



## Glossary

This glossary includes terms that appear throughout the film as well as supplementary terms to support discussion and learning about Jewish life, community, culture and diversity.

**Anti-Black Racism:** Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, to the extent that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger White society. Anti-Black racism is manifest in the current social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians, which includes unequal opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. ([Source](#))

**Antisemitism (IHRA definition):** 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. See [here](#) for more about behaviours and expressions of antisemitism and tropes.

**Ashkenazi:** Ashkenazi Jews are Jewish people who settled in Diaspora in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g., Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Germany, France...). They make up 80% of Jewish people today. Widespread use of the Yiddish language (a language combining elements of Hebrew, German, and Slavic languages, and written in Hebrew characters) until the Holocaust.

**Ashkenormativity:** The assumption that all Jewish people are of Ashkenazi heritage. Ashkenormativity like Eurocentrism, privileged Ashkenazi culture, resulting in the bias towards and erasure of other ethnic and racial experiences, histories, narratives and cultures within Jewish life. See [here](#) and [here](#) for further examples.

**Bene Israel:** The Bene Israel community is the world used to define the Indian Jewish population.

**Beta Israel (House of Israel):** is the term used to describe Jewish people of Ethiopian descent.

**Bukharian Jews:** are from the territory in Central Asia that is today demarcated by the independent states of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The origin of Bukharian Jews can be traced back to the destruction of the Northern Israelite and Judean kingdoms. Exiled Jews left in droves, mostly northern and western, but a smaller number settled in the east, in what was then the Persian Empire. Many of them made the city of Bukhara their home, hence the name “Bukharian” Jews. In the 600s, the Arab conquest of Central Asia began and Islam became the dominant religion of the region. [Source](#)

**Converting to Judaism:** Those that choose to convert to Judaism go through a process of study, conversation, immersion, culminating in Jewish rituals to bless their conversion process. Depending on the denomination in which you convert there will be differences in what you study and one’s proficiency in Hebrew. Some processes take longer than others. There are a variety of reasons why people might choose to become Jewish. One common reason is through marriage and family but it is not the exclusive reason and should not be assumed as the main reason. Within the laws of Judaism, there is no difference between one who is born Jewish and one who has converted. *Ger*, or converts, are referenced at least two dozen times throughout the Torah, including Vayikra/Leviticus 19:34: “The strangers [widely interpreted as converts] who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: **אני יהוה** am your G-d.”

**Cultural Assimilation:** There are several different types of cultural assimilation. Predominantly, cultural assimilation is the absorption and adoption of one's surrounding culture in order to survive and thrive. Acts of cultural assimilation can erase the culture linked to one's ethnicity and heritage by birth. Code switching is a common aspect of cultural assimilation.

**Cultural Erasure:** Occurs when a community abandons their cultural practice and tradition and takes on the cultural practice and customs from the dominant cultural group they are surrounded by

**Diaspora:** A scattering of a group of people from their original homeland. The term diaspora was originally used to describe the dispersion of Jewish people and the term has since been used to describe other groups of people no longer living in their ancestral homeland.

**Diversity:** In the context of identity and community, the concept of diversity refers to the recognition of distinct differences among people like ethnicity, culture, faith, age, gender expression, ability, sexual orientation, political values etc. Diversity is an important foundational concept for students to engage with when learning about cultural communities outside of their own. The term can help students bridge the space between

the specific challenge of recognizing diversity within their community and the challenge of recognizing diversity in all communities.

**Ethno-Racial Identity:** The combination of ethnic and racial characteristics that compose aspects of one's identity. This includes self-identification and ancestry.

**Ethnicity:** An ethnic group is a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, or the like. Aspects that make up ethnicity include shared languages, religion, national or racial commonalities. [Source.](#)

**Race:** Race is a social construct. It is a classification system used to define physical and cultural differences between people. The term has been applied to linguistic, religious and ethnic groups but it is important to note that the concept of race bears no significant biological validity. Historically and in the present day, race has been used as a tool to segregate, oppress and marginalize groups of people in societies. [Source.](#)

**Ethno-Religion:** Judaism is not just a faith based identity. Many Jewish people globally identify as Jewish ethnically or culturally as Jewish but not religiously and others identify with all 3.

**Racialization:** The process of social construction of race is called racialization which is the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life. [Source.](#)

**Falasha:** Falasha is the Amharic word that means foreigner. This term is considered derogatory and should not be used to refer to Ethiopian Jewry.

**Georgian Jews:** are a community of [Jews](#) who migrated to Georgia during Babylonian [captivity](#) in the 6th century BCE. Judeo-Georgian was a dialect spoken by Georgian Jews. The majority of Georgian Jews now reside in Israel.

**Hebrew:** Modern Hebrew is the language spoken by Jewish people in Israel and is one of the languages spoken within the Jewish diaspora. Biblical Hebrew is the language used in Jewish scripture including the Talmud and Torah.

**Intersectionality:** The term coined by Kimberlee Crenshaw is used to understand how multiple forms of inequality intersect and compound, creating obstacles for individuals. The term pushes us to consider the ways that race, gender, socio-economic status and ability intersect in ways that compound inequalities in our society. Intersectionality takes account of peoples overlapping identities to understand the prejudices and discrimination they face. [Source.](#)

**Intradiversity:** Refers to the diversity that exists within ethnic and cultural groups. In the Jewish community, intra-diversity can refer to (but not limited to) ethnic, cultural, religious observation, sexual orientation, geo-political location, political values, diasporic experiences and ability. Intra-diversity reinforces the idea that there is no monolithic Jewish experience or one way to be Jewish.

**Jewish Summer Camp:** Jewish summer camps operate across the Jewish diaspora globally serving a wide range of Jewish denominational adherence. In Ontario there are several Jewish summer camps that operate providing Jewish participants an opportunity to nurture their Jewish identity, knowledge and values built through a connection to nature, outdoor activities and camp living.

**Jewpanese:** A term used by mixed Japanese and Jewish folks to define and combine their mixed ethnicities.

**Jews of Colour:** The term JOC (Jews of colour) is a term that emerged in the early 2000's in the US, first within feminist academic spaces as a way to denote and differentiate the experiences of Jewish women with a vast range of ethnic heritage and identity including Indigenous, African American, Chinese American, Ethiopian, Puerto Rican, Arab, Indian, Peruvian, Yemenite, Mizrahi, Sephardi, Ashkenazi, Mixed Heritage, and Jews by choice, starting a conversation about race within the Jewish community in America ([Mckinney-Baldon](#), (2020)). In its inception, the term was intended to be used as a tool for early coalition building within the community to strengthen ties between ethnic minorities within a minority community to achieve a number of goals. One of the overarching goals of the creation of this term were a desire to push back against Eurocentrism within the Jewish community, that privileged Ashkenazi Jewish history, in order to create more space for non-Ashkenazi histories, traditions and cultures ([Mckinney-Baldon](#), (2020)). [Source](#)

**Mizrahi:** Mizrahi Jews are from North Africa and the Middle East. This includes Modern Iraq (Babylonia), Iran (Persia), Yemen and Syria. The word Mizrahi comes from the Hebrew word meaning "Eastern."

**Mountain Jews (Kavkazi Jews):** Mountain Jews, also known as Kavkazi Jews, are of eastern and northern caucasus region including Azerbaijan, Chechnya, Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria. They are one of the oldest ethnic groups in the Caucasia and Dagestan. The Mountain Jewish dialect is known as Jewish Tat. This dialect, which acquired the status of an independent language in Soviet times, was the basis for literacy and a literature in the past. Prior to World War II, the majority of Mountain Jews lived in cities and spoke Russian. For this and other reasons (including the Soviet policy restricting the use of ethnic languages), the Mountain Jews stopped using the Tat language for school instruction and instead used only Russian. The mountain Jews have preserved

very little written history, passing knowledge and teachings orally from generation to generation.

**Multi-Ethnic Jews/Bi-racial Jews:** This definition could include people with 2 or more ethnicities, Jewish included. These individuals could be a product of interfaith families, conversion to Judaism, adoption or Jewish parents of differing ethnic heritage (Ashkanazi/Bene etc) *Intersectionality* is an important term when exploring multi-ethnic experiences—more information is available in the glossary

**Seder:** The seder is the traditional meal that occurs during the Jewish holiday of Passover. The meal includes reading of scripture, eating special meals, drinking wine singing and storytelling

**Sephardic:** Sephardic Jews are from Iberia and the Spanish diaspora including Spain, Portugal, Tunisian, Morocco and Southern France. Sephardic/Sephardim is derived from the Hebrew word Sepharad which means Spain. Sephardic Jews have their own international language: Ladino (Spanish and Hebrew) in the same way that Yiddish was based on German and Hebrew.

**Shabbat:** Shabbat is the Jewish day of rest and it occurs each week starting at sundown on Friday and lasting until sundown on Saturday. Shabbat is observed in a variety of ways depending on ones denominational observance

**Nationhood** and/ or **peoplehood** are both terms that are used to support the concept that Jews, irrespective of their religious denomination or racial-ethno background, are all members of a single people belonging to a distinct nation.The concept of Jews as a nation and/or people are not necessarily at odds with one another, but they are different because both terms use different themes from Jewish history to make their claims.

Jewish **nationhood** tends to find reference in Zionism, a political ideology and nationalist movement that advocated for a homeland (i.e. the creation of a nation-state) for the Jewish people. The thinking here supports an ancient concept that Jews are a nation bound by their common history and origin story, not only their religion.

Jewish **peoplehood** tends to find reference in Biblical verbiage (i.e. *Klal Yisrael*) that describes the Jews as a people and is often used to invoke our shared responsibility to take care of fellow Jews, ensuring each other's safety and wellbeing. Jewish peoplehood also communicates a shared ethnic and/ or civilization origin that has laid the foundation for Jewish community building for over a millennia.

**Racial (Passing):** Passing is a term that has been used within discourse in America, Canada parts of Europe, to describe the lived reality of multiracial people who identify and belong

to multiple racial categorization including European, Black/African, Asian, South-East Asian, Indigenous) but are simultaneously able to pass (be perceived by others) as white. The term has its origins in the US throughout slavery and the enforcement of Jim Crow laws.

**Yiddish:** Yiddish used to be the common language spoken among Ashkenazic Jews. Yiddish is a combination of German and Hebrew.