options:

- Strongly agree / Somewhat agree / Neither agree nor disagree, or don't know / Somewhat disagree / Strongly disagree / Doesn't apply

ISRAEL

[Ask if not a resident of Israel]

Q28. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- I am emotionally attached to Israel.
- I am active in support of Israel.
- I visit Israel often.
- I keep up-to-date on news relating to Israel.

Response Options:

- Agree to a great extent / Agree somewhat / Agree a little / Do not at all agree

[Ask if not a resident of Israel]

Q29. How many close relatives of yours (parents, siblings, children, grandchildren) live in Israel?

- None
- One or two
- Three or four
- Five or more

[Ask if not a resident of Israel]

Q30. Have you lived in Israel for a period of a year or more (not including a gap year)?

- Yes
- No

[Ask if lived in Israel for a year or more]

Q31. Why did you leave Israel? [Open-Ended]

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[Ask if not a resident of Israel]

Q32. How likely are you to move to Israel (either permanently / making aliyah, or to "try it out") in the next five years?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Not sure

[Ask if very or somewhat likely to move to Israel]

Q33. Would you view this move to Israel as a permanent move (aliyah), or more as a "trying it out" move?

- Permanent move (aliyah)
- Trying it out; or not sure

[Ask if very likely to move to Israel]

Q34. Please check up to the top five reasons why you would move to Israel.

[Maximum of 5 responses]

- Love for the State of Israel
- Spiritual / religious reasons
- Connection to the Jewish people
- To be closer to my family
- Cost of children's education
- Health care
- Retirement
- Antisemitism where I live
- General political situation where I live
- Job/professional/business opportunities
- Israel as a technological, "startup nation"
- Opportunity for remote work
- Just generally want to try it out
- Other – Please describe [Open-Ended; Required response]

[Ask if a resident of Israel]

Q35. Do you ever consider moving away from Israel?

- We never consider this
- We sometimes consider this
- We often consider this

[Ask if often consider moving away from Israel]

Q36. Do you consider moving permanently or temporarily Why would you move? Open-Ended

Q37. What are your reactions toward the newly elected Israeli government?

- Very pleased
- Somewhat pleased
- Neutral
- Somewhat concerned
- Very concerned
- Don't know enough to comment

[Ask if very or somewhat pleased]

Q38a. Why are you pleased about the newly elected Israeli government? Open-Ended

[Ask if very or somewhat concerned]

Q38b. Why are you concerned about the newly elected Israeli government? Open-Ended

AGUNOT

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q39. How familiar are you with the halachic pre-nuptial agreement that some couples use to reduce potential agunah situations?

- Very familiar
- Generally familiar
- Only slightly familiar
- Never heard of it
- Not sure

[Ask if Orthodox, not single, and age 18-54]

Q40. Did you and your spouse sign a halachic pre-nuptial agreement before your marriage?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

[Ask if Orthodox, male, divorced or separated]

Q41a. You indicated that you are divorced. How did that process go (with respect to your most recent spouse, if more than one)?

- I gave a get my wife in a timely manner.
- There were some hold-ups with the get, but I did give it eventually.
- To date, I have not given my wife a get.

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[Ask if Orthodox, female, divorced or separated]

Q41b. You indicated that you are divorced. How did that process go (with respect to your most recent spouse, if more than one)?

- My husband gave me a get in a timely manner.
- There were some hold-ups with the get, but I did receive it eventually.
- To date, I have not received a get.

[Ask if Q41a or Q41b are answered]

Q42. Is there anything you would like to add regarding the entire divorce / get experience? [Open-Ended]

FAMILY PLANNING

[Ask if Orthodox, married, with one or more children]

Q43. Have you ever done any family planning (possibly limiting the number of children you want to have)?

- We have never done any family planning.
- We have done family planning and ultimately decided not to limit our family size.
- We have done family planning and therefore had fewer children, due to cost concerns.
- We have done family planning and therefore had fewer children, for other reasons.
- Other decision / result

PRIORITIES

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q44. How important is it that the overall Orthodox Jewish Community pays more attention to these issues over the next 10 years?

- Agunot
- Climate and environment
- Cost of Jewish education
- Cost of maintaining an Orthodox home
- Creating more togetherness among Orthodox Jews
- Dealing with those who commit abuse (physical, mental, sexual)
- Deciding on proper approaches to Orthodox gay / LGBTQ+ individuals
- Deciding what community roles are appropriate for women
- Divorce rates

Response Options:

- A top issue we must address / Moderately important to address / Lower level of importance

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q45 (Continued). How important is it that the overall Orthodox Jewish Community pays more attention to these issues over the next 10 years?

- Doing better as “Ohr La’goyim” – role models for other peoples of the world
- Empathy and caring for minority groups within the Orthodox community
- Fighting anti-Semitism
- Having better access to reliable news, information, science, etc.
- Inter marriage / assimilation
- People going off the derech
- Reducing materialism
- Shidduchim
- Substance abuse (alcohol or drugs)

Response Options:

- A top issue we must address / Moderately important to address / Lower level of importance

DEMOGRAPHICS PART 2

[Ask if Orthodox]

Q46. Do any of the following describe you? Please check all that apply.

- Baal Teshuvah (did not have an Orthodox upbringing, but currently Orthodox)
- Convert / ger
- Married to a convert / ger
- Émigré from the former USSR
- Immigrant from other country
- Openly "off the derech" (OTD)
- OTD in beliefs/practices, but still in the community (“double lifer”)
- Gay / LGBTQ+
- Jew of color (Black, etc.)
- None of the above [Mutually exclusive]

Q47. What is the highest level of secular education that you have completed?

- High school graduate or less
- Some college, less than four-year bachelor’s degree
- Four-year bachelor’s degree
- Postgraduate or professional/degree (e.g., master’s, doctorate, medical, law, etc.)

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Q48. What is the highest level of formal Jewish studies you have completed?

- None
- Talmud Torah (e.g., a Sunday or weekday evening Jewish studies program run by a synagogue)
- Some Jewish elementary school (did not graduate)
- Graduated Jewish elementary school (8th grade)
- Some Jewish high school (did not graduate)
- Graduated Jewish high school
- Post-high school study

Q49. What is your annual household income?

- Under \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 to \$299,999
- \$300,000 TO \$499,999
- \$500,000 or more
- Would rather not say

POLITICS

[Ask if live in United States]

Q50. Which of the following best describes your political leanings?

- Progressive, liberal Democrat
- Moderate Democrat
- Independent, not affiliated with either party
- Moderate Republican
- Conservative Republican
- Libertarian
- Other
- None, I am not political

WHERE HEARD OF SURVEY

Q51. How did you hear about this survey? If you heard about it through multiple channels, please check the one to which you responded.

- Email from Nishma Research
- My shul, or my shul rabbi
- Email from Jewish Link
- Article or advertisement in Jewish Link
- Email from The Jewish Week
- Email from Jewish Content Network
- From the RCA
- From National Council of Young Israel
- From the IRF, Chovevei Torah, Maharat, PORAT
- Email from Torah in Motion
- From another organization to which I belong
- The 18Forty Podcast
- The Franciska Show Podcast
- From a friend, relative, etc.
- Other [Text Box]
- Don't know, don't remember

FINAL THOUGHTS

Q52. Finally (really!) ... feel free – if you want – to share any thoughts you may have relating to the issues covered in this survey or any other issues relating to the Jewish community. [Open-Ended]

OPT-INS

Q53. Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts. Your response is very important to us.

- Check here if you would you like to be entered into the raffle for a chance to win one of ten \$100 gift cards.
- Check here if you would like to get email invitations to occasional future research on Jewish topics.
- Check here if you would you like to get a free report of the results of this survey.

[Show if any box is checked]

Please let us know your email address, so that we can contact you as appropriate. Your email will be totally confidential and will not be attached to your survey responses. Thank you! [Small Text Box, email formatted]