



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 2-1-25 BO

Ministry News

IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU WOULD LIKE PEOPLE ON THE LIST TO PRAY FOR YOU CAN SEND THEM TO US AT TOLMM@ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG OR BY TEXT MESSAGE TO 575 644-7706 AND I WILL SEND THEM BY EMAIL ONLY.

Remember that you can support the work of Tree of Life Messianic Ministries with a donation made via PayPal or by check to PO Box 467, Organ, NM 88052. Your donation helps our continued outreach to inmates and the time it takes to put this Newsletter together.

Donate



Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is a 501 C-3 non-profit. To donate go to etz-chayim.org and click on the PayPal link.

Tree of Life Messianic Ministries primarily focuses on its Prison Ministry and helping form groups in the prisons. TOLMM also seeks to help Home Groups and offers a covering for Home Groups and the combined experience of leadership

from Rabbi Philip Hammond and Rabbi Mordecai Silver. Group leaders can receive recognition as Elders under TOLMM, which will help in an advisory role. Your support is needed for the Prison Ministry due to continuing rising costs. We now have an Affiliate in Australia.

HOME GROUPS, CONGREGATIONS AND PEOPLE SEEKING FELLOWSHIP...

Shalom all,

As usual - to catch up on our weekly Torah Notes + which is attached and online at our website www.etz-chayim.org.

PRISON MINISTRY NEWS:

256 BOOKS AND ASSOCIATED MATERIALS WERE SHIPPED OUT IN NOVEMBER-DECEMBER TO INMATES SEEKING A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH YESHUA... OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS EXPANDING THIS OUTREACH, AND WE PRAY LIVES ARE BEING CHANGED FOR HIS GLORY. SOME GROUPS HAVE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME AFFILIATED WITH TOLMM TO HELP WITH OVERSIGHT AND GUIDANCE – REQUIRING MORE WORK... BUT MORE BLESSINGS!

WANT TO DONATE TOWARDS THIS OUTREACH – GO TO WWW.ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG AND USE THE PAYPAL LINK.

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE WE HAVE **10 PRISON GROUPS AFFILIATING WITH TOLMM.**

HOME GROUP NEWS.

TOLMM now offers affiliate status to Home Groups. Why this offer? Small groups no longer have to be alone [this never should be the case]. Experienced discipleship is available for servant leaders, and elders. Zoom meetings can be arranged for questions, and general discussion. Email us at: tolmm@etz-chayim.org or philip@etz-chayim.org

Home Groups joined:

Arizona – Elder Shawn Warren.

El Paso Texas – Rabbi Gabriel Levi Martinez. Phone: 915-407-1776.

Beit Ha Midrash is a Home Study Group in Las Cruces. They meet on Friday evenings. Contact them at frietze96@gmail.com. Group leaders are Ruben and Yvonne Gonzales and Jean Fietze-Gomez.

JSI-Judaic Studies Institute was founded by Rabbi Hammond and Rabbi Silver and is now called JSI Yeshiva, and you can check it out at www.jsiyeshiva.com. We have classes of all shapes and sizes from short term to long term with Certificates of Completion and up to all degrees for a ministry college established in Louisiana. Rabbi Michelle Johns is the Chief Administrative Officer, a Professor with JSI as is Rabbi Mordecai Silver who is President of JSI Yeshiva.

Ba-Peretz Messianic Ministries as an Affiliate from Illinois. If you live near Wheaton, ILL drop us a line and we will refer you to the contact person for the Home Group.

We have a new Home Group in Nevada: The Group name is ‘Yeshua’s Chesed Messianic Congregation’. We meet in Sun Valley (Reno Metro) on Shabbos morning. They can contact Elder Djan Fermaint at 775-462-5539.

Don’t forget... Rabbi Silver is available to answer any questions on his weekly Parashah teachings... plus more.

If you need prayer – send an email. Not only have we witnessed prayers answered, but new relationships have been formed in Yeshua... praise His Holy Name.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED.

Rabbi Philip Hammond has several ministry outreaches:

- Shabbat service 11am [AEST] 5:00pm Friday USA Mountain Time.
- Men’s group
- Weekly Bible Study.

Contact Rabbi Hammond at Philip@etz-chayim.org for more information. Check out Rabbi Hammond’s ministry outreach at <https://www.etz-chayim.org/australia-affiliate/>.

ALL OF RABBI MORDECAI'S BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE ON AMAZON BY SEARCHING - **BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER. THERE ARE 19 BOOKS.**
RABBI HAMMOND HAS A BOOK ON AMAZON-SEARCH ON HIS NAME-**RABBI PHILIP HAMMOND OR EMUNAH CENTER.**
RABBI JOHNS HAS SEVERAL BOOKS ON AMAZON.

Under His Wings,
Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph.D. and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D.

General News

TO SEARCH FOR RABBI SILVER BOOKS ON AMAZON ENTER "**BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER**". MINE ARE AVAILABLE IN PRINT FORMAT ONLY. I HAVE TWO NEW BOOKS ON AMAZON: RAV SHA'UL AND REFLECTIONS ON TORAH. TO SEE MORDECAI'S BOOKS, GO TO: [HTTPS://WWW.ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG/SHOP-OUR-STORE/PRINT-AND-KINDLE-BOOKS/](https://www.etz-chayim.org/shop-our-store/print-and-kindle-books/)

RABBI MORDECAI HAS A NEW BOOK AVAILABLE. IT IS A SPANISH TRANSLATION OF THE TORAH IS VALID: THE COVENANT OF ISRAEL. IT'S AVAILABLE ON AMAZON.

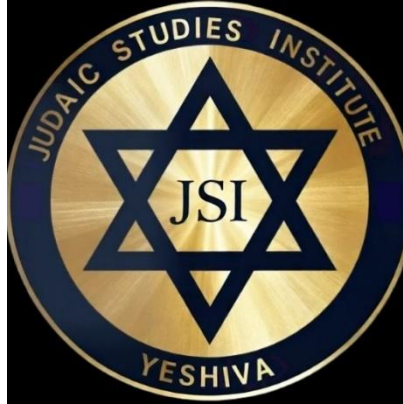
FOR RABBI HAMMOND'S BOOK, **HIS PERFECT GRACE**, GO TO AMAZON.COM AS WELL.

CHECK OUT RABBI MICHELLE JOHNS BOOKS ON AMAZON.

CHECK OUT RABBI MORDECAI SILVER'S 3 YEARS OF VIDEO TEACHINGS ON THE TORAH PORTIONS AND FESTIVALS ON YOUTUBE.

RABBI PHILIP HAMMOND HAS VIDEO TEACHINGS ON YOU TUBE AT [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@EMUNAHCENTER-CY9TQ](https://www.youtube.com/@emunahcenter-cy9tq)

WE HAVE 10 PRISON AFFILIATES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND OVER 2,000 INMATES ON OUR MAILING LIST. ONE OF OUR PRISON GROUPS HAS 32 MEMBERS.



THE JUDAIC STUDIES INSTITUTE IS A POST-SECONDARY MESSIANIC YESHIVA THAT IS AUTHORIZED TO ISSUE ALL COLLEGE LEVEL DEGREES FOR MINISTERIAL PURPOSES. THE MISSION OF THIS INSTITUTION IS TO RESTORE THE ORIGINAL BELIEF SYSTEM FOLLOWED BY YESHUA AND HIS TALMIDIM (DISCIPLES) BY PROVIDING A TORAH-BASED, ACADEMICALLY SOUND, AND SPIRITUALLY VIBRANT EDUCATION FOR THOSE SEEKING A NEW OR IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF YHVH AND HIS WAYS. CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.JSIYESHIVA.COM. OUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS JSIYESHIVA@GMAIL.COM.

OUR CLASSES ARE SELF-PACED, AND MOST ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH SELF-STUDY. ALL HEBREW CLASSES ARE TAUGHT LIVE VIA ZOOM. THERE ARE OTHER LIVE CLASSES, BUT THEY ARE DEPENDENT ON STUDENT ENROLLMENT. WE TRY TO OFFER TWO TO FOUR LIVE CLASSES PER SEMESTER. THEY LAST FOUR TO EIGHT WEEKS.

WE ARE A NON-TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION AND DO NOT REQUIRE A STANDARD NUMBER OF CLASSES PER SEMESTER. STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO PAY PER CLASS. MOST CLASSES REQUIRE A 10–12-PAGE PAPER, BUT THERE ARE SOME THAT REQUIRE QUIZZES, AND WEEKLY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS. MOST CLASSES HAVE AN ASSIGNED BOOK THAT IS ACCOMPANIED BY AUDIO TEACHINGS. CLASSES GENERALLY TAKE A MONTH BUT CAN TAKE LONGER DEPENDING ON THE STUDENT.

JSI YESHIVA DOES ACCEPT CREDITS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND YESHIVA'S. WHEN YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION PLEASE SUBMIT UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS.

PASS ALONG THE INFORMATION. CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND CLASSES.

IN HIM,
*RABBI MORDECAI SILVER, PH.D. AND RABBI MICHELLE JOHNS,
PH.D.*

MESSIANIC TEACHING ON THE WEEKLY TORAH, HAFTARAH, AND APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE PORTIONS...



Rabbi Mordecai Silver tolmm@etz-chayim.org

MESSAGE FOR 2-1-25

Bo – enter!

Exodus 10:1-13:16

Jeremiah 46:13-28

Exodus 10:21-23

The Lord said to Moses, “Stretch forth your hand toward the heavens, and there shall be darkness upon the land of Egypt, and the darkness will be tangible.” Moses stretched forth his hand toward the heavens and there was a thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt for a three-day period.

No man could see his brother nor could anyone rise from his place for a three-day period; but for all the Children of Israel there was light in their dwellings.

Matthew 12:40

For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the depths of the earth.

Genesis 1:3-4

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated between the light and the darkness.

Exodus 13:13-16

Every first issue donkey, you shall redeem with a lamb or kid; if you do not redeem it, you shall axe the back of its neck. And you shall redeem every human firstborn among your sons. And it shall be when your son will ask you at some future time, 'What is this?' you shall say to him, 'With a strong hand the Lord removed us from Egypt from the house of bondage. And it happened when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to send us out, that the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of man to the firstborn of beast. Therefore, I offer to the Lord all male first issue of the womb, and I shall redeem all the firstborn of my sons. And it shall be a sign upon your arm, and an ornament between your eyes, for with a strong hand the Lord removed us from Egypt.'"

Tefillin: The four Scriptural passages that are contained in tefillin – the first two passages of the Shema and the two passages of this chapter – are basic to Judaism. The two passages in this chapter speak of the exodus, which is basic to the Jew's awareness of his responsibilities to God, Who liberated him and made Israel a nation. The first two passages of the Shema express the concept that God is One and that we accept His Kingship, the concept that God is One and that we accept His Kingship, the concept that God is One and that we accept His Kingship, the concept of reward and punishment, and the responsibility to observe all the commandments. These principles must always be with us: upon the arm that symbolizes our capacity for action and is opposite the heart, the seat of emotion, and upon the head, the abode of the intellectual soul and the power of memory, which enables us to be conscious of our antecedents and obligations to do His will.

Jeremiah 46:27-28

But as for you, do not be afraid, My servant Jacob, and do not be frightened, O Israel, for behold, I am saving you from afar, and your offspring from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return and be tranquil and complacent, and none will make him afraid. You do

not be afraid, My servant Jacob – the word of the Lord – for I am with you; though I shall make an end of all the nations where I have dispersed you, but of you I shall not make an end; I shall punish you with justice, but I shall not destroy you utterly.

Romans 5:18-21

In other words, just as it was through one offence that all people came under condemnation, so also it is through one righteous act that all people come to be considered righteous. For just as through the dis-obedience of the one man, many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the other man, many will be made righteous. And the Torah came into the picture so that the offence would proliferate; but where sin proliferated, grace proliferated even more. All this happened so that just as sin ruled by means of death, so also grace might rule through causing people to be considered righteous, so that they might have eternal life, through Y'shua the Messiah, our Lord.

Ephesians 5:8-14

For you used to be darkness; but now, united with the Lord, you are light. Live like children of light, For the fruit of the light is in every kind of goodness, rightness and truth – Try to determine what will please the Lord. Have nothing to do with the deeds produced by darkness, but instead expose them, For it is shameful even to speak of the things these people do in secret. But everything exposed to the light is revealed clearly for what it is, since anything revealed is a light. This is why it says, “Get up, sleeper! Arise from the dead, and the Messiah will shine on you!”

We include a Traditional Torah Commentary and my Messianic Commentary. The reason for this is so you can see a Messianic Perspective and a Traditional Jewish one. Remember to use discernment in approaching Traditional Jewish teachings as they do not recognize Yeshua as the Messiah. There are various ideas in traditional Jewish circles about the Messiah and Chavahn that there is no Messiah, the thinking in Reform Judaism. So, please be careful to balance the teachings.

We do not agree with the Jewish position on Yeshua, but Believers need to know the Jewish thinking on Yeshua and not buy into this thinking and forsake faith in

our Messiah. For those who say they would never do this, we must beg to differ, because we have seen it over our lives as Jewish Believers in Yeshua. We have been Believers in Messiah Yeshua for decades. We have seen a lot and had many discussions with our fellow Jews and non-Jews who ultimately turned away from Yeshua because they steeped themselves in Jewish teachings. One does not come out of either traditional Judaism or Christianity and come into the Messianic walk, and then going back, or into, traditional Judaism. *There are many good things in Judaism but denying Yeshua as Messiah is not one of them.*

Berachot (Blessings), Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph.D., and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D.

A TRADITIONAL JEWISH PARASHAH AND HAFTARAH COMMENTARY



Parashat Bo: Summary

God brings the final three plagues on the Egyptians; the Israelites leave Egypt and receive the commandment to observe Passover.

Exodus 10:1 – 13:16

God said to Moses, “Go again to the Pharaoh for I have hardened his heart so I may display My signs to the people. It is these signs which will enable you and the generations after you to recognize Me as your God. This is the story parents will pass down to their children and their children’s children. I will be known as the God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

“Moses,” God continued, “this time tell the Pharaoh that if he doesn’t let My people go, I will bring locusts to swarm the land.” Moses warned the Pharaoh of the coming locust plague. His staff urged him to let the Hebrews go but Pharaoh would only relent enough to let the men go and not the women and children. Soon God sent so many locusts that the land was black with them.

The Pharaoh summoned Moses, "I have sinned against your God and you, Moses. Please forgive me and have your God remove this plague of locusts." Moses asked God to remove the plague and God did, but God also hardened the Pharaoh's heart so that he again refused to let the Jews go free.

The Last Straw

Then came the darkness. For three days the Egyptians were plagued by complete darkness while the area where the Hebrew lived had plenty of light.

Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, "Your people may leave but do not take your animals."

"No," responded Moses. "We must all go including our livestock."

"No!" shouted Pharaoh as God hardened his heart once again. "Moses, get out of here! The next time I see your face, you will die." "You're right," Moses replied, "I shall never see your face again."

The Plague of The First Born

Later the Lord said to Moses, "My last plague will make the Pharaoh insist you leave. This plague will signal the beginning of months for the Israelites. Tonight, at midnight I will go among the Egyptians and kill every first-born. Now no Hebrew first-born shall die if they follow My instructions exactly.

"First, have all the Hebrews ask the Egyptians for their objects of gold and silver. They will give easily to you since they hold you in high esteem. Then, make sure every household has a lamb. These lambs are to be slaughtered as a community and then each family shall return to their home and place some lamb's blood on each side of their doorposts. Then each family shall feast with roasted lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

"This 14th day of the beginning of months will be known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It shall be celebrated among all the Jewish generations for seven days. No leavened bread may be eaten during this time. On the first night of this Feast of Unleavened Bread, every Jew will remember and retell the story of how God brought the Hebrew slaves out of bondage in Egypt."

In the middle of the night, just as God had warned, God killed all the first-born in the land of Egypt. Young and old, rich and poor, human and animal, all the first-borns were killed. Throughout Egypt there was a loud cry for there was no house where someone was not dead.

Remember This Day

Immediately, Pharaoh demanded Moses and the Jews leave Egypt. The Jews hurried from the land, carrying their unleavened dough before it could even rise into bread.

Moses said again God's commandment to the Israelites, "This is the law of the Passover offering. You must remember this day as a covenant between Me and My people. Remember, this day you were freed from Egypt by God to go to the land of milk and honey. Remember, this day, for all generations and honor Me by not eating any leavened bread."

“Remember also,” Moses said, “to redeem every first-born, whether animal or child, so that your children will ask, ‘what does this mean?’ Then you can answer to them, ‘It was with a mighty hand that the Lord brought us out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’”

Parashat Bo Discussion Questions

- 1) Why do you think God hardened Pharaoh’s heart? Is there a time in your life when you feel God hardened someone’s heart against you? How?**
- 2) Have you ever felt that God brought plagues upon you or your family or even the Jewish people? Describe these plagues. Describe God’s role in these plagues.**
- 3) When in your life have you felt as if you were being freed from slavery?**
- 4) Why do you think Passover, more than any other holiday, is the most celebrated holiday of Jews around the world? Why is it important to you?**

Haftarah for Bo

Jeremiah taunts the Egyptians.

Jeremiah 46:13-28

In the Haftarah for *Parashat Bo* we read a part of Jeremiah’s prophecies against Egypt. Jeremiah foretells an attack on Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylonia. Though Egypt is mighty, Jeremiah is confident that the Egyptian Pharaoh will be overpowered by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah taunts the Egyptians, reminding them that their gods would not withstand the power of the one true God. After the Egyptians flee from the Babylonians, Jeremiah promises, they will call their own Pharaoh “Braggart Who Let the Hour Go By” (46:17).

Egypt Will Return to Glory, Israel is Consoled

In the last three verses of the haftarah Jeremiah is less condemnatory, and in fact says that though Egypt, is soon to be destroyed, “afterward she shall be inhabited again as in former days” (46:26).

Then Jeremiah turns to Israel and delivers a short message of consolation. Even though Israel will be exiled, they will be redeemed, and God will deliver them back to their land. The nations around Israel will be destroyed for their bad deeds, but God says, “I will not leave you unpunished, but I will chastise in measure” (46:28).

In the Torah portion for this week we read about the final three plagues that God inflicts on the Egyptians before the Exodus: locusts, darkness, and the plague of the firstborn. Similarly, the

haftarah describes the Egyptians being punished and falling before their enemies. Israel's promise of redemption from Jeremiah is much like the promise that they received from Moses. But in Exodus, as in Jeremiah, the Israelites do not escape punishment: suffering from lack of food, water and faith as they travel through the desert to the Promised Land.



***From the Desk of
Rabbi Philip Hammond. Ph.D.***

Rabbi Hammond can be contacted at – Philip@etz-chayim.org

[WHO WANTS TO PLEASE THE FATHER PART 2](#)

Who wants to please The Father?

- ▶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. ⁶ This parable spake Yeshua unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. ⁷ Then said Yeshua unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep...

Who wants to please The Father?

- ▶ ⁸ All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. ¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine...

Who wants to please The Father?

- ▶ **¹⁵ As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. ¹⁷ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. ¹⁸ No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.**

John 10:1-18

- ▶ Shepherds and sheep have a responsibility...
- ▶ The good news is [we need plenty of that] despite the interference of questionable shepherds, if we stay faithful to Yeshua through teshuvah - embrace His instruction YHVH will gather us from:

Who wants to please The Father?

- ▶ **³ And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. ⁴ And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith YHVH.**

Jeremiah 23:3-4

- ▶ The Father Himself will gather His people from whence they have been scattered. He will appoint shepherds, not hirelings who will care for them. Shepherds who make sure the flock is eating from healthy pastures. Shepherds who stay true to the line of David, obeying the instructions of the Father. Shepherds who point the way to our true, and faithful Shepherd – Yeshua The Messiah... our One and only Saviour!...

- ▶ therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; ¹⁰Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. ¹¹For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, *even* I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. ¹²As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. ¹³And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. Ezekiel 34:9-13

Who wants to please The Father?



- ▶ Who wants to please The Father? All children of Israel should... as
- ▶ We serve a wonderful God, as there is no God like the God of Israel and no nation like the nation of Israel.

Hebraic Life



Jewish Immigration to America

The size and character of the American Jewish community has been defined by the 3.5 million Jews who have emigrated since the 17th century.

Over 3.5 million Jews have immigrated to the United States since the first Jews arrived back in the 17th century. As a result, the vast majority of American Jews are descended from people who came to America from someplace else.

Today, America's Jewish community is largely Ashkenazi, Jews who trace their ancestry to Germany and Eastern Europe. However, the first Jews to arrive in what would become the United States were Sephardi, tracing their ancestry to Spain and Portugal.

Sephardi Jews

The first Sephardi settlers arrived in New Amsterdam in 1654 from Brazil. For several decades after, adventurous Sephardi and Ashkenazi merchants established homes in American colonial ports, including New Amsterdam (later New York), Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah. While Ashkenazi Jews outnumbered Sephardi ones by 1730, the character of the American Jewish community remained Sephardi into the early 19th century.

All of the early Jewish communities were Sephardi-style "synagogue-communities": the community and the synagogue were one and the same. Even if some leaders were Ashkenazi, they followed the Western Sephardi liturgy and adhered to Sephardi customs. Early American synagogues also seated congregants in the traditional Sephardi manner: women upstairs, men downstairs and everyone seated around the perimeter. They resembled and maintained ties with Western Sephardi congregations elsewhere, such as Amsterdam, London and the West Indies.

Sephardi hegemony ended in the United States in the early decades of the 19th century. Sephardi immigrants nevertheless continued to arrive on America's shores, initially from Holland and the West Indies, later from the disintegrating Ottoman Empire and still later from Arab lands, the latter now known as Mizrahi (Eastern) Jews. Some 50-60,000 Eastern Sephardi

Jews immigrated to the United States between 1880-1924, many of whom spoke Ladino (Judeo-Spanish). More arrived following the 1965 Immigration Act, which ended four decades of quotas and made immigration to the United States easier. Today, an estimated 250,000-300,000 Sephardi Jews of different backgrounds live in the United States, comprising 3-4% of the total U.S. Jewish population.

Central Europeans

Between 1820 and 1880, America's Jewish population ballooned from 3,000 to 250,000, a rate of growth 15 times greater than that of the U.S. as a whole. An estimated 150,000 Jews emigrated to America during these years, the overwhelming majority young German-speaking Central European Jews from Bavaria, Western Prussia, Posen and Alsace. Like the Catholics and Protestants who emigrated from these lands, Jews were spurred to leave by famine, economic dislocation and political discontent. But Jews emigrated at a rate almost four times that of their non-Jewish neighbors, for they additionally faced severe restrictions on where they could live, what kind of work they could pursue, how they practiced Judaism and even, in some cases, whether they could marry. For them, America represented both economic opportunity and religious freedom.

Overall Jewish emigration from Central Europe peaked in the 1850s — partly in response to the failed liberal revolutions of 1848, partly in response to the antisemitism that followed them, and mostly because of a dramatic rise in food prices and a sharp decline in real wages across the region. While immigration subsequently slackened, German-speaking Jews continued to arrive in America well into the 20th century — 250,000 of them, according to one estimate, by World War I alone.

German-speaking Jews took advantage of America's expanding frontier and burgeoning market economy. They fanned out across the country, often beginning as peddlers, they spread the fruits of American commerce to the hinterland, building up new markets and chasing after opportunities. They also carried Judaism with them, spreading it literally from coast to coast. By the Civil War, the number of organized Jewish communities with one or more established Jewish institutions reached 160, and individual Jews lived in about 1,000 other American locations, wherever rivers, roads or railroad tracks transported them.

German-speaking Jews transformed American Judaism. The synagogue-communities gave way to communities of (competing) synagogues, most of them Ashkenazi in one form or another and many of them conducted in German. Where Sephardi Jews had venerated ancestral custom and tradition, many German-speaking Jews looked to modernize Judaism in various ways, while a percentage abandoned religion altogether. Some, influenced by liberal religious currents in America and Europe, embraced what came to be known as Reform Judaism, with heightened attention to decorum, vernacular sermons, abbreviated services and a relaxed approach to Jewish laws and customs. Others looked to connect as Jews through fraternal organizations, the best-known being B'nai B'rith. German-speaking Jews also took advantage of new technologies to advance Judaism's message. Books, periodicals and other publications — in English, Hebrew

and German — promoted Jewish education, connected Jews one to another and helped Jews defend themselves.

Eastern Europeans

The unification of Germany in 1871 diminished German-Jewish immigration to the United States, but at that very time East European Jewish immigration to America's shores began to increase. Violent attacks (known as pogroms) led many to risk life and fortune in the new world, but the root causes of the mass migration lay deeper — in overpopulation, oppressive legislation, economic dislocation, forced conscription, wretched poverty and crushing despair, coupled with tales of wondrous opportunity in America and offers of cut-rate steerage travel. Once again, Jews emigrated at a much higher rate than their non-Jewish counterparts. Between 1880 and the onset of restrictive immigration quotas in 1924, well over two million Jews from Russia, Austria-Hungary and Romania settled in the United States.

The majority of East European Jews spoke Yiddish and found jobs in rapidly growing cities on the East Coast and midwest, especially New York and Chicago, rather than as peddlers on the (fast-shrinking) frontier. Many became involved in the garment industry, as well as in cigar manufacturing, food services and construction. They became active in the labor movement's struggles to improve conditions for workers; in socialism, communism and Zionism; and in efforts to assist Jews abroad. They also reinvigorated Orthodox Judaism and then the Conservative Movement, which simultaneously promised to be both religiously traditional and modern. By the time mass immigration ended, in 1924, they had reshaped the whole character of the American Jewish community. It now numbered some 3.5 million Jews, mostly of East European descent, and had become the second-largest Jewish community in the world after Eastern Europe.

Yiddish culture — in the form of drama, journalism, poetry, prose and later film — flourished in American Jewish immigrant neighborhoods. Some of the cultural works they produced, since they were not subject to censorship, impacted Europe too. Immigrants and their children likewise became involved in music, the arts and scholarship. The most successful among those whose parents spoke Yiddish, like Leonard Bernstein and Barbra Streisand, eventually made major contributions to the broader culture. The legacy of East European Jewry thus continues to shape both the American Jewish community and America as a whole.

Later Immigrants

The immigrant quotas imposed by law in 1924 greatly reduced, but did not completely foreclose, Jewish immigration to the United States. Some Jews still received quota certificates and immigrated. Others crossed over from Canada or Mexico hoping not to get caught. Still others, such as pulpit rabbis, enjoyed quota exemptions under the law. For humanitarian reasons, about 200,000 European Jewish refugees gained entry in the late 1930s and 40s, some just prior to World War II and some soon afterward.

In the decades following the revised 1965 Immigration Act, six other major groups of Jewish immigrants arrived on America's shores. The largest by far, at least 500,000, were Jews from the former Soviet Union, who left following the collapse of Communism. Another 60,000-80,000 Persian Jews fled Iran following the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Thousands of Jews from Latin America immigrated to the United State in response to revolution, unrest, persecution and economic collapse. Tens of thousands of Jews from Arab lands immigrated (often via Israel) after being driven out by nationalist Arab governments and hostile Islamic neighbors. As many as 12,000 Jews from South Africa moved to the United States during the tumultuous apartheid era and its aftermath. And over 100,000 Israeli Jews live in the United States. Unlike other Jewish immigrants to America's shores, many Israeli Americans speak of returning to their homeland at some point in their lives.

The 2020 Pew survey of American Jews reports that about 10 percent of those over 18 were born abroad. Today, as in the past, immigration impacts upon the size and character of the American Jewish community.

עֵבְרִי - Hebrew

Word (s) of the Week

Hope / תִּקְוָה

Pronounced: teek-VAH

Israel's national anthem is Hatikvah, which literally means "the hope."



A Taste of Jewish Humor

A Prescription Perspective

70-year-old Yankel Sapperstein makes an appointment to see his doctor. "So how can I help you?" asks Doctor Levy.

"I was speaking to my pharmacist yesterday and he suggested I should ask you to change my prescription," replies Yankel. "And he also suggests that you check the prescription you've given to Miss Jones."

"That's a bit of a *chutzpah*, don't you think, Yankel?" says Doctor Levy. "Since when does a pharmacist query a qualified doctor's diagnosis?"

"Since he discovered that I've been on birth control pills for the last two months," replies Yankel.

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