

K1

Galut and Geula

Darkness to Light



AIMS:

1. To introduce the concepts of Galut and Geula
2. To see Jewish History as a process
3. To recognise the centrality of the Beit HaMikdash and the importance of Jerusalem to the Jewish people

The Big Question:

What does Yerushalayim mean to us today?

Why Learn History?

We don't just study history out of curiosity. There is always a hope that if we can understand past events and their causes, then we can apply that understanding to future experiences.



The best way in which an individual can progress and improve themselves is to learn from previous actions. We can learn a lot through personal experience, by realizing when we have made a mistake and trying to change our ways for the future.

"Those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it."

Georges Santayana

But this approach has its limitations. Our lives are short and we have only limited opportunities to learn from personal experience. Through the study of history we can expose ourselves to the lessons of the generations who have come before us.

However, what we must understand is that this is not *his*-story (or *her*-story) but in fact it is *my*-story.

Seems like the Torah thinks along the same lines...

"Understand the years of generation after generation. Ask your father and he will relate [them] to you, your elders and they will tell you [about them]." (Devarim 32:7)

Do you agree? If we learn history, will we be able to correct our mistakes?

Why should we learn from our Mistakes?

"Turn from evil and do good..." Tehilim 34:15

A fundamental teaching of the Torah and the Sages is that there is meaning in all historical events. But this "meaning" refers to something greater than simply learning from past events.

Judaism introduced a very important idea – that of a G-d who acts in history. It's a radical idea and one of the fundamental Jewish beliefs.

When we speak of "meaning" in history, we refer to a Divine design, an all-encompassing Master plan. We see a larger purpose in the events of life, a purpose which goes beyond just ourselves. We believe in a God who is the Creator, Sustainer and Supervisor - not a God who merely created the world and then left it alone, but an Infinite Being who is actively involved in creation and cares for His creations.

Every human being has free choice, *bechirah chofshit*, with which they can shape their destiny and character, but despite this G-d also has *hashgachah* (providence) over us with which He can guide our lives. **On a universal level, G-d directs the course of history and has *hashgachah* over this too. History is a winding path to ultimate redemption and perfection, something which we hope our lives will be too.**

A fundamental concept in Judaism is that a Jew, no matter how seemingly simple they may be, is of infinite value. One aspect of this is that they are a link in the chain of Jewish destiny – a necessary part of the process which began with the Creation and will come to fruition with the arrival of Moshiach.

Who can do the best Rabbi Sacks impression? It's your time to shine!



"To be a Jew is to know that this cannot be the full story of who I am. A melody is more than a sequence of disconnected notes. A painting is something other than a random set of brushstrokes. The part has meaning in terms of its place within the whole, so that if history has meaning then the lives that make it up must in some way be joined to one another as characters in a narrative, figures in an unfolding drama. Without this it would be impossible to speak about meaning; and Judaism is the insistence that history does have a meaning. Therefore each of us has significance precisely insofar as we are part of a story, an extraordinary and exemplary story of a people dedicated to certain ideas. We are not free-floating atoms in infinite space. We are letters in the scroll... **I am a Jew because, knowing the story of my people, I hear their call to write the next chapter.** I did not come from nowhere; I have a past, and if any past commands anyone, this past commands me. I am a Jew because only if I remain a Jew will the story of a hundred generations live on in me. I continue their journey because, having come this far, I may not let them fail. I cannot be the missing letter in the scroll. I can give no simpler answer, nor do I know of a more powerful one.

Rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks, "Radical Then, Radical Now"

So where are we going?

“...request peace and pursue it”

Tehilim 34:15

It is popular amongst philosophers to think of history as a "teleological process" - which, for the non-philosophers amongst us, means a process with an end point. For example, Karl Marx charted the historical evolution of all socio-economic systems from that of slavery (beginning), to feudal systems, to the industrial revolution and Capitalism, to socialism and finally culminating in Communism (end). His mentor Hegel considered that history is self-improving and would ultimately culminate in a post-historical era where society has reached perfection.

Judaism also sees history as a teleological process. The current stage began with the destruction of the second Temple in the year 70 and will come to an end with the final redemption and the foundation of the third and lasting Temple. As Religious Zionists, we believe that the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 was the beginning of this final redemption and we are currently living in a period known as "Itchalta deGaula", the Beginnings of the Redemption. Familiarise yourselves with this term, as you'll be hearing it a fair bit from now on in...

In order to understand where we are going and the ultimate process of history, we must first understand the ideal that we started from and what that meant to us. For us to realise the true significance of where we are going, we must understand where we became a people, and where we will ultimately reach our collective destiny. That place is Jerusalem and the focus is the Beit Hamikdash.

The right of the Jewish people to a State in the Land of Israel does not derive from the catastrophes that have plagued our people. True, for 2,000 years, the Jewish people suffered expulsions, pogroms, blood libels and massacres which culminated in a Holocaust - a suffering which has no parallel in human history. There are those who say that if the Holocaust had not occurred, the State of Israel would never have been established. But I say that if the State of Israel had been established earlier, the Holocaust would not have occurred.

This tragic history of powerlessness explains why the Jewish people need a sovereign power of self-defence.

But our right to build our sovereign state here, in the land of Israel, arises from one simple fact:

This is the homeland of the Jewish people, this is where our identity was forged.

Benjamin Netanyahu, Bar Ilan University, June 2009



וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְהִיִּיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי לְעָם:

And I will be amongst you, and will be a G-d to you, and you will be My nation

Hashem, Vayikrah 26: 12

Jerusalem and The Beit Hamikdash

One who was standing in *chutz la'aretz* should direct his heart towards *Eretz Yisrael*...

One who was standing in *Eretz Yisrael* should direct his heart towards Yerushalayim...

One who was standing in Yerushalayim should direct his heart towards the *Beit HaMikdash*...

One who was standing in the *Beit HaMikdash* should direct his heart towards the *Kodshei HaKodashim*...

Thus, all of Israel directs their hearts to one place.

Gemara, Tractate Brachot, 30a

Jerusalem and the Temple hold a special place at the centre of Judaism both physically and spiritually.

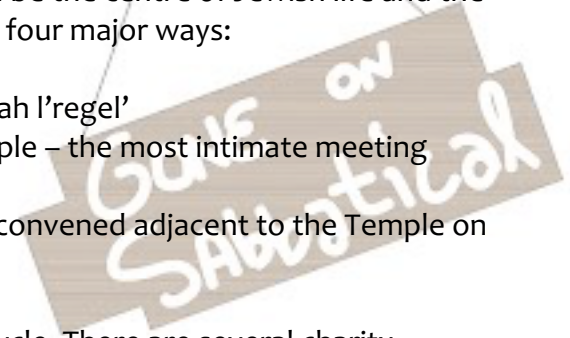
The temple that King Solomon built in 946 BCE, the first Beit HaMikdash, was destroyed by the Babylonians in the year 586 BCE, 410 years later. The Jewish people were exiled but returned, just 70 years later, to rebuild the second Beit HaMikdash under the leadership of Ezra and Nechemia in the year 516 BCE. In the year 37 CE, King Herod completed dramatic renovations to the dilapidated Temple. Roman armies destroyed it in 70 CE, and the current exile began.



Those who have not seen Yerushalayim in Her glory have not seen a beautiful city in their lives. Those who have not seen the Beit HaMikdash standing have never seen a majestic building in their lives' (Gemara Succah 51b)

Yerushalayim, and the Temple within it, was and will be the centre of Jewish life and the religious capital of the world. This manifests itself in four major ways:

1. The socioeconomic centrality of Jerusalem
 2. The celebrations of the festivals and the 'aliyah l'regel'
 3. The perpetual religious centrality of the Temple – the most intimate meeting between Hashem and His Creations
 4. The Sanhedrin (highest Jewish court) which convened adjacent to the Temple on Temple Mount
1. Jewish agricultural tithes work in a seven year cycle. There are several charity institutions within Jewish law in an agrarian society, and additionally on certain years a fixed percentage of crops have to be given to the poor. However, on certain years, one must travel to Yerushalayim to spend or consume this portion of their produce. Furthermore, the three festivals at which we have a mitzvah to visit Yerushalayim, particularly Pesach, made Yerushalayim a social centre in which families and friends would celebrate the festivals together, learn Torah together, and collectively serve G-d through sacrifices and prayer. This made Yerushalayim economically strong, and fortified the unity of all parts of the Jewish people. Interesting to note is the view of one of the Sages, that, as opposed to the rest of the land of Israel, Jerusalem was not divided amongst the tribes, in order that it could serve as the shared inheritance of all of the Jews!
 2. On Succot, Shavuot and Pesach, a huge portion of the Jewish people would congregate in Yerushalayim to celebrate the chag. Many religious practices, such as the Pesach sacrifice, bringing the first fruits, and offering thanksgiving offerings could only be done in the Temple. This made the focus of any festival Jerusalem, and made the city a forum for learning Torah, strengthening family ties, and renewing passion in religious commitment. Along with the more serious days, there was intense celebrations too.
 3. The Temple is designed to be the connecting point between heaven and earth. It also resembled Har Sinai and continuous miracles unfolded there on a daily basis in the first Temple. Rav Soloveitchik zt"l said that wherever a Jew is in the world, when they learn Torah or do a mitzvah they are 'before G-d', yet within the Bet HaMikdash the Shechinah – G-d's presence – could always be tangibly felt. It was also a place where monotheists of all religions could come to pray within certain formats, and the Jewish people would offer sacrifices for their benefit.
 4. The highest Jewish legal authority, who appoints kings, deals with the most complex and severe legal cases, calculates and fixes the Jewish calendar, and is responsible for maintaining the moral standard of the people in the public space, convenes on the Temple mount in a special chamber known as the *לישכת הגזית* – the stone chamber. This group of judges had to speak seventy languages and were the most

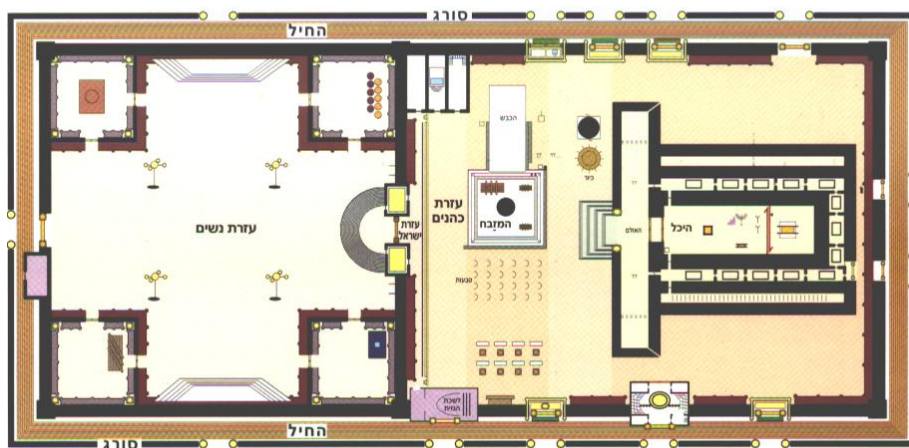


learned, moral and devout group of judges within the Jewish people. They also decided when to go to war.

Notably, Yerushalayim was also the political capital of the Jewish people. The king was based there, as were the courts, and international leaders would come to Jerusalem to meet with the kings and to pray at the Temple, and to admire the wisdom of the leaders of the Jews.

What did the temple look like?

During 'Temple times', Judaism, as a religion, was very much focused on the Beit HaMikdash itself. The Second Temple was over three times taller than today's dome of the rock, and had a multi-level structure that stood atop Jerusalem's Mt. Moriah. The Second Beit HaMikdash, after Herod's renovation, was the biggest it had ever been, although the basic design remained consistent throughout. The Temple sits on the plateau constructed on Mount Moriah, which is still visible today. A huge walled area was the perimeter of the Temple. Within it, various walled courtyards and ornate terraces were arranged to specific measurements. These were areas to pray, meditate, celebrate during festivals and experience intimate closeness with G-d. Tens of thousands of pilgrims would attend the services on Pesach, Shavuot and Succot. There was a three story high altar (accessible via ramp!) where the regular and voluntary offerings were brought. Storage and offices for the hundreds of on-duty Kohanim and Levi'im were located within the mountain, under the Temple Mount. The *Heichal* (Sanctuary) was a towering structure which housed the Menorah, the Incense altar, and the Table on which show-breads were arranged. Within the *Heichal* was the *Kodesh HaKedoshim* – Holy of Holies. This was a small square room at the back of the hall formed by a wall-to-wall cloth curtain. In the Holy of Holies was the Aron – the Ark of the Covenant. This small room was a space so ethereal that the laws of physics were suspended within its confines. It was only entered by the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, the most spiritual human being, on Yom Kippur, the most spiritual day of the year. The Beit HaMikdash was a space in which one could return to Eden, and palpably experience G-d's presence. To express thanks to G-d one would bring different sacrifices, which one would then eat with one's family and friends within Jerusalem to acknowledge and celebrate G-d's kindness.



Although there were 4 main Jewish exiles, when we refer to Galut, we normally mean either the destruction of the 2nd Temple itself or the whole of the Jewish history after that until today.



1700 B. C.—“THE WANDERING JEW”—1939 A. D.

This “weary, despised, blood-grimed, hoary-headed trekker of the ages” was seen on a dirty, dusty country road in Poland. Martin Munkacsi, artist photographer, instantly recognized and grasped the opportunity of a lifetime, and got his picture! The silhouette sets forth the pathos of the bowed and aged son of sorrow, wandering on and on and on, over the face of the whole wide world, in search of a place whereon he may find rest for the soles of his feet!

Why were we punished specifically with Galut (exile)?

Punishment comes in direct consequence of sin, and with the purpose of rectifying it. Some explain that Am Yisrael failed to fulfil its mission as the holy **nation** during the thousand years of the two Temples, and so suffered Galut as a result. Although there were prophets and righteous people, overall the State and the kings did not succeed in leading a Godly manner of life. Thus, the punishment of Galut is saying that perhaps, we must first work on ourselves as individuals.

Galut breaks the nation into individual communities and families --, so as to "charge their batteries," and thereby have enough strength to rejoin and become a nation at a later time.

The land of Israel is not some external entity.
It is not merely an external acquisition for the Jewish people.
It is not merely a means of uniting the populace.
It is not merely a means of strengthening our physical existence.
It is not even merely a means of strengthening our spiritual existence.

Rather, the land of Israel has an intrinsic meaning.
It is connected to the Jewish people with the knot of life.
Its very being is suffused with extraordinary qualities.

The extraordinary qualities of the land of Israel and the extraordinary qualities of the Jewish people are two halves of a whole.

Orot 1:1

This was carried out through the destruction of land. In addition, the **nation** was dispersed throughout the world. People no longer had the motivation to be a nation, to go to Israel. They felt, and many still feel, that it was better to remain in exile under the shelter of other nations than to establish a state of their own in the Land of Israel.

Therefore, when we lost our land, our temple, and the means to self-autonomy – we lost part of the ability to be a nation. By not realising the benefits we got from living in Jerusalem and Israel – we lost them.

We experience exile and mediocrity because we do not proclaim the value and wisdom of the land of Israel.

We have not rectified the sin of the biblical spies who slandered the land. And so we must do the opposite of what they did: we must tell and proclaim to the entire world the land's glory and its beauty, its holiness and its honour.

Rav Kook, Orot, Eretz Yisrael 6

"In truth, all darkness is merely diminished light"

Rav Kook, Orot Hakodesh II, p. 455

It is with this in mind, an understanding of the significance of Jerusalem and the meaning of Galut, of being in exile, that we can begin our journey from Galut to Geula, and from Darkness to Light.

The BIG QUESTION:

What does Yerushalayim mean to us today?

As Human Beings...

As Jews...

As Religious Zionists...

As people looking towards the Geula of Am Yisrael...

Its importance in Galut...

And its future role in the Geula...

K2

Destruction & Reaction: Loss of the Beit HaMikdash

From Despair to Hope



Aims:

1. To look at the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash and to try and understand what we lost
2. To understand reasons for the destruction and the way they relate to us nowadays.
3. To discuss the different reactions to the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, and their relative merits

The Big Question:
**Which response should we take, living
in the Diaspora?**

Why were the Batei Mikdash destroyed?

The first Beit HaMikdash was built by King Solomon. It required the labour of tens of thousands of men and took 7 years to complete. This Beit HaMikdash stood for 410 years before its destruction in the year 586BCE by the Babylonians.

What were the sins that caused the destruction to be decreed upon the Beit HaMikdash?

Yoma 9B

Why was the first Sanctuary destroyed? Because of three [evil] things which prevailed there:

Idolatry (Deuteronomy 6:5), **sexual immorality** (Deuteronomy 22:26), and **bloodshed** (Sanhedrin 74a)

The second Beit Hamikdash stood for 420 years (according to Seder Olam Rabba) and when it was renovated by King Herod in 20CE, it was the most beautiful building that has existed. It was eventually destroyed by the Romans in 70CE.



In 66CE, the Jewish Revolt against the Romans started. Four years later, Titus and his army fought strongly, re-took Jerusalem and burnt the city, including the Beit HaMikdash. The Arch of Titus was built in Rome to commemorate the victory because the Romans wanted to leave something to mark that they had been to Jerusalem and destroyed it. Today that and the Kotel is all we have left to remember the Second Beit HaMikdash.

The destruction of the Second Beit HaMikdash was a terrible event for the Jewish world at the time - as we will see in upcoming K's. But Flavius Josephus (a Jewish historian who was around at the time of the destruction) writes:

"The Romans, though it was a terrible struggle to collect the timber, raised their platforms in twenty-one days, having as described before stripped the whole area in a circle round the town to a distance of ten miles. The countryside like the City was a pitiful sight; for where once there had been a lovely vista of woods and parks there was nothing but desert and stumps of trees. No one - not even a foreigner - who had seen the Old Judea and the glorious suburbs of the City, and now set eyes on her present desolation, could have helped sighing and groaning at so terrible a change; for every trace of beauty had been blotted out by war, and nobody who had known it in the past and came upon it suddenly would have recognized the place: when he was already there he would still have been looking for the City."

Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, p. 303

So why was this terrible destruction decreed?

Messechet Gittin 55b.

The destruction of Jerusalem came through a Kamtza and a Bar Kamtza in this way. A certain man had a friend, Kamtza and an enemy, Bar Kamtza. He once made a party and said to his servant, Go and bring Kamtza. The man went and brought Bar Kamtza. When the man [who gave the party] found him there he said, See, you tell tales about me; what are you doing here? Get out. Said the other: Since I am here, let me stay and I will pay you for whatever I eat and drink.

He said, I won't.

Then let me give you half the cost of the party.

No, said the other.

Then let me pay for the whole party. He still said, No, and he took him by the hand and put him out.

Said the other, Since the Rabbis were sitting there and did not stop him, this shows that they agreed with him. I will go and inform against them, to the Government. He went and said to the Emperor, The Jews are rebelling against you. He said, How can I tell? He said to him: Send them an offering and see whether they will offer it [on the altar]. So he sent with him a fine calf. While on the way he made a blemish on its upper lip, or as some say on the white of its eye, in a place where we [Jews] count it a blemish but they do not. The Rabbis were inclined to offer it in order not to offend the Government. Said R. Zechariah b. Abkulas to them: People will say that blemished animals are offered on the altar. They then proposed to kill Bar Kamtza so that he should not go and inform against them, but R. Zechariah b. Abkulas said to them, Is one who makes a blemish on consecrated animals to be put to death? R. Johanan thereupon remarked: Through the sins of R. Zechariah b. Abkulas our House has been destroyed, our Beit Hamikdash burnt and we ourselves exiled from our land.

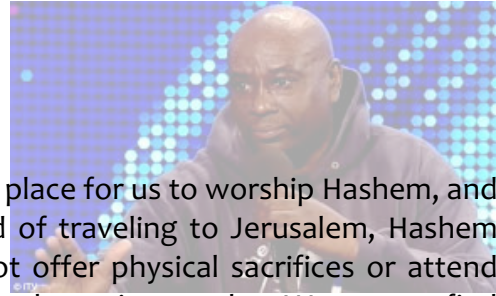
From this story we can see the way the host of the party treated Bar Kamtza lead to the whole story of the blemished offering and eventually the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash.

Yoma 9B

But why was the second Sanctuary destroyed, seeing that in its time they were occupying themselves with Torah, [observance of] precepts, and the practice of charity? Because therein prevailed hatred without cause. That teaches you that groundless hatred is considered as of even gravity with the three sins of idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed together

What have we lost?

With the destruction, there was no longer a physical place for us to worship Hashem, and so we had to find new ways of doing this. Instead of traveling to Jerusalem, Hashem wanted us to find Him in our daily lives. We cannot offer physical sacrifices or attend Temple services three times a day, but we can pray three times a day. We cannot find Hashem in Jerusalem; we must find Him in us.



However, this is not a real or satisfactory replacement for what we really lost.

From this we can see that the reason for the destruction is actually of massive importance to us today. This quote suggests that we must work very hard to eradicate the original reasons for the destruction.

As we saw before, *sinat chinam* – hatred for no reason - destroyed the second Beit Hamikdash ; it is our duty to get rid of the leftover *sinat chinam* that we still have today.

Can you think of someone who you don't like which is actually based on almost nothing?

Do you think we do enough to try and create a loving atmosphere amongst all types of Jews?

Does this mean we can't argue with anyone?

Pirkei Avot 5:20 Judah the son of Teima would say: Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, fleeting as a deer and mighty as a lion to do the will of your Father in Heaven. He would also say: The brazen--to purgatory; the bashful--to paradise. May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that the Holy Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days; and grant us our portion in Your Torah.

After the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash there were two distinct reactions taken by the Jewish people.

Passive

After the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai was carried out of the besieged old city in a coffin and told Vespasian (the Roman in charge of the attack) that he would soon be made emperor. After he was, Vespasian gave Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai 3 wishes. This can all be found in the Gemara Gittin 56a/b.

The Gemara concludes "give me Yavneh and its sages, the family of Rabban Gamliel (as there were from the lineage of King David), and doctors to cure R'Tzadok (who had fasted and prayed for 40 years to ask Hashem to protect the Jews).

Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai clearly chooses not to ask for too much but rather go to a place far away from the action and to keep Judaism alive by slowly building it up back to its previous glory.

Was Rabban Yochanan being passive? Or was he being assertive in making a very difficult decision? Though the events may give off an impression of Rabban Yochanan being weak and unassertive, perhaps he was being very strong and courageous in making a risky decision.



Why didn't he ask for Jerusalem back?

Assertive

Even though the Romans had the most powerful army in the world at the time, the Jews could stick up for their rights and their beliefs.

This is what Bar Kochba and his men decided to do in what is now called the Bar Kochba Revolt.

Bar Kochba was very widely believed (including by people like Rabbi Akiva) to be Mashiach (Messiah).

He managed to get together 250 strong men. To be drafted into his army you needed to be able to uproot a tree whilst riding a horse, which he could do. After some time, Bar Kochba managed to build an army of 350,000 men which was bigger than the Roman army. They began by conquering the Galil (north of Israel) and Bar Kochba started building a new independent Jewish state. When Hadrian (the new Roman Emperor) came to Israel he started to allow the building of the new Beit HaMikdash but soon when back on his word.

The Jews built caves in the mountain sides in the north of Israel and hid away until Hadrian left the country and they started to rebel again, but this time Bar Kochba turned away from G-d and used to enter battle and say to Hashem- "Ribbono Shel Olam!! Do not help us do not hinder us!"- In essence he started to think nature would run its course and not Hashem. The Jews no longer won every battle.

So which is the right way?

As we saw, the Jews at the time decided to take to very different approaches in reaction to the destruction. There is a fine line between situations which demand action and ones which demand sitting back and keeping to yourself. How do we know which one to take?

With hindsight, we can see that Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai made a decision which would save Judaism as a religion and allow Judaism to live and flourish after the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash and of Jerusalem. However, there is no doubt that Rabban Yochanan's actions at the time were deemed by many others to be controversial and incorrect.



A Modern view:

If we want to courageously defend our continued national and historical existence, we must from time to time, interpret the verse of "an eye for an eye" (Exodus 21:24) literally. Of course, I am sure everyone recognises that I am an adherent of the Oral Law, and from my perspective there is no doubt that the verse refers to monetary restitution, as defined by Halacha. However, with respect to the Mufti (Haj Amin al-Husseini, Grand mufti of Jerusalem who collaborated with Hitler and led the armed opposition to the Yishuv and State of Israel) and Nasser (Gammal Abdel Nasser, PM and president of Egypt who led the Suez Campaign and Six day war), I would demand that we interpret the verse with its literal meaning- the taking of an actual eye and pay no attention to the saccharine suggestions of known assimilationists and of some Jewish socialists who stand pat in their rebelliousness and think they are still living in Bialystok, Bret-Litovsk and Minsk of the year 1905, and openly declare that revenge is forbidden to the Jewish people in any place, at any time and under all circumstances. "Vanity of vanities!" (Ecclesiastes 1:2) Revenge is forbidden when it is pointless, but if one is aroused thereby to self-defence; it is most elementary right of man to take his revenge [...]

Rav Solovetichik: Kol Dodi Dofek pg. 37-41

The Big Question:
Which response should we take
living in the Diaspora?

Is there a correct and incorrect response?

Or is perhaps one response suitable for times of Galut and another
for times of Geula?

Should we be taking a more passive or active response now?

Can Rabban Yochanan's actions be seen as sacrificing the physical
unity and nationhood of Am Yisrael for the survival of Torah
Judaism?

Are the actions of Rabbi Akiva and Rabban Yochanan at odds with
one another or may they actually agree with one another?

Can we ever know [Brachot 28b]?

K3

New Perspectives and the Oral Torah



From Confusion to Clarity

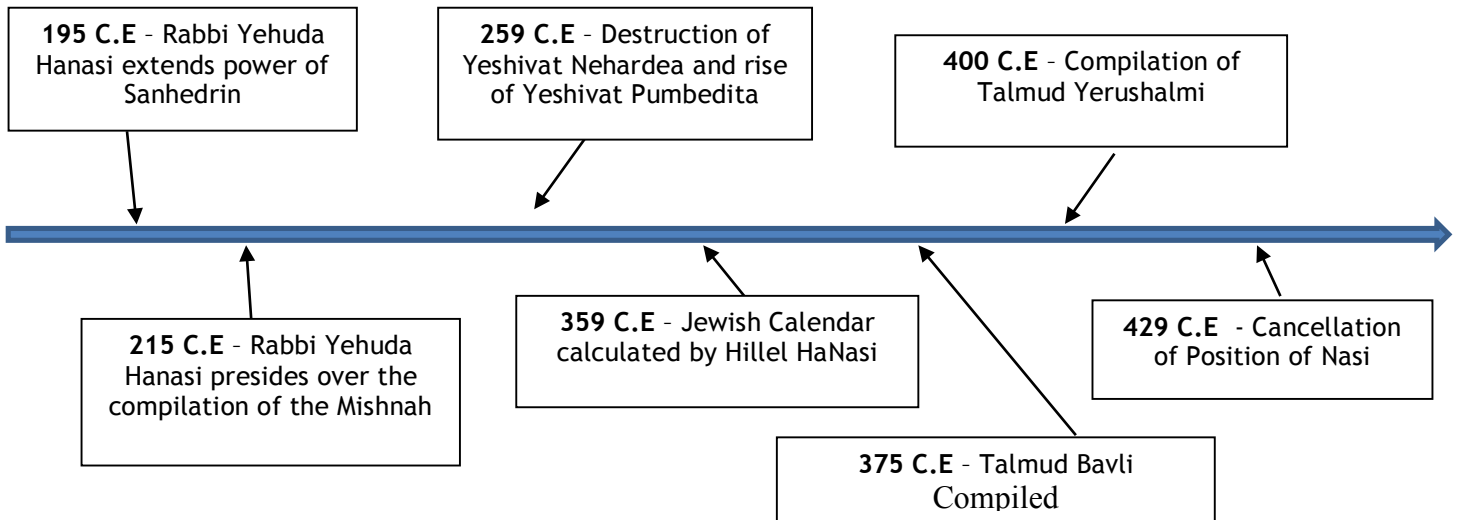
Aims:

1. To understand the difference between the Oral and Written Torah.
2. To find out how the Jewish people developed the Oral Torah to deal with the changes that Galut brought, and why the Oral Torah needed to be written down.
3. To look at how Jewish life developed after the destruction.

The Big Question:

What is the importance and value in learning and engaging with the Oral Torah?

TIMELINE



On Har Sinai, Moshe received the "Torah". We have two "Torah's" – the Written Torah (Torah she'Bichtav), and the Oral Torah (Torah she'Baal Peh). , but which one did Moshe receive? The answer is, of course, both of them.

So what is Torah She'Bichtav?

We believe the Torah was dictated to Moshe directly from Hashem on Mount Sinai. Very simply, the term Torah She'Bichtav refers to the Tanach, which is made up of Torah, Neviim (Prophets) and Ketuvim (Writings). Are you ready... All together... Bereshit, Shemot, Vayikra, du du du du

Neviim and Ketuvim were written by prophets or great Jews of the time like David HaMelech and are also considered "from God", because they were written in the name of Hashem.

So what is Torah She'B'al Pe?

The Torah She'Baal Peh (Oral Torah) is essentially anything that is not included in Torah She'bichtav.

When referring to Torah She'Baal Peh, we are primarily talking about the Mishna and Gemara. We believe that all the laws and details that are included in the Torah She'B'al Peh were also given to Moshe at Sinai.

What is Mishna?

The word Mishna comes from the Hebrew word 'shnah' - to teach (like ve'shinininininantam levanecha bum bum tz). It is the oldest part of the Oral Torah and is a collection of teachings of the greatest Rabbis of the time. It was written down by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi in 250 C.E in Yavneh after the destruction of the Bet HaMikdash. It is written in a very precise and concise form and deals with mainly halachic matters

What is Gemara?



For three centuries after the compilation and editing of the Mishna, the Amoraim and their students discussed and analysed the Mishna. Their questions, discussions and solutions make up the Gemara.

There are two versions of the Gemara – the Talmud Bavli, written in Aramaic in Babylon, and the Talmud Yerushalmi written in Hebrew in Israel (Interestingly, it was actually written in Tiberias, the last place where the Sanhedrin sat). We don't know a huge amount about the development of the Gemara, but it seems that the Torah scholars would gather together at fixed times of the year or would meet by chance. Their conversations and teachings were committed to memory and sometimes recorded in writing in brief notes. This material was eventually collected and written down around the year 500CE - making up the Gemara.

The formation of the Torah She'Baal Peh is less well known than that of the Torah she'Bichtav. It is simply the (Shisha Mi Yodea? Shisha Ani Yodea) Shisha Sidrei Mishna (six orders of the Mishnah). The Talmud Bavli does not include all of these masechtot (tractates) as some of them are 'mitzvot she'tluyot ba'arezt' (mitzvot that can only be performed in Israel), and are therefore included in the Talmud Yerushalmi.

זרעים <u>Zeraim</u>	מועד <u>Moed</u>	Nashim נשים	נזיקין <u>Nezikin</u>	Kodshim קדשים	Taharot טהרות
Berakhot · Pe'ah · Demai · Kil'ayim · Shevi'it · Terumot · Ma'aserot · Ma'aser Sheni · Hallah · Orlah · Bikkurim	Shabbat · Eruvin · Pesahim · Shekalim · Yoma · Sukkah · Beitzah · Rosh Hashanah · Ta'anit · Megillah · Mo'ed Katan · Hagigah	Yevamot · Ketubot · Nedarim · Nazir · Sotah · Gittin · Kiddushin	Bava Kamma · Bava Metzia · Bava Batra · Sanhedrin · Makkot · Shevu'ot · Eduyot · Avodah Zarah · Avot · Horayot	Zevahim · Menahot · Hullin · Bekhorot · Arakhin · Temurah · Keritot · Me'ilah · Tamid · Middot · Kinnim	Keilim · Oholot · Nega'im · Parah · Tohorot · Mikva'ot · Niddah · Makhshirin · Zavim · Tevul Yom · Yadayim · Uktzim

What's different between the Oral & Written Torah?

While the word 'Torah' can simply mean the Chamisha Chumshei Torah as we have seen earlier, there is a much wider meaning as well.

Rak Kook suggests that the Written Torah is something that is given to the Jewish people directly from Hashem above. This means that it ultimately has the highest level of holiness possible and affects everything in the world by being above it. The Oral Torah on the other hand, is something that has the ability to enter our lives in a different way. It is something that we, the Jewish people, are always actively involved in, and have the ability to affect. This means that the Oral Torah is always changing and comes alive in each new generation.

Surely it is all in the Written Torah?

The written Torah lacks many details for putting the laws into practice and therefore requires interpretation. For example, Sefer Devarim mentions a 'sefer keritut' [a contract of divorce] required for a divorce, but nowhere hints at what this contract might include.

Similarly, in Shemot it says "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand" - does this actually mean that one needs to cut off a person's hand? Therefore the Oral Torah is there to explain the laws. As different interpretations and beliefs of the Oral Torah developed, the rabbis felt these 'oral' traditions

needed to be written down. This was necessary both to respond to challenges from alternative sects of Judaism (such as the Kara'ites), as well as to prove the authority of the Torah She'Baal Peh. Just as the Oral Torah depends on the Written Torah, there can be no real existence for the Written Torah without an Oral tradition.

“The Torah was not meant to be just a book lying on the shelf. It was meant to be part of the everyday life of an entire people. Because of this it could only be transmitted by word of mouth. Torah She'Baal Peh was handed down from teacher to pupil for almost 1500 years until the harsh Roman persecutions finally threatened to eradicate it completely. Finally, 1700 years ago, it was written down to form the Talmud.”

Aryeh Kaplan, Tefillin

Why did it have to be "Oral"?

The Torah contains 613 Mitzvot. Each mitzvah contains all the information needed to apply them in every possible circumstance (e.g. technological innovation and electricity on Shabbat). Included within the mitzvot is the idea that every person has a different aspect of the Torah that enthralls us and this should help us find a suitable path to follow.

The reason the Mishna is so brief was because every Jew had to remember its content. The brief nature of the Mishnah resulted in it being elaborated on in great depth in the Gemara. The Gemara is also written in a style which lends itself to an oral way of learning. The

Gemara is written in a series of discussions and arguments. To read the Gemara in the same way you read a novel or a guide book would be impossible.

Another interesting perspective is this: If the Torah included all possible halachic questions that have, will and could ever be, it would simply become a massive rule book. If everything was written clearly and unambiguously, it would simply sit on the shelf in a library, without the need to be discussed, debated or disputed. It would essentially become a 'dead book'.

Therefore, Hashem created the Oral Torah, a framework in which not everything was clear cut, one where different interpretations could arise. The framework of the Oral Torah, requiring large sections of the Torah to be passed down verbally, would ensure that the Torah would be kept alive and vibrant through being passed down from teacher to student in the homes and Batei Midrash of the Jewish people.

If it's Oral Torah, how and why is it written down?

The Oral Torah was controversially written down during times of persecution. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi (rebbe) wrote down the basics of the Mishna in a logical Seder in order for the tradition to be passed on correctly. The Talmud Bavli was similarly written down in times when the Jewish communities had less means to pass on the tradition effectively or correctly.

Since the time of the last Amoraim (those who compiled the Gemara) Rishonim, Achronim and present day Rabbis have devoted themselves to writing down their explanations of the Mishna and Gemara. At first glance this seems purely a positive thing. However, reading such books in a way that keeps the flavour of a living Torah is also a challenge. Therefore, in an ideal world, the oral Torah would have best been kept oral, but as a result of human deficiency and yeridat ha'dorot (the decline of each generation), we simply could not remember it all.

So do we still have an "Oral Torah"?

Does that mean that, now, in the imperfect world in which we live, we no longer have the real thing? Of course the answer is NO. Despite the fact that we have printed versions of the Talmud and many other books as well including translations to help us, the Oral Torah is still oral at its essence. Without the guidance of a teacher and the help of a chavruta to battle our ideas with, the Oral Torah is relatively inaccessible.

I understand the Oral Torah now, but....What's the connection of Oral Torah to Galut?

"In exile, these twins were separated. The written Torah rose to the heights of holiness, and the oral Torah descended to the very depths."

The oral Torah draws sustenance in a hidden manner from the heavenly, and in a revealed manner from the earthly. The land of Israel must be built up, with all the people of Israel dwelling upon it in a well-ordered manner: with the Temple and a kingdom, with cohanim and prophecy, with judges and officers and all their accoutrements. Then the oral Torah will live in all the glow of its beauty. It will flower and bloom. With its entire measure, it will connect to the written Torah.

Rav Kook, Orot HaTorah

Rav Kook makes a clear connection between the land of Israel and the Oral Torah. He says that only in Israel, when we are ruling ourselves and we have a temple, the Oral Torah will truly flourish. As we explained before, the Oral Torah gives Am Yisrael the potential to become holy by being involved in its creation process. This is no more relevant than is Israel. When we are in Israel, keeping our laws the way we should, building our country, we are directly involved in creating holiness through doing seemingly normal actions. When we fulfill the Oral Torah in Israel, we are fulfilling our potential as a people.

But in the Galut, we do not have the opportunity to fulfill the Oral Torah properly, to grow as a people and therefore, the Oral Torah cannot properly exist. It therefore had to be written down. When we lost the Beit HaMikdash and the ability to flourish as a people, we also lost the ability for the Oral Torah to flourish as it had been.

As we have seen, the Oral Torah is always alive and changing as the world grows and changes. There are many aspects of modern day life which never existed before and therefore never needed to be discussed. When learning the Oral Torah we often find that to answer our question more questions must be asked. It is through constantly asking and learning we find out how to live our lives as good Jews in a very changing world.

THE BIG QUESTION:

What is the importance and value in learning and engaging with the Oral Torah?

Is it more important than just knowing the facts?

How important is it to keep the Oral Torah alive today?

Should we emphasise our time on 'Knowing Halacha' or 'Learning Torah'?

Should there be a difference in our emphasis during times of Galut and the Geula?

K4

New Roots in Europe and Sephardi/Ashkenazi

From Individuals to Communities

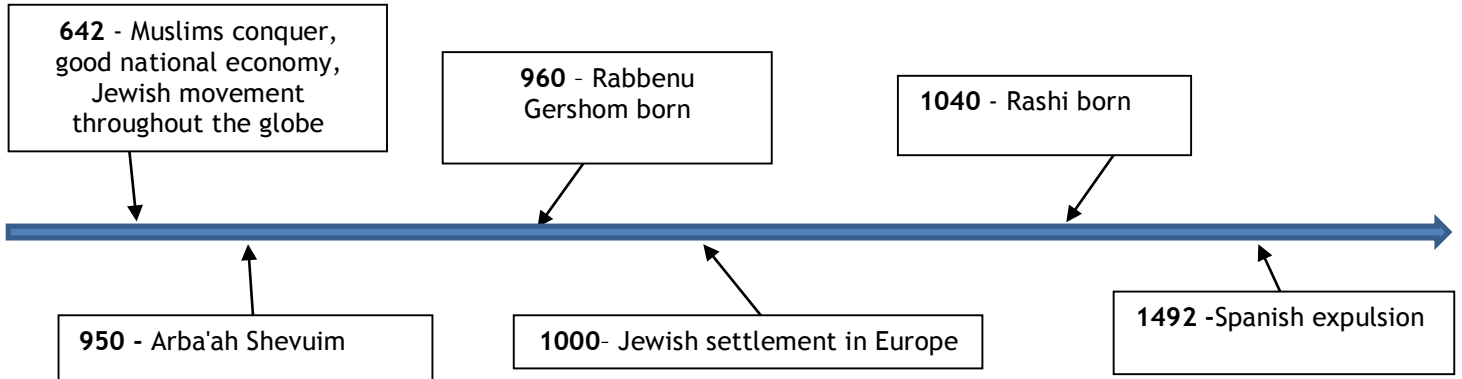


AIMS:

1. To look at the spread of Jews- where they went to in Western Europe and how they got there.
2. To find out how the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities developed and evolved.
3. To discover how the Jews flourished in their new surroundings.

The Big Question:
**To what extent have Ashkenazi and Sefardi
Tradition lasted?**

TIMELINE



Torah outside Bavel: Arba'ah Shevuyim- Four Captives.

In 950 CE, four Babylonian scholars and their wives were sent on a mission to Europe to collect money for the Yeshivot in Bavel. On the Mediterranean Sea, pirates captured their ship. The scholars were valuable prisoners and their captors knew that Jewish communities would pay generously to buy their freedom.

The four couples were brought to the slave market in North Africa and Spain and put up for sale. The Jews from far away came to ransom their people, however this time, they came with a condition. They asked the scholars to remain with them as teachers and Rabbis. The Jews of Alexandria redeemed Rabbi Sharyahu; the Jews of Kairouan (Tunisia), redeemed Rabbi Chushiel; the Jews of Cordova (Spain), redeemed Rabbi Moshe and his son Rabbi Chanoch. Each Rabbi remained with the community that had freed him, started a Yeshiva and helped it flourish into a new centre for Torah. They brought their families from Bavel, new students arrived, and a new period of growth and learning began.

By now, the constant fighting in the Arab world was causing many problems, and together with the large movement to new countries, the Jewish community in Bavel began to decline. Within one century, almost

150,000 Jews left Bavel and arrived in North Africa. Others went to France, Germany and Austria. Many books and commentaries were written at this time, for example Rabbi Chananel (son of Rabbi Chushiel) wrote the first commentary on the Talmud (Rashi could later use it in his works) and the Rif (Rabbi Yitzchak Alfazi, from Fez, Morocco) wrote a code of Jewish law, which would be the foundation of later codes such as the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch.

The Jews in Europe:

The start of Ashkenaz

**1) Kingdom of Provence
(situated between France and Spain)**

**2) In the German communities
along the shores of River Rhine**

3) Around Paris near Troyes

By 1000 C.E., things had started to move on, as had the Jewish people. They followed the Arab nations to trade across the Middle East and North Africa and started to move to Europe. Jewish traders started to come through to Europe and by the 9th century there were communities starting to be set up in France and Germany. The Jewish people called this area “Ashkenaz” and called themselves “Ashkenazim”.

The Jews settled and built communities, living their own lives and turning to the leading Babylonian Rabbis for Halachic guidance. They generally shied away from outside influences and concentrated on internal Jewish sources, ideas and customs. In the early years, the Jews had 3 main places of living;

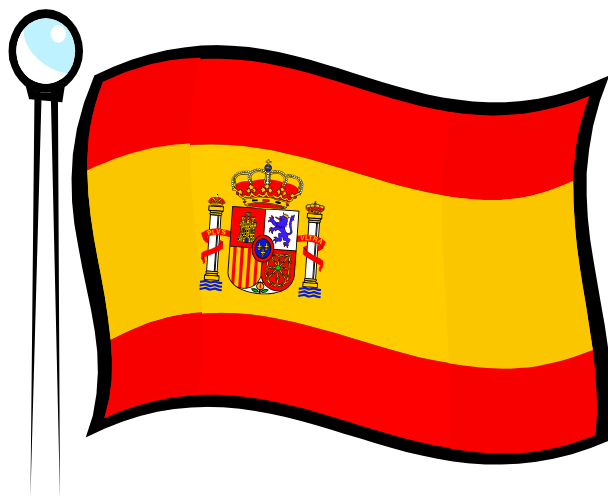
In later years, the Ashkenazi Jews spread out towards countries including Poland and Lithuania. In the 10th and 11th century, the first Ashkenazi Jews were merchants and were treated well because of their trading connections. In the 11th century the Ashkenazi Jews accounted for just 3% of the world’s Jewish population!

Jews of Spain

It was often claimed that their arrival in Spain happened soon after the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple in 586 BCE.

Many Jews settled in the Iberian Peninsula. The area became known by the Hebrew word Sephard. The Moors (Muslim Arabs from North Africa) invaded Spain in 711 and many Jews helped them to fight the Christians. Many Jews from North Africa, Asia and the Middle East followed the Moors to Spain and each Moorish city soon had their own Jewish community. For four hundred years Torah, Jewish philosophy, literature and science all

flourished under Moorish rule and the Jews rose to positions of great wealth and power.



During the Golden Age, Torah, Hebrew language, philosophy blossomed, magnificent Shuls, Yeshivot and luxury homes were built. Jews were free to practice as professionals and rise to great positions within the economy and within the society.

Below is a little timeline of major events in Spain from 409 C.E. to 1492 C.E.

409	The Visigoths followers of Arius who reasoned that Jesus could not logically co-exist with God and must therefore be subservient to him conquered Spain
1587	King Reccared, the Visigoth king in Spain, converted to Roman Catholicism and made it the state religion.
612	The Council of Gundemar of Toledo ordered that all Jews submit to baptism within the year.
638	Arian Visigoths declared that "only Catholics could live in Spain
711	Spain under Muslim rule. Jews were allowed to co-exist with Muslims. They still had to pay a special tax called Jizha but could practice Judaism.
800-1100	Golden Age of Spain
1147	Almoravids gained power. Jews continued to work as moneylenders, jewelers, cobblers, tailors and tanners; however, they had to wear distinguishing clothing, such as a yellow turban.

Mid 13 th century	Christians controlled most of Spain and increasingly forced Jews to convert to Christianity. Those who converted became known as Marranos or New Christians. Marranos are also known as crypto-Jews because they taught their children and practiced Judaism in secret. During this period, Jews were forced to participate in "religious" disputes with Christians counterparts.
1391- 1492	Anti Jewish Riots broke out. New Christians were tortured or killed in the Spanish Inquisition during the 15th century. Father Tomas de Torquemada felt that if the Jews remained in Spain, then they would influence the new converts to Christianity. After the capture of Granada from Muslim forces, Father Torquemada convinced King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella that the Jewish community was expendable. In 1492, Isabella and Ferdinand commanded that all Jews who refused to convert to Christianity be expelled from Spain. The Jews were given four months to leave Spain and were forced to sell their houses and businesses at low prices. It is estimated that 100,000 Jews left Spain at this time.

Spanish Jewry knew both greatness and humiliation. It was a Jewry which produced great Rabbis, distinguished communities, and a rich Torah Literature. However, in later periods, it was also a country which knew inquisitions, pogroms, marranos, and expulsion. Spanish Jewry has left us a very important Torah inheritance: commentaries on the Torah by the Radak, Rambam, and Ibn Ezra, the Rambam's "Mishneh Torah" and "Guide for the Perplexed", poetry by Ibn Gavriol and Yehuda Halevy, and the Kuzari, to name but a few. This was a great period for Spanish Jewry which left its mark on the whole of the Jewish people.

Following The Expulsion of Jews from Spain (1492)

Many Spanish Jews settled in Portugal, where they were allowed to practice Judaism. In 1497, however, Portugal also expelled its Jews after King Manuel of Portugal agreed to marry the daughter of Spain's monarchs. One of the conditions for the marriage was the expulsion of Portugal's Jewish community. In actuality, only eight Jews were exiled from Portugal and the rest converted, under duress, to Christianity. In the first Sephardi Diaspora, a large number of Jews settled in North Africa and in the Ottoman Empire, especially, Turkey and Greece. Spanish exiles brought with them a unique culture, language (Ladino) and traditions. Large Sephardic communities were founded in Venice, Leghorn, London, Bordeaux, Bayonne and Hamburg. These immigrants spoke Portuguese and Spanish and many adapted mainstream Western European culture. Successful business

enterprises were started by the Sephardim and their trade networks became famous worldwide.

Sefardi and Ashkenaz: More in common than we think.....

The differences between Ashkenazim and Sefardim are not limited to geography; there are many other differences in Hebrew pronunciation, davening and customs. Language is one of the main differences. Ashkenazim tended to speak Yiddish, which is a mixture of German and Hebrew. Sephardim often spoke Ladino, which is a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish. One of the major differences between Ashkenazim and Sefardim is the sources and Rabbis they follow when deciding Jewish law. The Sefardim follow the Shulchan Aruch written by Rav Yosef Cairo, whereas the Ashkenazim follow Rabbi Moshe Isserlis (The R'ma) who wrote a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch.



However, although customs and interpretations may differ between Sefardim and Ashkenazim, both take and follow an Orthodox approach to the Torah. As we have seen, at different times in history, the Sefardim and Ashkenazim both have had to deal with threats against Judaism, either because of persecution or assimilation. Some of the differences between the two major branches of Judaism are due to the fact that they, at different times, have developed traditions designed to keep Judaism alive. Today many of the distinctions between Ashkenazim and Sefardim have disappeared and Ashkenazim and Sefardim live side by side.

THE BIG QUESTION:

To what extent have Ashkenazi and Sefardi Tradition lasted?

Does it matter?

Halacha? Minhagim? Clothes? Language? Food?

Do you eat your Kugel with Matbucha? Or your Shakshuka with slices of Gefilte Fish?



What about the way you pronounce Hebrew or what you say in Tefilla?

What about the Rishonim you use when learning Torah?

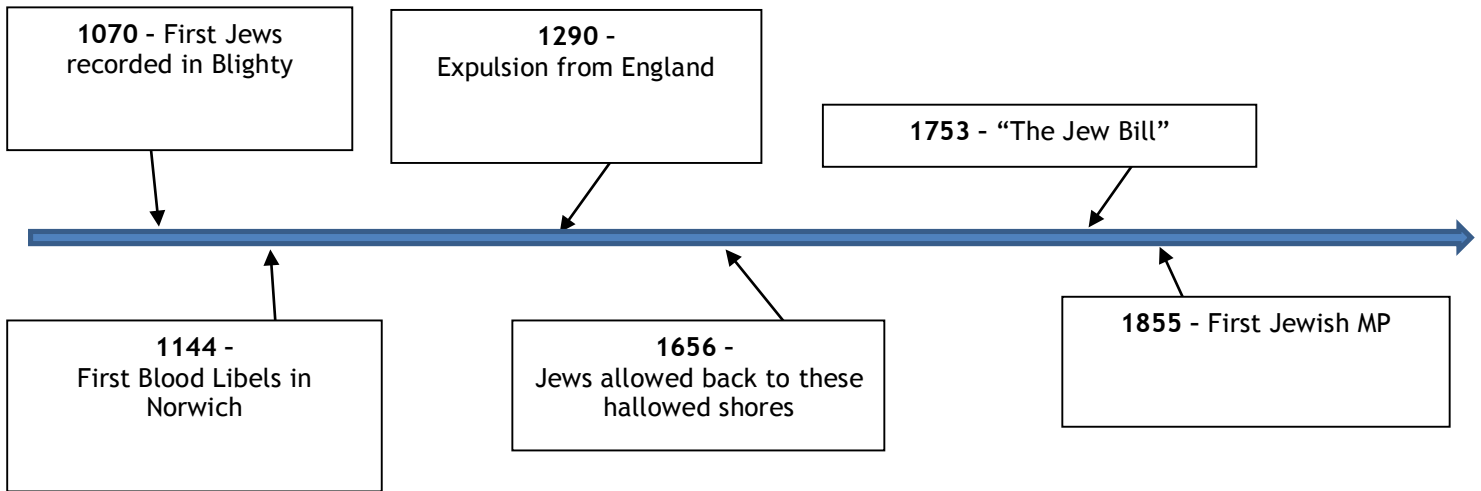
K5

Anglo Jewry: A Microcosm of the ups and downs of Galut. *From Persecution to Prosperity*



Aims:

1. To look at the beginnings of Anglo Jewry.
2. To understand the development of the Jews in England.
3. To appreciate the story of Anglo Jewry as a microcosm for the story of the Jews in Galut.



What's so special about Anglo Jewry?

“The story of the Jews of England is of supreme importance to the student of the philosophy of Jewry and of Jewish history. The adage that history repeats itself is well worn, but none the less true. **The history of the Jews in England is the history in miniature of the Diaspora.**

Since the opening of the Christian era the story of the Jews, everywhere has been the same-continual alternations of prosperity and persecution. As with individuals, the wheel of fortune ever revolves for nations, but with the Jews its progress seems to have been more rapid, for alternations have been more numerous than with any other race. But with the Jews the wheel lingers during the period of depression and hurries through that of elation in order to recover the time that has been lost. The story of the Jews of England shows all the vicissitudes common these two thousand years to the lot of Jewry.”

Albert M. Hyamson
Preface, A History of the Jews in England.

When looking at the history of the Jews in Galut, we see the same theme repeated again and again. The Jews seem to be in a constant game of ping pong between hard times and happy days. Anglo Jewry is no different to this and this highlights perfectly the same journey



that the Jews have taken everywhere they have been. Similar to the history of Galut, Anglo Jewry is a history that has seen the Jews at low points and at high points in nearly every place they have been, moving again and again from Galut to Geula.

In the Beginning...

William the Conqueror was the first guy to write about the Jews living in England, even though Jews may have lived here since Roman times. In 1070, believing that the Jews commercial skills and incoming capital would make England more prosperous, William invited a group of Jews from France to England. This marked the beginning of the Jews' joyous relationship with dear Blighty.

Blighty

/ˈblaɪti/

noun BRITISH

an informal term for Britain or England, used by soldiers of the First and Second World Wars.

- **military slang**

a wound suffered by a soldier in the First World War which was sufficiently serious to merit being shipped home to Britain.

noun: **blighty**; plural noun: **blighties**

"he had copped a Blighty and was on his way home"

In the Middle Ages, lending money with interest - usury - was considered a sin by Christianity and was forbidden. This was very useful to Medieval monarchs and so Jews were used to finance royal spending, adventures and

wars – and also made a lot of money themselves in the process. Jews spread across the country and this enabled the king to use them as he needed and they gained favour amongst the rich ruling classes. During this period, Jews were not necessarily seen as social or cultural partners by the Brits, but rather as useful monetary assets.

60 Second Fact-file- The Crusades

The Crusades were a series of religiously motivated military campaigns waged by Christian Europe. The specific crusades to regain control of the "Holy Land" were fought over a period of nearly 200 years, between 1095 and 1291. Although these Crusades aimed to recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim rule, many other religions and political enemies of the Pope were targeted on the way to Israel. A particular target in the Crusades was the Jews, many of whom were massacred as the Crusader mob moved across Europe.

Persecution and Expulsion

Although Jews were useful to the monarchy, this did not protect the Jews from the jealousies, rumors and aggression of some of their neighbours.

From here on, it gets a bit rubbish.

This period of history witnessed the introduction of blood libels. A blood libel is a false accusation or claim that religious minorities murder children to use their blood in certain aspects of their religious rituals. The concept of the blood libel appears to have originated in England in 1144 in the case of William of Norwich when the death of a 12 year old apprentice tanner was attributed to the local Jewish community. Similar claims spread from England to France and Spain and throughout Europe in medieval times, and also resurfaced in Nazi propaganda in the 20th century



As a result of the William ritual murder story, massacres of Jews took place across England.² In what was the first of anti-Jewish laws that would spread

² Story of the Jews of York

all over the world, the Archbishop of Canterbury made all the Jews wear a white rectangle badge in order to identify them. Barons and aristocracy tried to remove any traces of borrowing from Jews and so directed mobs to destroy Jewish homes. By 1290 the inevitable happened. After the Pope declared it illegal to borrow money from a Jew and the King found an alternative source of finance, the Jews, a now persecuted and hated people, were banished from England.



For more than 300 years no Jew (officially) existed in the country. It was not until Charles I had his head chopped off that the Jews felt safe to return. In 1656 a Dutch Jew named Menasseh ben Israel, petitioned Oliver Cromwell to allow the mass return of Jews to British Shores.

Back to Blighty

Thus, it was that in the middle of the 17th century, around 300 merchants - Spanish and Portuguese Jews - settled in London. In 1701 they built the country's first purpose-built synagogue, Bevis Marks, the only building in Europe where services have continued without interruption (except for kiddush of course) for more than 300 years.

Resettlement

Just as the relationship between Jews and non-Jews had its ups and down before the expulsion, things were still not plain sailing. Various groups of aristocrats, Christians and businessmen tried to re-expel the Jews. But the new Jewish merchants were just too darn useful. They had brought in £1,500,000 with them which then increased to £5,000,000 by the middle of the century. This provided one-twelfth of the nation's profits and one-twentieth of its foreign trade.

The Jews of York fled to Clifford's Tower at York Castle. Trapped in the castle, the Jews were advised by their religious leader, Rabbi Yomtov of Joigny, to kill themselves rather than convert. The father of each family killed his wife and children, and then Yomtov stabbed the men before killing himself. The handful of Jews who did not kill themselves surrendered to the crusaders at daybreak, leaving the castle on a promise that they would not be harmed. On leaving the castle, however, they were also killed.

Finally, by 1890 when there were now 46,000 Jews living in England, all restrictions upon positions in the British Empire, except that of monarch, were removed.

Modern Day Anglo Jewry

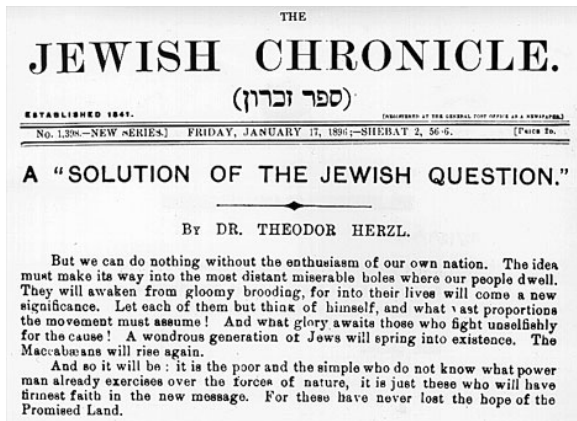
At the end of the 19th century, the pogroms in Germany, Poland and Russia were causing many Jews to flee. It was at this point that Jews really started to come! These were not Sephardim but Ashkenazi Jews with a more distinct East European and Yiddish culture. They soon outnumbered the Spanish and Portuguese.

In 30 years, the Jewish population had increased to about 250,000. But these Ashkenazi Jews adapted to English life very differently to those Jews already here, differing even from all other Jews around the world at that time. And it was with this feeling that Minhag Anglia came about...

60 Second Factfile- Minhag Anglia

Minhag Anglia, is the name for particularly British or English customs that have been incorporated into Judaism. With Jews aspiring to be considered British, sermons started to be given in English and "British sounding" melodies were composed for some prayers. The Ashkenazim turned into a Jewish version of the Church of England. Clergy were ministers called "The Reverend" and wore clerical collars, chazzanim were "precentors", shammashim were "beadles", and the lay leaders were "wardens". The founding of the United Synagogue in 1870 strengthened the minhag, and the Singer Siddur and Routledge Machzor provided Specifically Anglo Jewish prayer books.

Where are we now?

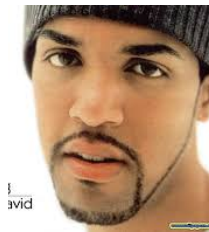


"We Jews of England are not only in England; we are of England. We are not only British Jews, we are Jewish Englishmen. It is our boast and our pleasure and our pride that we can claim and fulfil the duties of Britons without sacrificing our Judaism, without neglecting its observances and without abandoning its sacred hopes."

Today, the United Kingdom, with approximately 300, 000 Jews, is the second largest Jewish population in Western Europe after France and the seventh largest community in the world! We are World Jewry's number 7!

British Jews span a range of religious affiliations including the Charedi communities and a large segment of Jews who are entirely secular. Although many feel that the biggest threat to Jews in England is a rise in Anti-Semitism, it seems that that may be a much more dangerous threat, with recent figures suggesting that up to a third of British Jews marry out.

Britains got Talent – some Jewish Brits



Who is our 'best export'? Which one of these individuals, if any, makes you proud to be British? Or Jewish? Or both?

THE BIG QUESTIONS:

Are you a British Jew or a Jewish Brit?

Is that a good thing?

Does this country's acceptance of Anglo-Jewry indicate British religious tolerance or Jewish assimilation?

Is prosperity in Galut actually a good thing?

K6

New Roots in Poland, and Chassidut



From the Physical to the Spiritual

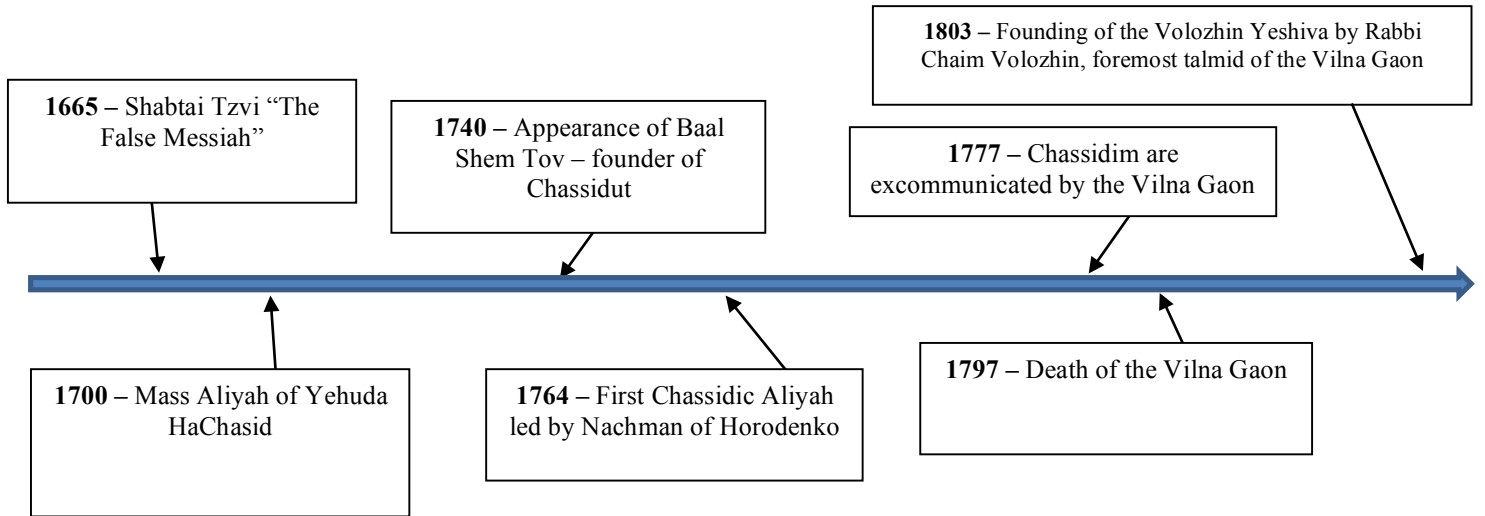
Aims

To understand the settlement of Poland and how it differed from other places the Jews had been.

To learn about Shtetl life - the emergence of the simple Jew and the Rebbe

To see the development of Chassidut – The ideological differences between Chassidim and Mitnagdim

Big Question: Would you have been a Chassid or Mitnaged?



Poland - A ‘well fair’ state for the Jews

Early Jewish Settlement in Poland was very different from earlier settlements in other European countries such as Spain and Portugal. During their early years in Poland, the Jews were given a far higher level of independence than they had ever experienced before. Instead of a life of royal servitude, Jews could not practice their trade freely.

Among the first Jews to arrive in Poland (in 1097 or 1098) were those banished from Prague. Jews from Bohemia and Germany settled primarily in Silesia. They usually engaged in trade and agriculture and some owned landed estates. By the middle of the 14th century they had occupied thirty-five Silesian towns’ settlers in Warsaw and Krakow.

Under Boleslav III (1102–1139), the Jews settled throughout Poland, including over the border in Lithuanian territory and enjoyed undisturbed peace and prosperity in the many different parts which the country was then divided; forming the middle class in a country where the general population consisted mainly of Polish nobility and peasants.

In the 14th and 15th centuries the main occupation of Jews in Poland was local and long distance trade. Owing to their links with Jewish communities in other countries, as well as experience in trade and money lending operations, Jewish merchants gained the advantage over local merchants, both in European and overseas trade.

Of course, all good things must come to an end and in 1454 anti-Jewish riots flared up in Warsaw and other Polish cities. The riots were inspired by the clergy and in 1495, Jews were ordered out of the centre of Krakow and allowed to settle only in 'Jewish towns'. These 'Jewish Towns' were to become the Shtetls in which the Jewish People of Poland were to live over the next several hundred years.



The Shtetl – A golden age of Yidishkeit

The Shtetl can be explained as a small town or village in which the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe and the remarkable culture of the Ashkenazim flourished before World War II. In many a shtetl, most of the inhabitants were Jews; in others, all were Jews. It was in the shtetlach that certain Jewish traditions and values were preserved until they achieved a character distinctly their own. The residents were poor folk, fundamentalist in faith, earthy, superstitious, stubbornly resistant to secularism or change. They wrote in Hebrew or Yiddish and refused to speak foreign language among themselves. They were



dairymen, cobblers, tailors, butchers, fishmongers.....

*"Gone now are those little towns
where the shoemaker was a poet,
The watchmaker a philosopher, the
barber a singer.*

*Gone now are those little towns
where the wind joined
Biblical songs with Polish tunes and
Slavic rue,*

*Where old Jews in orchards in the
shade of cherry trees,
Lamented for the holy walls of
Jerusalem.*

*Gone now are those little
towns, though the poetic mists,
The moons, winds, ponds, and stars
above them*

*Have recorded in the blood of
centuries the tragic tales,
The histories of the two saddest
nations on earth." Antoni Sionimski,
'Elegy for the Jewish Villages'*



Many people think of "Fiddler on the Roof" when they think of 19th and early 20th century Shtetl life. While it is true that music and dancing were important components of the Shtetl life, there was far more to it as well.

The vast majority of the Jews in the tsarist empire lived within a restricted area. They could not move without approval from the police. Entire local populations could be abruptly "resettled," forced out of their homes, with no more legality than the impulse of a local governor. Jews were forbidden to own land. They were barred from colleges and universities and from even the most humble government jobs. They were not allowed to practice certain crafts, skills, and trades. Life in the shtetl was very hard. In some years, thousands literally starved to death.



In the Shtetlach, the Jews produced their own culture, an independent style of life and thought, an original gallery of human types, fresh modes of humor, irony, lyricism, paradox - all unlike anything in history. There, Yiddishkeit entered a golden age.

The world of the Jews in Germany, France, England, Holland, Italy, Austria, was vastly different from the world of Shtetl Jews in Poland. The world of the first was the same as that of Non-Jews of the same time-period; the world of the second was unique unto itself.

City Jews in Eastern, as in Western, Europe were caught up in political and libertarian movements;; they became trade unionists, social democrats, socialists, revolutionaries. But the shtetl was another world...



The "Pale" ended due to the severe economic and political pressure that accompanied the First World War. Thousands of Jews left for the factories of Odessa, Kiev, Warsaw, Lodz, Moscow, and Petrograd; and then to Germany, England, South America, the United States. History will surely record the Shtetl as a phenomenon worthy of remembrance. It was a world isolated from time, medieval in texture, living on the daily edge of fear.

Torah and the Shtetl



The Rabbi of any shtetl was highly respected by all Jews. The people of the shtetl, lived and worked hard to sustain their poor lives. There were a few well-to-do families, but the majority were poor artisans, storekeepers, and plain poor folk.

Any Jews that could spare time would go to Shul or the Beit Midrash. Materialism was not common, with Jews managing to get along on very little. The main concern was one's

spiritual life. Years passed by and generation after generation carried on the same way: people believed that nothing would ever change.

"Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years. Here in Anatevka, we have traditions for everything. How to sleep, how to eat, how to work, how to wear clothes. For instance, we always keep our heads covered, and always wear a little prayer shawl that shows our constant devotion to God.

You may ask, "How did this tradition get started?" I'll tell you!.....I don't know. But it's a tradition, and because of our traditions, Every one of us knows who he is and what G-d expects him to do".

The beef between Chassidim and Mitnagdim and how it came about....

Chassidut is the movement of Orthodox Judaism that sought to renew the service of God so as to include the simple, even illiterate Jews of the Eighteenth Century. At such a time, only the scholars and Rabbis were considered beloved of God and actually able to serve Him through their study of the Talmud and the performance of the Mitzvot as they were written in the Shulchan Aruch. There are two critiques about Rabbi Eliyahu, The Vilna Gaon, a fiery and holy man, a genius, totally absorbed in the service of God through intellectual study and clarification of the finer points of Jewish law.



Despite being a huge Talmid Chacham, The Villa Gaon was disconnected from the majority of the Jewish people. Shetl Jews were poor and illiterate, barely knowing the alef-bet.. Many of them loved G-d and performed all the mitzvot by imitating the local Rabbi. But sadly, they felt, as did the scholars in the circle of the Vilna Gaon, that such simple peasant Jews were on the outside, far from G-d and far from any ability to serve God on a deep level. In short, there was a great gap between the elite minority and the majority of simple Jews.



Then came Rabbi Israel, the Baal Shem Tov. He taught the simple Jews, "as long as you have faith, as long as you have trust in God, as long as you love God and know that God loves you, you are not on the outside, you are a member of the inside circle. It's not about what you know. It's about your pride in being a Jew and your simple faith. As long as you have a fear of Heaven that prevents you from transgressing the Halachot then you are no longer on the outside." God will not cast anyone permanently into Exile, for in the end, he will save all, even the mistaken Jews lacking the fear of God. (Keter Shem Tov)" And if you do a little more, serving God with love and Joy, then you are a part of God's own inner circle, and have influence in divine policy making. He hears your prayers, and your Joy gives God joy.

Now, if we look at a parable from the Chassidic outlook, their beliefs become very clear.

What is the greatest thing two Jews can do when they meet each other? According to the circle of the Vilna Gaon, the greatest thing two Jews can do when they meet is sit down and learn a page of the Gemara or the Code of Jewish law. But what if they are incapable of learning Gemara, a study that takes not only a sharp intellect but great training? So they can learn a Mishna, a simple law from the Oral Tradition. What if they are unable to learn even a single mishna? Then, the Baal Shem Tov would suggest that the greatest thing they



can do is tell a story about the Tzaddikim, the righteous and holy masters of God's path. What if they don't even know a story? Then they can get together and sing a niggun! (cue for your favourite niggun) According to the Chassidim the singing of the 'Simple Jew' can connect to HaShem in the same way that a Torah Scholar can connect with his learning.

One major Chassidic concept is known as 'deveikut' or "clinging to G-d." This involves feeling the presence of God in all aspects of one's existence. Through prayer, mitzvot and other spiritual actions one should cling to get closer to G-d.

Becoming more spiritual caught on very rapidly among the simple Jews in particular and thousands upon thousands of Jews were drawn to the Chassidic movement.

The outlook of the Vilna Gaon and the Mitnagdim can easily be looked at with disdain but it must be understood that in their early years, it was feared that the Chassidim would become another heretical sect, similar to that of Shabbetai Tzvi (The False Messiah). In its formative stages, Chassidut wisely put its primary emphasis on personal religious growth rather than on national salvation, and it downplayed the messianic element. This was not enough, however, to appease the Mitnagdim. Other Chassidic traits, such as their laid-back attitude toward the appropriate hours for davening, bitterly provoked their opponents. The Chassidim answered that they couldn't have precise hours for each of the three daily tefillot; they prayed with such kavana (intensity) that they couldn't do so while looking at a watch.

With the passage of time, the Chasidim and Mitnagdim recognised that their differences were increasingly unimportant after both groups found themselves facing a common enemy: the nineteenth century *Haskala*, or Jewish Enlightenment. Jewish parents, who once feared that their Chassidic or Mitnagdish child might go over to the other camp, were now far more afraid that their child might become altogether irreligious.

An additional factor that lessened the Chassidic Mitnagdish split was nineteenth and twentieth century Chassidut's increasing emphasis on Talmud study. As the movement expanded, it put less emphasis on meditation and hitbodedut (time spent alone with one's thoughts) and more on traditional Jewish learning. As a result, Chassidim today are no longer regarded as revolutionaries; in fact, they are the conservative stronghold of Chareidi Judaism, easily recognised by the eighteenth and nineteenth century black coats and hats worn by most of their male supporters.



Nonetheless, the Chassidic approach to Judaism significantly differs from that of the Mitnagdim. Chassidut generally places a much greater stress on *simcha shel mitzvah* — the joy of performing a commandment where the Lithuanian (Mitnagdish) outlook feels that this is an unnecessary requirement.

In hindsight, we see that the Chassidic movement contributed significantly to the revitalisation of Eastern European Jewry. It brought a lot of people back to Judaism who could well have been lost because they didn't have the time to study. Jewish history did not see the fears of the Mitnagdim materialise. The Chassidic movement did not create a separate religion and while it has developed its own customs, it did not cause a tremendous split. However, the pressure brought by the Mitnagdim against the Chassidim probably acted as a brake, preventing them from going too far.

Who would you support the Chassidim or the Mitnagdim? Emotion or Intellectualism? Heart or Mind?

Hasidim advocated using a sharper knife when slaughtering animals than the one used by the Mitnagdim's slaughterers. Such stringency had a socially divisive effect: The Hasidim no longer could eat at the Mitnagdim's houses. The Hasidim also adopted a different Siddur, so that their davening differed somewhat from that of other Jews and had to be conducted separately. Their most brilliant act of "public relations" was labeling themselves Chassidim, the Hebrew word for both "pious" and "saintly," while calling their adversaries Mitnagdim, Hebrew for "opponents." These terms made the Chassidim seem like the more dynamic and positive of the two groups.

Yaacov Katz, Israeli Historian

60 Second Biography - The Vilna Gaon

Rabbi Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman (1720-1797), also known as the Gra, was the foremost scholar-sage of Lithuanian Jewry in the eighteenth-century, and has become the spiritual forefather for much of the non-Chassidic yeshiva world. Known for his greatness in Talmudic and Kabbalistic study, he likewise mastered astronomy, mathematics and music. His system of Talmudic study focused on trying to find the true meaning intended by the sages in the text.

Known for fierce opposition to Chassidut, which was initiated in 1736 by the Baal Shem Tov, he and his followers in this anti-Chassidic Movement were known as "Mitnagdim," or opponents. Their opposition was based on the beliefs, vigorously denied by Chassidic leaders, that Chassidut took liberties with the Oral Torah, that it substituted emotion for intellect in the Study of Torah, that its form of Tefilla departed too far from the traditional form of prayer.

60 Second Biography - The Baal Shem Tov

The Baal Shem Tov was Born in the region of Podolia (now in Ukraine) and lived between 1700-1760. He was named Israel ben Eliezer, but was called Baal Shem Tov, meaning "master of the Holy Name", because he professed to perform miracles by using the name of God. He was also known by the acronym Besht. A rabbi and student of Kabbalah, he stressed inner conversion, personal piety, humility, charity, mystical and ecstatic experience of the divine presence, and a joyful attitude towards life, rather than traditional learning and fixed doctrine. From about 1740 until his death, he lived in Medzhibozh, Podolia, where he attracted a large number of followers. From this group, which numbered about 10,000 at the time of his death, the modern Hasidim developed. Even during his lifetime, the Baal Shem Tov became the subject of many legendary tales. His sayings and the legends about him, preserved orally at first, were committed to writing as the Hasidic movement grew.

THE BIG QUESTION:

If you were alive then, would you be a Chassid or a Mitnaged? Why?

To what extent have Chassidim and non-Chassidim nowadays been affected by each other's ideologies?

Did Chassidut need Mitnagdishe Judaism and vice versa?

Can the disagreements between the Chassidim and Mitnagdim be seen today reflected in contemporary arguments within Orthodox Judaism?

Kiruv and Chinuch perhaps?



K7

New Perspectives: The Enlightenment and Jewish Reactions

From Knowledge to Wisdom

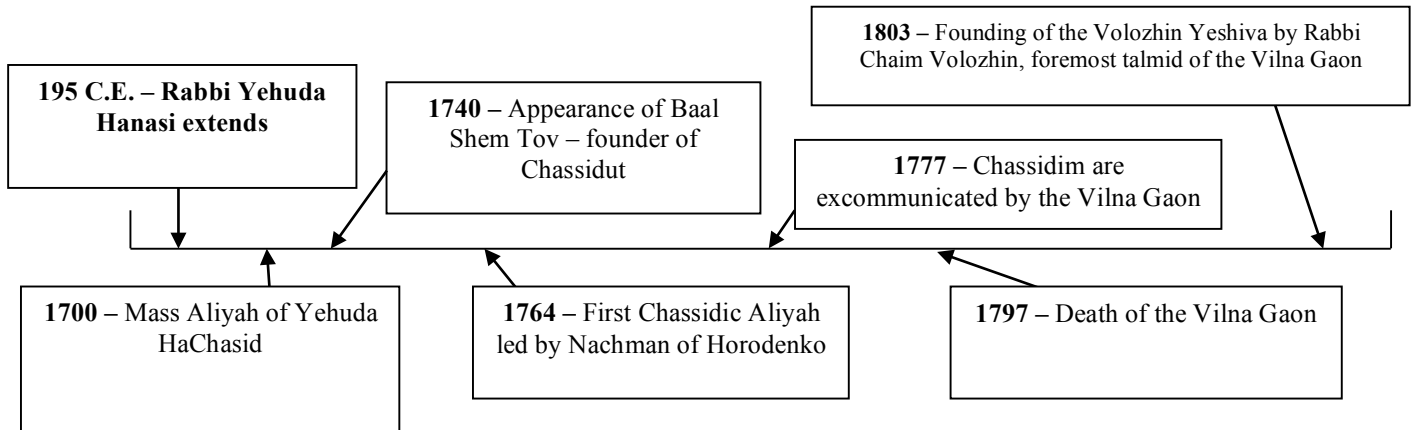


AIMS:

1. To learn about the Enlightenment.
2. To identify those Jews who embraced the enlightenment.
3. To understand the varying Jewish reactions to the enlightenment.

The Big Question: How much integration should we have with modern secular society?

Time Line



The Haskala

The word “Haskala”, loosely translated as “The Enlightenment”, was a period in Jewish history between 1770 and 1880. Beginning in Germany, the Enlightenment was inspired by the European Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason, which in many ways defined the 18th century. Ideas such as democracy, secularism and rationalism replaced religion’s dominant role in society, thereby opening the door for Jews to leave shtetls and start to contribute to wider society. However, the Enlightenment also meant the beginning of wide-spread assimilation, as Jews began making extra efforts to fit into their newly accepting society. However, anti-Semitism did not disappear.

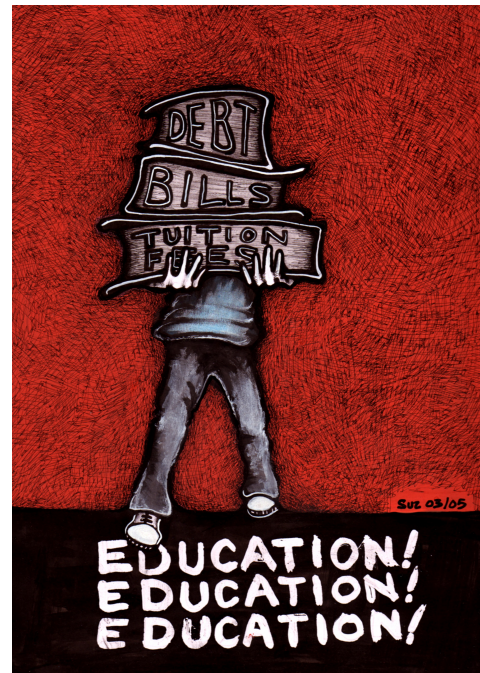
60 Second Factfile- The Haskalah

Supporters of this movement were called ‘Maskilim’ (intelligent ones), and believed in the integration of Jews into western culture. Its leader was Moses Mendelssohn, who believed that Jews should leave the ghetto mentality. Maskilim encouraged learning German and Hebrew, both languages of culture, as opposed to Yiddish. An example of this was Mendelssohn’s translation of the Torah into German for the first time.

There were 4 main category changes within society which were introduced by the Maskilim:

1) Education

The Maskilim attempted to remove Gemara learning from Jewish education and instead emphasised secular knowledge and common sense in order to enable Jewish children people to assimilate into society.



2) Language

At the earliest stages of “The Enlightenment” the majority of the Jewish people in European countries spoke Yiddish. However, during this time period, Jews began speaking other European languages, with rich Jews speaking French. Moses Mendelssohn stated that he thought Yiddish was “ridiculous, ungrammatical, and a cause of moral corruption”. It was felt by the Maskillim that sometimes Yiddish was used as a code language between the Jewish people.

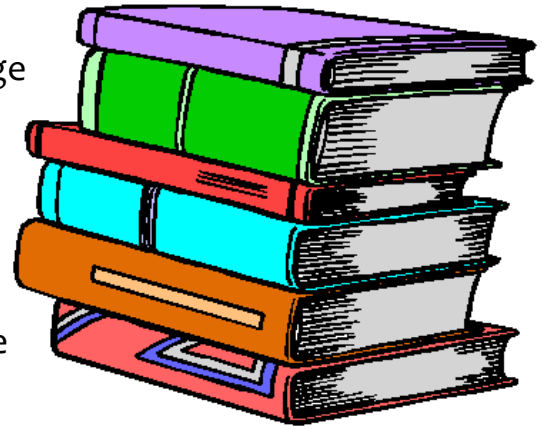


Interestingly, during this time period a revival of Hebrew, in particular Biblical Hebrew, began. The publication “Ha-Me’assef”, meaning “The Gatherer”, was released in an aim to increase the use of Hebrew. This publication rejected Modern Hebrew, instead writing poems, essays and historical accounts in Biblical Hebrew.

3) Literature

Following the reintroduction of the Hebrew language many new novels were written. The novels depicted the ancient Jewish people as lovers and warriors. The implication being that Jews should not be passive, but should actively fight by taking political action.

Later texts were used by the Maskillim to denounce the practices of Chassidim and the Orthodox.



4) Jobs

Throughout Europe the primary occupations of the Jewish people were in commerce e.g. money lenders. The Maskillim tried to change this perception by promoting industry, apprenticeships and manual labour.

Moses Mendelssohn

Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1789) was born in Dessau in Germany and is commonly known as the father of the Haskala movement. Many of his ideas were brought from the secular Enlightenment, particularly from Christian Wolff (a prominent philosopher of the Enlightenment) and Gottfried Leibnitz (a European rationalist). He combined Judaism with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, becoming one of the principal figures in the Haskala. He valued reason and felt that anyone could arrive logically at religious truths. For some people he was even the 3rd Moshe- after Moshe Rabbeinu and Rambam- Moses Maimonides. For other people his ideas led to assimilation, a loss of Jewish identity and



a dilution of Jewish traditions. He was also the man behind the first Jewish school for boys which included secular *and* religious lessons.

Varying Jewish Reactions to the Enlightenment

Mussar Movement: Rabbi Yisroel Salanter established the Mussar Movement, which emphasises the study and practice Jewish values and ethics. This concept provided the oppressed masses of Eastern Europe, who were not able to achieve greatness through Torah scholarship, with a sense of self-worth and an achievable aim. Rabbi Salanter responded by emphasising the difference between his movement and the Reform. “The Reform is out to change Judaism. I am merely out to change Jews.” Due to his sincerity and great scholarship, Mussar eventually wins out incorporated into the curriculum of many Yeshivot.

Reform: Leaders such as Israel Jacobson and Abraham Geiger started the Reform movement in the early 19th Century in Germany and it eventually spread across Europe. Their aim was to change Jewish belief and practice to ‘fit in’ more with modern German society. Reform ‘temples’ (so called because they replaced visions of a rebuilt Temple) featured organs, German songs and aimed to resemble a church service. Some Reform Jewish leaders thought that Judaism needed constant reform in order to progress and be the enlightened religion of the times. Others just believed that in the age of the enlightenment, the need for Judaism and the separateness of a Jewish people was no longer necessary and Jews should take the opportunity to become more German.

Soon, Shabbat was observed on Sunday, the divinity of the Torah was denied and circumcision was dropped, as was the shofar, kippot and other religious items. These ‘Germans of the Mosaic persuasion’, said that ‘Berlin is the new Jerusalem’.



RICHARD LOBEL

Torah im Derech Eretz: Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch was the leader of this movement along with other Rabbis including Azriel Hildesheimer and was a major critic of the reformers. He moved to Frankfurt, a place where the banning of shechita, learning Torah and the mikveh by reformers had almost destroyed the religious community and he re-invigorated Orthodox Judaism there and throughout Germany. He succeeded in establishing a shul and argued that “An excellent thing is study of Torah combined with the ways of the world (derech eretz)”, meaning that integration into European life should enhance a Torah lifestyle.



He argued and showed that one could be a good member of secular society with a secular education and a profession whilst still maintaining Halachic Orthodox Judaism. This belief is the main influence behind today's Modern Orthodoxy.

Chadash Asur min HaTorah: Rabbi Moshe Schreiber [Sofer] - The Chatam Sofer was the leading Rabbi in Pressburg [Bratislava] and was one of the leading proponents against Reform Judaism and any changes in Judaism. In response to Reform he argued that any interaction with the secular world would lead to assimilation and the best approach was to remain isolated, as “New things are forbidden by the Torah”. This has been the guiding principle for today's strictly Charedi community. In many ways, Charedi Judaism as we know it has been formed as a result of the Chatam Sofer and his school of thoughts response to and rejection of the Enlightenment and the more isolationist response they took compared to those such as Rav Hirsch.

The Result of the Haskala

The results of the Haskala were astounding. Many Jewish people started assimilating and stopped keeping Halacha. The Haskala also triggered Jewish emigration to America, Palestine and other places. In Russia, the Haskala also prompted the formation of the *Chibbat Zion* movement. *Chibbat Zion* was a pre-Zionist movement, beginning in the 1880s, advocating revival of Jewish

life in the Land of Israel. Its adherents worked towards the physical development of the Land, and founded agricultural settlements in Palestine. By the time the First Zionist Congress met in 1897, they had already begun to transform the face of Palestine.

Regardless of one's feeling towards it, the Haskala undoubtedly changed the face of Judaism. Education, Language, Literature and Jobs were all affected. Indeed, the influence of the Haskala movement on World Jewry can still be appreciated today.

THE BIG QUESTION:

How much integration should we have with modern secular society?

Was Rav Hirsch's school of thought correct?

Are there any dangers with the Torah im Derech Eretz approach?

What school of thought would you have chosen to follow at the time?

Are some approaches less risky than others?

How much are we influenced by these schools of thought today?

K8

The Holocaust

From Tragedy to Strength



Aims:

1. To see how the leaders of the Holocaust reached their positions of power.
2. To see the development; Normal life – ghetto – concentration camps.
3. To see and understand acts of Heroism amidst the annihilation.

The Big Question:

Kiddush or Chillul HaShem?

For not just one alone has risen against us to destroy us, but in every generation they rise against us to destroy us; and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand!

The Pesach Haasadah

In 1922 Adolf Hitler was put into prison for causing a disturbance at a meeting at the Lowenbraukeller of the Bavarian League. While he was in prison he wrote his book, Mein Kampf (My struggle), which was then first published in 1925. This book became the "bible" for a party that was later to become the Nazi party. In the book Hitler explained the supremacy of the Aryan race and his belief that anyone who is not part of this race, is contaminating it and causing Germany to lose its nationality.

What we have to fight for is the freedom and independence of the fatherland, so that our people may be able to fulfil the mission assigned to it by the creator.

Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf

Hitler started his campaign in 1919 when he joined the Deutsche Arbeiter partei known as the DAP, which later became the Nazi Party. It was a party which stood for extreme nationalism in a time where the people of Germany were in desperate need for something to believe in, after having a shattered economy post WW1. In January 1933, Hitler was made Chancellor by President Paul von Hindenburg and after some backhanded politics an act was passed that gave Hitler close to dictatorial powers.

But how did he get to the top of the party in the first place?



Hitler was a very good orator and the release of Mein Kampf brought Hitler to a wider audience. In the 1920's the party engaged in electoral battles in which Hitler was a speaker and organiser.

How did people let Hitler torment a group of people the way he did?

Hitler's main aim was to rid Germany of the non-Aryan (primarily the Jews). Clearly after the Enabling Act, Hitler could do almost anything he wanted, but to torture a people would be ludicrous surely no-one would let that happen!?

It started on April 1st 1933 when there was a national boycott of Jewish businesses. Hitler used his power to infect the minds of the German people. He started from grass roots by using the education system to brainwash his population into believing the same things as him.

By 1935, the Nuremberg laws, the German public was very much brainwashed and most of the public believed in Hitler's depiction of the Jews.

The personifications of the devil as the symbol of all evil assumes the living shape of the Jew.

Adolf Hitler Mein Kampf

With quotes like this, Hitler infected the minds of the German population. He used the national publications and the education system to make sure people believed the same as him. These publications depicted the German race as strong well-built people who work the land and contribute to Germany and Jews, as fat, devil like, money obsessed pigs.

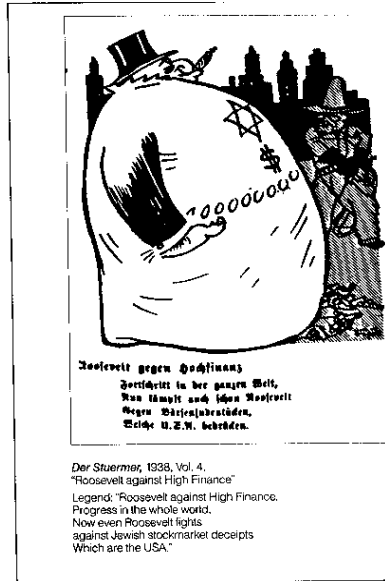
From 1933-1935 small laws, which inconvenienced Jews were passed but nothing was too radical.

In 1935 the Nuremburg laws were passed. This is where the true terror of the Holocaust would begin.

At the annual Nuremburg rally, the Nazi party released laws identifying a person with three or four grandparents as Jewish and one or two as 'Mischling" (Mixed blood). This allowed laws restricting Jewish rights to be passed and implemented much easier.

The laws forbade marriages between Jews (including mixed blood) and Germans. They also forbade sexual intercourse between the two.

These laws were clearly directed at the Jews but were in no way lethal or deadly. This is how Hitler got away with so much of what he did.



Der Stürmer, 1938, Vol. 4, "Roosevelt against High Finance" Legend: "Roosevelt against High Finance. Progress in the whole world. Now even Roosevelt fights against Jewish stockmarket deceits Which are the USA."



Vechernya Moskva, 1973. "The Modern Prayercoat" Legend: "Jewish extremists still request—and receive—large donations from Zionists abroad and from the Pentagon, for their aggressive purposes." NOTE: Jew wearing traditional East-European Jewish coat called Lapsertack, both pockets of which are shown as money sacks.



As People started becoming used to these laws and life became 'normal' under them, the Nazi started to implement more laws which caused greater inconvenience to Jews.

These laws included things like a ban on a wireless (not broadband) in the house, separate benches for Jews, a ban on Jews owning bicycles. These laws eventually turned into separate education for Jews and then the famous recognition of Jews on the streets by enforcing the compulsory wearing of a yellow star on their outer jacket before finally segregating the Jews by building ghettos in cities and herding all the Jews from the surrounding areas to live in these Ghettos.

Why didn't anyone do anything?

What does the term innocent bystander mean to you?

Do you think there is such a thing as an innocent bystander?



Leviticus 19:16

"Neither shall thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour"

The Netziv (Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, also known as Reb Hirsch Leib Berlin, was an Orthodox Rabbi, dean of the Volozhin Yeshiva and author of several works of rabbinic literature in Lithuania.) says on the above passuk.

"Even if you are not the slanderer or the cause for the lessening of his soul, rather he caused his own soul to be in a position of danger. It is assur [forbidden] for you to 'stand on your friends blood.' But slandering is assur even if does not affect the soul and his blood directly, rather it damages him or similar, even if he is known for this (what you are saying). Even if he has been warned about what he is doing, because even though he has been warned, you shouldn't 'stand on your friend's blood.' For instance if someone knows that there is a man who wants to kill another person, this persons is m'chayuv to let the right people know (the police) and it is assur for him 'to stand on his friends blood."

Furthermore the Gemara in Sanhedrin says:

Sanhedrin 37a

"Whoever destroys a single soul (of Israel) is as though he has destroyed an entire universe, whoever saves a single soul (from Israel) is as though he has saved an entire universe"

So after having looked at these sources, do you think there is such thing as an innocent bystander??

So what was a Ghetto?

Life in the Ghettos was very difficult and overcrowding was common. There was little to no plumbing, and human waste had to be thrown in to the streets. During the long winters, heating fuel was scarce and many people lacked adequate clothing. People were always hungry. Some residents had managed to smuggle in money or valuables that they could trade for food on the black market. Others were forced to beg or steal to survive. In order to survive, children had to make themselves resourceful. Small children in the Warsaw Ghetto helped smuggle food to their families by crawling through narrow openings in the ghetto wall. They did so at great risk, as smugglers who were caught were severely punished, sometimes killed.

Many young people tried to continue their education by attending classes (held in defiance of the Nazis and in utmost secrecy) organised by adults in many ghettos. Although surrounded by suffering and death, children did not stop playing with toys. Some had beloved dolls or trucks they had managed to bring in with them. Children also made toys using and bits of wood or cloth they could find. In the Lodz Ghetto, children turned the tops of empty cigarette boxes into playing cards.

Was it all just destruction?

All we hear about in the holocaust is the destruction of Jews, but was there such thing as Jews sticking up for themselves?

Take a look at these two memorials. Both of them are displayed in Warsaw, where the ghetto once was, and also in Yad Vashem at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial.

What do they represent to you?

Which one truly represents the strength of the Jews in the Holocaust to you?



The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

The Warsaw ghetto uprising is a story of bravery and heroism. It is a story which gave life to the rest of the Jewish world who were suffering at the hands of the Nazi's around Europe, and gave them something to believe in and something to live for.

Summer 1942- 300,000 people evacuated from the ghetto

Remaining survivors of two youth movements set up resistance groups, called the Jewish Combat Organisation (*Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa*; ZOB), made up of about 200 people in their late teens early 20's and the Jewish Military Union (*Zydowski Zwiasek Wojskowy*; ZZW). Although initially there was tension between the ZOB and the ZZW, both groups decided to work together to oppose German attempts to destroy the ghetto. At the time of the uprising, the ZOB had about 500 fighters in its ranks and the ZZW had about 250.

On January the 18th 1943 a group of fighters hid with Jews waiting to be deported. They surprised the Germans by firing at them from the lines. Most if not all the fighters died, but they did give a chance for many of the gathered Jews to get away, from being deported to death and labour camps.

The final liquidation of the ghetto was planned to start on April 19th. When the German SS soldiers entered the ghetto it was deserted. Jews had hid in bunkers and dilapidated buildings.

Mordecai Anielewicz the leader of the ZOB had informed his fighters that the renewal of deportations was the sign for the armed resistance to begin. On that day, the Germans were stunned and forced to retreat from the ghetto. Jewish resistance, armed with homemade grenades, pistols and a few automatic weapons, had succeeded in putting off that deportation.



The Germans reported losing 12 men that day. After that the Germans began



raising the ghetto to the ground. They used smoke grenades and sometimes gas to smoke the fighters out of their hiding places.

Mordechai Anielewicz and many other leaders of the ZOB used a bunker built at 18 Mila Street to use as their headquarters of the resistance. On May the 8th the Germans through smoke grenades in to the bunker. Mordechai, his wife

and children and the other people with them in the bunker committed mass suicide rather than give in to the Germans.

The ghetto fell into German hands after a valiant month long fight of ghetto Jews against the monsters that were the SS.

Overall approximately 7000 Jews were killed in the uprising another 7000 were sent to Treblinka death camp and 42000 sent to Majdanek concentration camp.

Do you think that the loss of life compensates for the statement made?

Do you think it was necessary to stand up and cause a commotion when you knew there was no way of stopping what was happening?

The other type of heroism...

In Bergen Belsen concentration camp, after a day of random selections of victims to be brutally murdered, night fell. A wooden clog of one of the inmates was placed not far from the heaps of bodies. Shoe polish used by inmates to shine soldier's shoes was put inside the wooden clog. A piece of thread pulled from the thin uniforms of the inmates was carefully stuck into the polish, because tonight was Chanukah, and on Chanukah we light the channukiah.

The Rabbi of Bluzhov lit the light and recited the first two blessing in the festive chant, which tonight was covered with sorrow and pain. When he reached the third blessing he paused. He looked around him as if he were searching for something, then immediately turned back and recited the third blessing. "Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and has preserved us and enabled us to reach this season."

Among the living skeletons gathered to witness the lighting of the channukiah was Mr. Zamietchkowski. After the rabbi had finished Mr. Zamietchkowski, a man with a passion for discussing matters of religion and faith, went up to the rabbi and said "I understand your need to light the channukiah here in the gates of hell, But how can you say the third blessing thanking G-d for bringing us here to this season, when hundreds of dead Jewish bodies are lying in the shadows of the Chanukah lights? When thousands of living Jewish skeletons are walking around the camp and millions more are being massacred all over Europe? For this you are thanking G-d? This is what you call 'keeping us alive'?"

"Mr. Zamietchkowski" said the rabbi "You are completely correct. I too when I reached that bracha paused and asked myself what I should do with this blessing. I turned my head in order to ask the Rabbi of Zaner and other distinguished Rabbis who were standing near me. But as I turned my head I saw a crowd of living Jews, expressing faith, devotion and concentration as they were listening to the kindling of the Chanukah lights. I said to myself, If G-d has a nation that at times like these, when lighting the Chanukah candles there are heaps of dead bodies lying around them and death lurks at every corner, if despite all of that, they stand with devotion and listen to the blessings, then indeed the third bracha is true and I am under special obligation to recite it." -Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust

There are many stories of people finding and keeping the faith during the Holocaust. Many stories of people going to extra lengths to keep the mitzvot

where they can and deny the Nazi's from taking their faith. These stories, arguably, are the true resistance of the Jewish people in the Holocaust. No matter where they are, no matter how many of their family they have seen murdered in front of their eyes, they search with devotion the materials needed to fulfill the mitzvot Hashem commanded us. The Nazi's could take away their clothes, they could take away their possessions, they could even take away their right to live as a human being but the one thing they could not take away was our faith and trust in Hashem. If only we had that eagerness to fulfill the mitzvot today, when we are free and have access to any resources we need to make the mitzvah as 'beautiful' as possible.

Do you think that this story shows resistance?

Are acts of faith like this, admirable or do you think that the times demanded more acts of courage and action?

Do you think faith saved the Jewish people from annihilation?

In Israel today there are two main Holocaust museums, one is Yad Vashem, the other, nowadays slightly less well known is the Lochamey HaGeta'ot Museum.

It is interesting to note that Israel's Holocaust Memorial Day's official name is 'Yom HaShoah v'HaGevura' – 'Holocaust and Strength Day'. The State of Israel and the Zionist Movement very much believed in viewing ourselves as the 'New Jew', no longer powerless people going to the slaughter, but people who could and would defend ourselves and take charge of our own destiny – The Geula Jew as opposed to the Galut Jew.



As a result, the State of Israel in its early years chose to emphasise the memory those who fought back over those who were murdered in extermination camps.

Though this approach may seem a bit harsh, it can be understandable as the part played by the Jews who fought back cannot be underestimated. It is interesting to note that it took the German army just three weeks to invade, conquer and subjugate the whole of France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, yet it took them four weeks to take the Warsaw Ghetto.



We often here the phrase ‘Kiddush HaShem’ with reference to the Holocaust. 6 million Jews were murdered al Kiddush HaShem. That 6 million Jews were murdered because they were Jewish and did not give up their Judaism.

It is also possible however to view this in a different perspective.

If we, Am Yisrael, are G-d’s people here on Earth, His representatives or ambassadors, then us being strong and respected in order to carry out G-d’s mission is a Kiddush HaShem. It would stand to reason therefore that if the Jewish people, G-d’s ambassadors are murdered and annihilated this in and of itself is actually the greatest Chillul HaShem possible.

The Big Question:

Should we view the Holocaust as a Kiddush
HaShem or Chillul HaShem?

Is there perhaps a difference between how we should view the Holocaust as an event and how we should view the actions of the Jews in the Holocaust?

Is there a 'Galut' way and a 'Geula way of viewing the Holocaust?

Extra Chomer

World War I

1914

Aug 1, 1914 World War I breaks out.

Aug 2, 1914 Adolf Hitler receives permission to enlist; joins the 16th Reserve Infantry Regiment in Munich

Oct 30, 1914 Adolf Hitler transferred to regimental staff as runner.

Nov 1, 1914 Adolf Hitler promoted to *Gefreiter* (senior private or corporal).**1918**

Jul 17, 1918 Adolf Hitler saves life of 9th Company Commander

Aug 4, 1918 Adolf Hitler awarded Iron Cross 1st Class.

Oct 13, 1918 Adolf Hitler gassed near Ypres.

Nov 11, 1918 First World War ended.

Nov 19, 1918 Hitler discharged from hospital at Pasewalk.

1919

Jan 1919 German Workers' Peace party renamed German Workers Party.

Mar 1919 Adolf Hitler finishes job of guarding Russian prisoners.

Jun 28, 1919 Versailles Treaty signed in the Hall of Mirrors (Palace of Versailles).

Sep 12, 1919 Adolf Hitler's inspection of the German Workers' Party in the Sterneckerbräu brewery, in Munich..

1920

Jan 1920 The DAP grew to 190 members.

Feb 20, 1920 DAP changes name to National Socialist German Workers' Party.

Apr 1920 Gov stops paying Freikorps units.

May 10, 1920 Dr. Joseph Wirth and Walter Rathenau announce their "Policy of Fulfillment"; not received well by nationalist groups.

1922

Jan 12, 1922 Adolf Hitler sentenced to three months for disturbance of Sept 14 1921. (On 14 September 1921, Hitler and a substantial number of SA members and other Nazi party adherents disrupted a meeting at the Lowenbraukeller of the Bavarian League. This federalist organization objected to the centralism of the Weimar Constitution, but accepted its social program. The League was led by Otto Ballerstedt, an engineer whom Hitler regarded as "my most dangerous opponent." One Nazi, Hermann Esser, climbed upon a chair and shouted that the Jews were to blame for the misfortunes of Bavaria, and the Nazis shouted demands that Ballerstedt yield the floor to Hitler.

The Nazis beat up Ballerstedt and shoved him off the stage into the audience. Both Hitler and Esser were arrested, and Hitler commented notoriously to the police commissioner, "It's all right. We got what we wanted. Ballerstedt did not speak.")

Jun 24, 1922 Hitler Incarcerated.

Jul 27, 1922 Hitler released.

1924

Feb 26, 1924 Hitlerputsch trial begins.

Dec 20, 1924 Hitler released from the Landsberg Prison.

1927

May 1927 Hitler speaking ban lifted in Bavaria.

1929

Oct 16, 1929 Liberty Law campaign officially begins. The Nazi Party joins a coalition

of conservative groups under Hugenberg's leadership to oppose the Young Plan.
 Dec 22, 1929 The Liberty Law referendum is defeated. Hitler denounces Hugenberg's leadership parlance.

1930

Sep 15 1930 - In a milestone election, Nazis gain 6 million votes in national polling to emerge as the second largest party in Germany.

1932

Apr 10, 1932 Hindenburg reelected to Reichspresident with over 40% of the vote. Hitler gains 37% and the communist candidate Thälmann gains 10.2%

May 30, 1932 Henrich Bruening (Center) leaves office.

Jul 31, 1932 Reichstag elections: Nazi party becomes the largest party.

Nov 6, 1932 Reichstag elections: Nazi party loses votes.

Nazi Revolution

1933

Jan 30, 1933 President Hindenburg appoints Hitler chancellor of a Nazi-DNVP coalition.

Feb 2, 1933 Hitler meets with top military leaders, describes his plans to rearm Germany

Feb 28, 1933 Law for the Protection of People and State ("Reichstag Fire Decree"): civil liberties suspended. Gleichschaltung ("coordination"), the process of exerting totalitarian control over Germany, begins. Over the next five months, the Nazis systematically force all opposition political parties to shut down.

Mar 5, 1933 General Elections result in slim majority of Hitler's coalition, though not a majority for the Nazi Party.

Mar 23, 1933 Enabling Act, passed with help of Catholic Center Party, effectively hands the legislative powers of the Reichstag over to the Chancellor. Act permits Chancellor and cabinet to issue laws without a vote of Parliament and to deviate from the Constitution.

Apr 1, 1933 One day boycott of Jewish shops.

Apr 7, 1933 Nazi governors appointed to rule the German states. End of federalism.

Jul 14, 1933 Hitler proclaims the Nazi party "the only political party in Germany." All others banned.

1934

Apr 11, 1934 Pact of the *Deutschland*: Hitler persuades the top officials of the army and navy to back his bid to succeed Hindenburg as president, by promising to "diminish" the three-million-man SA and greatly expand the regular army and navy.

May 16, 1934 German officer corps endorses Hitler to succeed the ailing President Hindenburg.

Jul 13, 1934 Defending the purge, Hitler declares that to defend Germany he has the right to act unilaterally as "supreme judge" without resort to courts.

Aug 2, 1934 President Hindenburg dies. Hitler issues a decree appropriating to himself the powers of the President, including supreme military command. The decree is illegal but goes unchallenged. Assumes new title, Führer und Reichskanzler (leader and chancellor).

Aug 3, 1934 Army swear oath to Hitler.

The Nuremburg Laws

The Laws for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour

(September 15, 1935) Entirely convinced that the purity of German blood is essential to the further existence of the German people, and inspired by the uncompromising determination to safeguard the future of the German nation, the Reichstag has unanimously resolved upon the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

Section 1

Marriages between Jews and citizens (German: *Staatsangehörige*) of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they were concluded abroad. Proceedings for annulment may be initiated only by the Public Prosecutor.

Section 2

Extramarital sexual intercourse between Jews and subjects of the state of Germany or related blood is forbidden.

(Supplementary decrees set Nazi definitions of racial Germans, Jews, and half-breeds or Mischlinge --- see the latter entry for details and citations and Mischling Test for how such decrees were applied. Jews could not vote or hold public office under the parallel "citizenship" law.)

Section 3

Jews will not be permitted to employ female citizens under the age of 45, of German or kindred blood, as domestic workers.

Section 4

Jews are forbidden to display the Reich and national flag or the national colours. On the other hand they are permitted to display the Jewish colours. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.

Section 5

A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of Section 1 will be punished with hard labour.

A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of Section 2 will be punished with imprisonment or with hard labour.

A person who acts contrary to the provisions of Sections 3 or 4 will be punished with imprisonment up to a year and with a fine, or with one of these penalties.

Section 6

The Reich Minister of the Interior in agreement with the Deputy Führer and the Reich Minister of Justice will issue the legal and administrative regulations required for the enforcement and supplementing of this law.

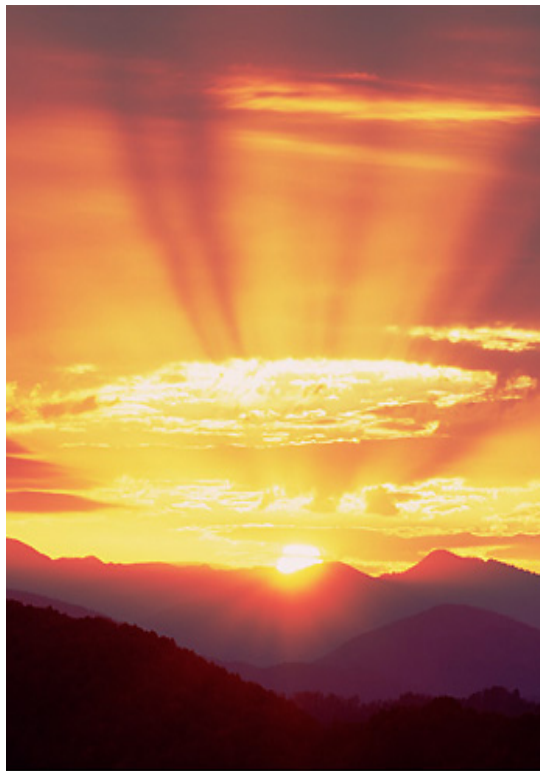
Section 7

The law will become effective on the day after its promulgation; Section 3, however, not until January 1, 1936.

K9

Galut and Geula: Israel

From Vision to Reality



Aims:

1. Understanding the Geula as a process.
2. To realise that this process has begun.
3. Look into Kibbutz Galuyot and Aliyah – our role.

The Big Question: Is Aliya the End?

Summary

As you know by now, (and if not – um where have you been?) the entire theme of machane has been Galut and Geula. We've been looking at various events and time periods in Jewish history as one big process moving towards the ultimate goal of Geula. In this Kvutza, we will look at how the Geula itself is a process with its own stages and how at the heart of this process is Israel. To finish off the machane, we will look at how we can play a part in this process and the Geula of the Jewish people.

"Geula is the opposite of Galut. What is Galut? An abnormality. For instance, in our normal state, we need to be here, the entire nation of Israel, in the Land of Israel. And all of Eretz Yisrael needs to be in our hands. Thank G-d, Hashem's light is now shining upon us, and increasing, little by little, in gradual stages. How different things were before the establishment of the State of Israel, when we were outside the Land, and the gentiles were in it, and the possibility for a Jew to enter Eretz Yisrael rested in foreign hands. This was a time of Galut. We've progressed a bit since then and are returning to a normal condition: Eretz Yisrael is now in our hands! Jerusalem is now in our hands! And we are now independent! This process unfolds in stages. Just as Hashem can bring the redemption through miracles, He can do it without miracles, in a simpler way, through a natural process, via the conquest and settlement of Eretz Yisrael. The redemption which is unfolding before us appears in stages - not all at once,"

Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook



And once R. Hiyya the great and R. Simeon ben Halafta were walking in the valley of Arbel at daybreak. And they saw the first rays of dawn as the daylight broke forth into the sky. Said R. Hiyya the great to R. Simeon ben Halafta b. Rabbi, "Like the break of day so is the redemption of Israel. It begins little by little and, as it proceeds, it grows greater and greater." Talmud yerushalmi, Brachot 1:2:1

Often, people picture the coming of the Mashiach as a one- moment miraculous event. They imagine that they will hear the shofar and then the Beit HaMikdash will fall from heaven, Mashiach will come riding on a donkey, and all the Jews will immediately come to Israel, where we will be the dominant nation of the world. Some midrashim describe the redemption in these terms but many sources describe it quite differently.

Religious Zionism believes that redemption is a gradual. Geula is not something that will just happen after intense prayer, but that it takes time and human effort to bring it about. The events of history have been leading towards the point of redemption, and the recent events surrounding the creation of the state of Israel are seen as the beginning of the Geula –known as "Reishit Smichat Geulateinu", "The First Budding of the Redemption."

Based on this belief, a gradual Geula needs physical effort to make it happen.

Previous Redemptions

Previous redemptions also occurred gradually.

- **Egypt**

When HaShem took the Jews out of Egypt, the nation achieved physical independence without improving its spiritual standing; a first stage. The ultimate goal of this redemption – to transform Israel into a godly nation – only came about forty nine days later when they received the Torah at mount Sinai, and they only entered Israel 40 years later!

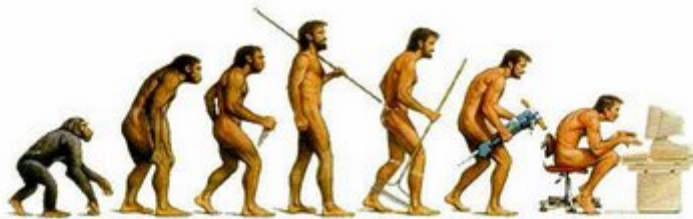
- **The Second Redemption**

The return to Israel after the destruction of the first Temple was also a slow process. At first, the exiles returned to Eretz Yisrael and established a small Jewish state, despite the fact that most of them did not keep mitzvot. In this state, they violated Shabbat, designating it as the market day in Jerusalem. Still, there is no doubt that this process

was the beginning of the second redemption. Israel did not achieve full sovereignty or improve its spiritual state until the time of the Chanuka Story 200 years later!

- **Purim**

The Purim redemption also occurred in a similar way. First there was a small measure of political deliverance with Mordechai being given a position of authority. Later, Ester put Mordechai in charge of Haman's estate, but the decree to annihilate the Jews was still not annulled. Finally, towards the end of the process, the Jews reaffirmed their loyalty to God and eventually they were all saved.



Speedily in Our Days...

Having looked at our History over the past 2000 years, to some extent, simple logic tells us that we are

living in a very special era of Jewish existence.

The Jewish people were exiled from their Land 2000 year ago and have been oppressed by nearly every nation that we have lived with since. The Prophets of Tanach assured us that we would eventually return to the Land and regain sovereignty over it. The ingathering of the exiles (all the Jews living in Israel) and the resettlement of the Land are clear components of the redemption we talk of, and it has all began to occur in our generation. One who truly contemplates the events of the past century will recognise the great miracles that have transpired and the hand of God that has brought it all about.

So what are these stages?

The Gemara in Megillah explains that the brachot in the Shmona Esrei were ordered to correspond with the order that the Geula will come and say that the order will be:

1. War will break out.
2. The land of Israel bear fruits after being desolate (Bless this year...)
3. The exiled will return to the Land (Sound the great Shofar...)
4. Judges will bring wicked ones to Justice (Restore our Judges...)
5. Sinners will perish (And for the heathens...)

6. The righteous will be praised (Upon the righteous...)
7. Jerusalem will return to its glory days (And to Jerusalem...)
8. Mashiach will come (The offspring of Your servant David...)
9. Prayer will be returned (Hear our prayers...)
10. Divine service will be returned (Be pleased...)
11. We will give thanks to God! (We thank you...)

But how do we know that is it happening now?

On Yom Ha'Atzmaut 1956, just eight years after the establishment of the state, Rav Soloveitchik gave one of his most famous addresses later published as 'Kol Dodi Dofek: Listen – My Beloved Knocks'. The title is taken from Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs 5:2), it tells the story of two lovers. The boy has been chasing the girl for a long time and treks many miles in order to find her. He finally arrives at her house in the middle of the night. He knocks on the door and she awakes but she stirs slowly. As he knocks on the door she slowly gets out of bed and gets dressed. In her slumber she finally arrives at the door only to find that her beloved has given up and has already left. Rav Soloveitchik compares this relationship to that of G-d and the Jewish people. He shows how the State of Israel represents a series of knocks by G-d at the door of the Jewish People. He is asking us to recognise Him and to appreciate the enormity of what is happening in our lifetime. It is the story of opportunity knocking.

Rav Soloveitchik spoke of six knocks:

1) **Political:** The issue of recognising the State of Israel was the only time the United States and the Soviet Union EVER agreed on anything in the United Nations. In fact, the two were racing to see which would be first to recognise Israel.

2) **War:** Israel's weak, amateur army defeated the professional armed forces of SIX Arab nations, just like in the Chanukah story.

3) **Theological:** The Catholics teach that the Jews forfeited their right to Israel by denying Jesus. The return of Jews to Israel is the most blatant proof that they are wrong.

4) **Sociological:** Israel's existence has saved millions of Jews from assimilation. Among Reform and Conservative Jews, the State of Israel gives them an identity which they did not feel from the religious aspects of Judaism.



5) **Defence:** We stopped turning the other cheek whenever somebody attacks Jews. Now Jews have a state, which will speak up and retaliate when Jews are attacked. A Jewish army and a Jewish state can proclaim for the first time in two thousand years that Jewish blood is not free for the taking.

6) **Inclusion:** The first act of the State of Israel after declaring independence was to abolish the White Paper (which restricted Jewish immigration to Israel under the British), and establish the right of return, that any Jew anywhere could become a citizen.

Rav Soloveitchik wrote these six knocks in 1956. In the past fifty three years would you add any knocks? If so, what would they be?

Kol Dodi Dofek makes us aware of just how amazing these events really are. For Jews to be able to live in our Israel is a privilege, but to proclaim it as our own state is something which our ancestors could only dream of. Most of us are lucky enough to have visited Israel and to have prayed in Jerusalem. Imagine how hard it would be to constantly face a city in prayer which you had never seen. For generations of Jews the Land of Israel was letters on paper or words in a song. Our people have merited to see, touch, live and feel a Jewish existence in the Jewish homeland. If we allow ourselves to take this for granted or forget what preceded it then we lose our right to have it. The message of Kol Dodi Dofek is teach us to hear the knocking, not to remain to deaf and ignore when Hashem comes to our door. If we look back at the last

century to all that has happened in Israel, is not clear that Hashem has been Knocking at our doors, telling us to get and go?

So aside from the reasons of Rav Soloveitchik, what other signs are there that it is happening now... that Israel is Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu.....

“Israel was never far from war or the threat of war, terror or the threat of terror. In 1967 Armies gathered in force on Israel’s borders, the Egyptian president Abdul Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran and spoke of driving Israel into the sea. For those of us watching these events from afar it seemed as if a second holocaust was in the making, it was a moment of trauma that changed my life as it did for many Jews who lived through those days. As we know in retrospect Israel survived and won an astonishing victory”

Rabbi Lord Sacks

What is our role?

Aliyah is one of the greatest Jewish phenomena of the past hundred years. For two millennia Jews across the world have been yearning to return to the Land of their ancestors. All prayers were directed to the land and thrice daily they prayed to return. But what is the nature of our connection to the land? Is it just a nice place to live with clean beaches and kosher cuisine or is there something more?

The land of Israel is not some external entity.
It is not merely an external acquisition for the Jewish people.
It is not merely a means of uniting the populace.
It is not merely a means of strengthening our physical existence.
It is not even merely a means of strengthening our spiritual existence.

Rather, the land of Israel has an intrinsic meaning.
It is connected to the Jewish people with the knot of life.
Its very being is suffused with extraordinary qualities.

The extraordinary qualities of the land of Israel and the extraordinary qualities of the Jewish people are two halves of a whole.

Orot 1:1

Whilst many people count settling in Israel as an obvious mitzvah, there are those who missed it out from their lists of Mitzvot. The most famous work to omit settling the Land of Israel as a mitzvah was the Rambam in his magnum opus the Mishneh Torah. In it, he codified every single Halacha, including those to do with Temple Service which did not apply in his day; however he did not mention living in the Land as one of his mitzvot. Nevertheless many explain that this was not an omission but rather such a fundamental Torah principle that it could not be counted alone.

The Rambam considers the settlement of our Holy Land an essential foundation [of our faith]. His statement teaches that the existence of the entire holy nation is bound to the settlement of the land to such a degree that the entire nation would dissolve if the Jewish People would cease to exist in Eretz Yisrael, god forbid... Eretz Yisrael is the heart of the Jewish nation and its life-giving force. Now, given that the Rambam values settling the land so much that he considers it the soul of the Jewish nation, how can any intelligent person entertain the thought that according to him there is no mitzvah nowadays to settle the land and that it is even forbidden to do so? The fourth rule that the Rambam sets down in Sefer HaMitzvot is: Commandments which encompass the entire Torah are not to be counted. Now, settling in Eretz Yisrael is an extremely precious mitzvah. It is the sum total of all other mitzvot, and it encompasses the entire Torah... Our nation's entire existence depends on it. Therefore it is not included in the enumeration of the mitzvot, for only particular mitzvot are counted, and this mitzvah is a general one.

HaRav Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal - Eim HaBanim Semeichah

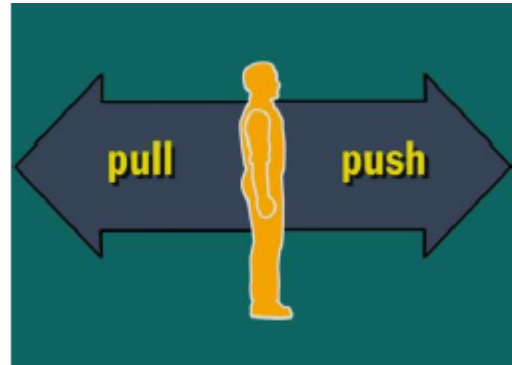


Reasons for Aliyah

Aside from the religious aspect there are many reasons that persuade Jews across the world to, or not to make Aliyah. Despite the millions who have made the move there are many millions who haven't.

What are the reasons that people make Aliyah? What are the reasons that people don't make Aliyah?

The *push-pull* theory stipulates that migrants require two forces in order to act - a push away from their current location and status quo, and a pull towards their new venue. Push forces could include famine, war, unemployment, a lack of suitable farmland, anti-Semitism, a feeling that you are not progressing in life, or poverty. Pull forces could be a greater availability of food, peace, a better economy, favourable immigration laws, a desire to return to one's homeland, religious factors, or available agricultural land in the target region or country.



Aliyah Today

Whilst the journeys or attempted journeys of our ancestors to the Land of Israel were fraught with difficulties and danger nowadays we can settle in Israel with almost no problems. One of the first laws enacted by the State of Israel (1950) was the Law of Return; this allowed any Jew to make Aliyah and take up citizenship of the State of Israel. Since 1918 over 3.5 million Jews have made Aliyah to Israel with different eras showing different rates of Aliyah from different countries. Many organisations work to encourage Jews to make Aliyah and one of the most well known of this decade is Nefesh B'Nefesh. Nefesh B'Nefesh is a Jerusalem-based nonprofit organization that promotes, encourages and organizes Aliyah from North America and the United Kingdom. The organization aims to remove or minimize the financial, professional, logistical, and social obstacles that potential Olim face.

Nefesh B'Nefesh was started by Rabbi Yehoshua Fass after a family member was killed in a terrorist attack in Israel. Realizing that there were many people who wanted to immigrate to Israel but were worried about certain obstacles, Rabbi Fass and Florida businessman and philanthropist Tony Gelbart decided to create an organization which would try to make it easier for people to make Aliyah. In the summer of 2002, Nefesh B'Nefesh organized its first chartered Aliyah flight to Israel. In the following years, growing demand



saw an increasing number of Aliyah flights from North America to Israel, and by the end of 2007, Nefesh B'Nefesh organized more than thirty Aliyah flights. In May 2006, in response to numerous requests from British Jewry interested in Aliyah, Nefesh B'Nefesh expanded its services to also include the United Kingdom.

"Befriending an old Jew whom I met regularly at the daily morning service in the Moscow Synagogue, I was approached by him on the last morning of my stay. 'Rebbe,' he said, 'I must ask you something. We hear from time to time of the agitation in the West demonstrating for the right of Soviet Jews to go to Israel. For us these reports sometimes cause us considerable discomfort. Unfortunately we live in a communist Medinah; leaving this country is regarded almost as treason, and we cannot easily go. But you live in a free Medinah; you need no exit permits; and are not exposed to any risks if you want to leave your countries. Why don't your Jews go on Aliyah when you can, whilst clamouring for us to go when we can't?' I had no answer, especially when I realized that by then a greater proportion of Soviet Jews had in fact gone to Israel than Jews from England or America.

'We also hear much', he continued, 'about the commotion you make on the rights denied to us to raise our children as Jews, to learn Hebrew, to get religious instruction and to have Jewish schools. Alas, in this atheist Medinah such things are forbidden, and we cannot give our children a Jewish education. But we have visitors from America, from England and other Western countries. On Shabbat they come to our synagogue, and when we honour them by calling them up to the Law, they often cannot even read the benediction for the Torah properly. In your countries, Jewish education is not illegal and you face no penalties for passing on Judaism to the next generation. Why don't you raise your children as Jews?' Again I was shamed in to silence, for I had no answer. To my mind these two questions constitute the biggest challenge of Soviet Jews to their brothers and sisters outside!"

"After almost two thousand years of homelessness the Jewish people came home. Judaism was born in the hope of land and Israel is the Jewish land of hope"

THE BIG QUESTION: Is Aliya the End?

Or perhaps just the beginning of the end?

Is it the end of the Galut l'Geula process or just *Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu*?

Is this the final step?

Are we still in the *Vision* stage or are we now in the stage of *Reality*?

If so or if not, what does that mean for us?

What are our responsibilities?