

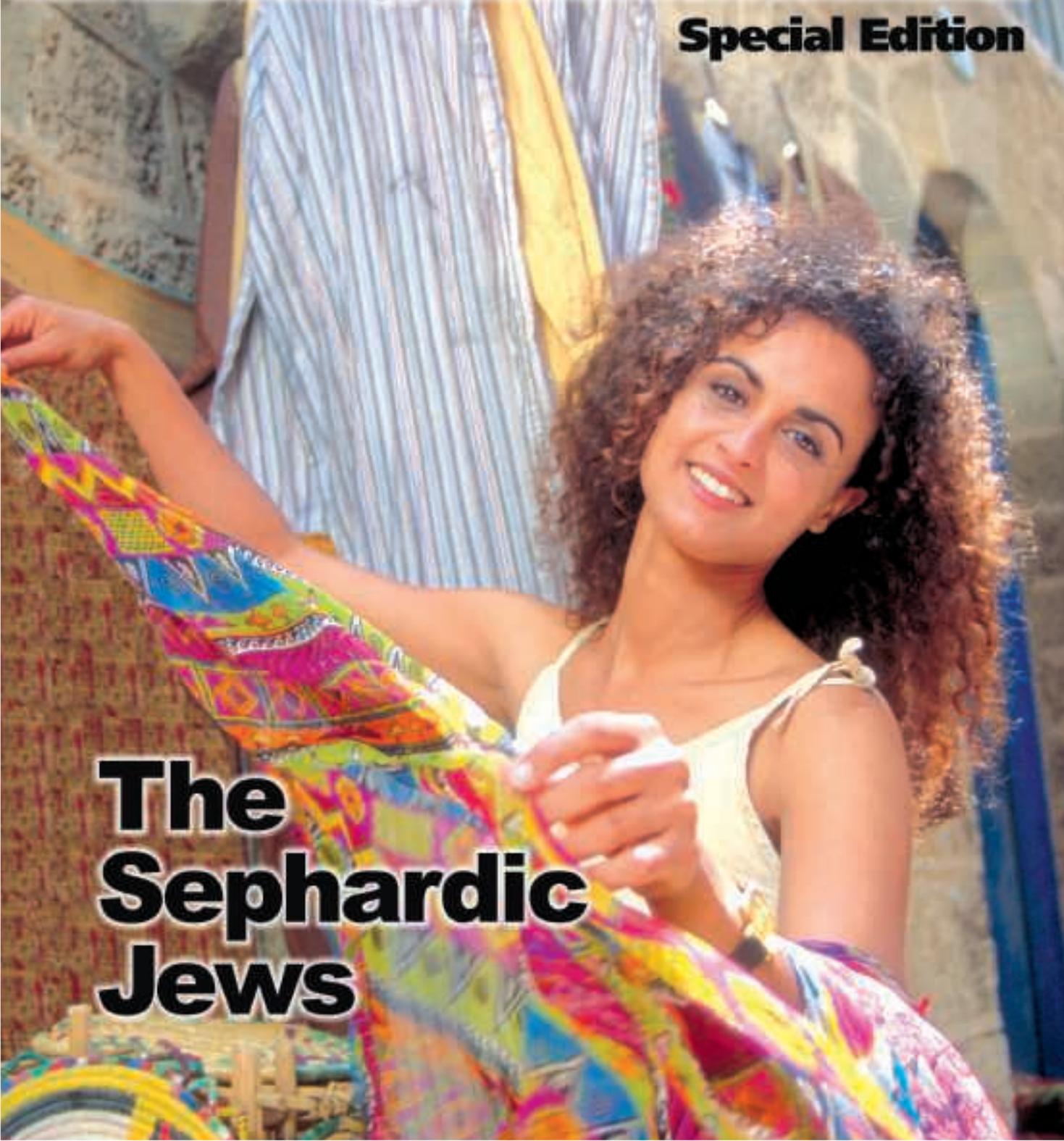
September - October 2006

Elul-Tishrei-Cheshvan 5766-5767

The JERUSALEM INTERNATIONAL

A Voice for Christian Zionism *Connection* "For Zions sake, I will not keep silent."

Special Edition



The Sephardic Jews

Activating God's Love for Israel

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"Comfort, Comfort My People! Says Your God."



The Golden Age of Spanish Jewry

The tenth to twelfth centuries are known as the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry, and are often regarded as the closest parallel in Jewish history to the contemporary golden age of American-Jewish life. During these three centuries, many Jews were invited to hold high government positions, and Jewish religious and cultural life flourished ...

Several great Jewish poets and philosophers flourished in the Golden Age, and the most renowned of whom was the poet and philosopher Judah Halevi. A half-century before Halevi lived the poet and philosopher Solomon ibn Gabirol possessed keen psychological antennae in *Pearls of Wisdom*. ... The outstanding figure of

the Golden Age's last period was Abraham ibn Ezra, a Bible scholar whose commentary on the Torah is still studied by religious Jews.

Even the Golden Age, however, had its share of dross. In 1066, there was an anti-Semitic outburst against Joseph ibn Nagdela, the rather haughty vizier of the king of Granada. Rumors were spread by Joseph's enemies that he was plotting to betray the kingdom of its enemies, and take over the kingship...The Granadans then launched an enormous pogrom; by the time it was over, close to four thousand Jews were dead. Nevertheless, in the rest of Spain, Jewish life flourished for almost another century.

Unfortunately, when the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry did end, it was

with a bang, not a whimper. In the twelfth century, the Muslim Almohades, who had come to power in North Africa, gained control of Spain. Suddenly, the prosperous and successful Jewish community found itself confronted with three unpalatable alternatives: conversion to Islam, exile, or death. There were subsequent improvements in the condition of Spanish Jewry, but the process that would culminate with the expulsion of Spanish Jews in 1492 had already begun.



From "Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to know about the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History" by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, p. 173-174



And the exiles shall return...

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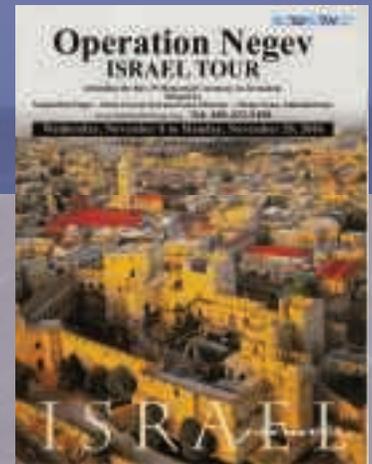
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I have been playing "Obadiah 20"...I really enjoy your CD the more I play it. It is excellent! I find myself wanting to listen to it more often and will air a song here and there to play it to our listeners...

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Differences in Sephardic Religious Practices

Jewish Virtual Library

Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews share the same tenets of Judaism, follow the Babylonian Talmud and the Shulkhan Arukh. Differences arise in customs and in liturgy. For example, on Passover, Sephardic Jews eat kitnyot, rice and corn products. Also, at many Sephardic sedars, the father will reenact the experience of gaining freedom by circling the sedar

table and holding a symbolic bag over his shoulder.

Other differences exist in the way Sephardic Jews wind their tefillin straps outwards, whereas Ashkenazi Jews wind the tefillin inwards. Sephardic grooms are honored with an aliyah to the Torah on the Shabbat after their wedding, whereas Ashkenazi grooms are called up to the Torah the Shabbat before the wedding.

Sephardic Torah scrolls are usually stored in a large wooden cylinder, which stands erect when opened. The parchment is in an upright position when read, whereas, Ashkenazi scrolls just have an embroidered cover and the scrolls are read while lying flat on a table.

Sephardic liturgy uses the same basic prayers, but add different psalms and poems. The prayer, Ein Keloheinu, is recited at the Saturday morning services for both Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, however, it is also read daily by Sephardic Jews. Sephardim also use a different cantillation for reading the Torah and different melodies for prayers. All Sephardic synagogues are traditional, women are seated separately, typically in a balcony. 

On The Cover:

The Sephardic Jews
(Photo copyright Israel Ministry of Tourism)



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For The Record

September - October 2006

The Sephardic Jews

“In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” We all learned that little rhyme in grade school. What we didn’t learn however, was in that same year a massive anti-Semitic dislocation of Jews from Spain took place.

This issue of *The Jerusalem Connection* is a Special Edition devoted to **Sephardic Jews** — Jews with a Spanish heritage. In it, we’ll trace the expulsion of the Jews from Spain during the Spanish Inquisition that began in 1492 — the same month Columbus sailed for America. That year, at the insistence of the Catholic priest Father Tomas de Torquemada, **King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella expelled over 200,000 Jews**. Many became “**conversos**,” genuine converts to Christianity. Many remained “**Crypto Jews**,” outwardly converts who covertly maintained their Jewish heritage. Both were persecuted in the New World.

Many of these Jews migrated to Portugal, Italy, France and the Netherlands. Most, however, came to the “New World,” to the Americas. Initially entering through Tampico, Mexico, they spread out through Mexico and

to what is now southern Texas and New Mexico. Later, many migrated throughout Latin & South America. **Some historians suggest those with a Sephardic Jewish heritage may now exceed 60 million.**

Time has passed — the majority of these with a Sephardic Jewish heritage don’t know it. Oh, some remember a grandmother who lit candles on Friday night. Some vaguely recall small gatherings at Passover, but God is awakening many hearts today!

Through this **Special Edition of *The Jerusalem Connection*** devoted entirely to **Sephardic Jews**, we want to awaken an awareness in as many as possible.

In addition to telling the relatively unknown story of the **Sephardic Jews**, we will provide a means whereby they can check to find out if their **DNA** actually qualifies them as a **Sephardic Jew**. (See the *Cyrus Legacy Lives On*, page 20-21).

If the DNA tests confirm their identity and they want to make **Aliyah** (immigrate) to Israel, we want to help them do just that through our own **Cyrus Fund**. Even now several groups are focusing on



James M. Hutchens

the Negev in southern Israel as the future home of the **Sephardic Jews**. In doing so, we will help to **fulfill Bible prophecy**;

“The exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad (Spain) will possess the towns of the Negev.” (Obadiah 20).

We believe it is a part of God’s call for ***The Jerusalem Connection*** to tell this story — to get the word out to **Sephardic Jews and others**. But we need your help — here’s how you can help!

- **Financially support *The Cyrus Fund*.**
- **Give out complimentary copies of this issue of *The Jerusalem Connection*.**



Columbus landing at Guanahani by John Vanderlyn

Definition of Terms

Sephard: Judeo-Spanish word for the land of modern day Spain, first used by Obadiah.

Sephardim (Hebrew plural for Sefardi):

Traditional term used for all Jews whose ancestors were expelled from Spain or Portugal. Term is now used liberally to include all Jews who have non-European countries of origin, e.g., Iran, Yemen, and Morocco.

Ashkenazim (Hebrew plural for Ashkenazi):

Traditional term used for all Jews descending from Germanic lands. Term is now broadened to include all Jewry from Europe and Russia.

Tarshish: Aryan word for “sea coast” and name of Phoenician seaport in Southern Spain.

Iberian Peninsula: Located in the extreme southwest of Europe, bordered on the south and east by the Mediterranean Sea, and on the north and west by the Atlantic Ocean. Spain occupies most of the peninsula while Portugal occupies the southwest portion.

Visigoths: East Germanic tribe and enemy of the Roman Empire. Adopted an Arian form of Christianity in contrast to the predominant Trinitarian Catholicism.

Council: Meeting of church leaders with the purpose of determining matters of doctrine and discipline.

Edict: Announcement of a law. Formal proclamation.

Moors: Berber Muslim warriors from



North Africa and conquerors of the Iberian Peninsula in the 8th century.

Almohad:

Moorish dynasty that ruled in the 12th century over the conquered lands in northern Africa and Spain.

Fanatical Muslim rulers, forced all Jews to convert to Islam or be sent into exile.

Anusim: Literal meaning is “the coerced,” a term for Jews forcefully converted to Catholicism during the Inquisition. While there are many other names for converted Jews (Marrano, Crypto, Converso), many of these names have certain negative insinuations. Anusim is the preferred term.

Marrano: Derogatory term for Jews who converted to Christianity, often forcefully, but secretly adhered to Judaism. Spanish for “swine” or “filthy.”

Bnai Anusim: Descendants of Anusim.

Inquisition: Starting in the 13th century, an institutional tool used by the Roman Catholic Church in most of Europe to identify and punish heretics. Inquisitors worked with local bishops in wielding their judicial powers as an ecclesiastical tribunal to suppress heresy.

Auto-de-fe: A forced conversion of Sephardic Jews.

Hogueras: Burning at the stake.

“Judaizing”: Practicing Judaism in secret.

Ladino: Language derived from medieval Spanish and Hebrew, spoken by Jews of Spanish origin.

Our Mission

1. To inform, educate, and activate Christians and Jews to serve as engaged agents of God’s love and blessing to Israel and the Jewish people.
2. To serve as advocates of Christian Zionism

Christian Zionism is the support of the modern State of Israel as a partial fulfillment of God’s covenant promise to provide a national homeland for the Jewish people, in anticipation of their ultimate redemption.

“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent” – Isaiah 62:1

In this time of growing international anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, and anti-Semitic action in churches, governments, and academia, we stand in solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people by:

- **Championing** Aliyah – the return of the Jews to Israel. (Isa. 49:22).
- **Confirming** the present validity of God’s covenants to Israel. (Gen. 17:7-8)
- **Confronting** Anti-Semitism. (Psalm 83:1-4, 18).
- **Countering** Replacement Theology/Supersessionism. (Rom. 9:4; 11:1-2).
- **Contenting** for God’s heart for Israel and the Jewish people. (Jer. 32:40-41).
- **Comforting** the Jewish people and Israel thru ministries of mercy. (Isa. 40:1-2).
- **Connecting** with the Hebraic roots of Christianity. (John 4:22).

Defining Moments in 3,000 Years of Sephardic History

By Shelley Neese

Each year on the Ninth of Av (Aug. 3, 2006), Jews fast in remembrance of the many tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people. Reciting the Lamentations of Jeremiah, Jews weep for the loss of the first and second temple, destroyed on the same day of the Hebrew calendar, the Ninth of Av, over six hundred years apart. Jews on this day lament the death and destruction suffered by the Diaspora in their years of separation from Jerusalem. Central to the horrors remembered is the forced expulsion of all Jews from Spain in 1492 on the Ninth of Av. The sustained memory of the Spanish Inquisition and the grief it has engendered through the centuries reflects the enormity of this event in all of Jewish history. In Spain's Golden Age, Sephardic Jewry, the world's largest Jewish community, was a beacon of progress and prosperity. However, racism, religious bigotry, and a thirst for power paved the way for the genocidal course Spain eventually chose. But just as the Western Wall defiantly stands today as a last vestige of the Holy Temple, the survival of Sephardic Jewry, after centuries of persecution, bears testimony to the indestructibility of the Jewish people.

Early Jewish pioneers and settlers in Spain

971BC With the succession of King Solomon, the united kingdoms of Judah and Israel experience enormous growth in power and riches. King Solomon extends his business ventures across the Mediterranean Sea to Tarshish, the west coast of modern day Spain. According to the scriptures (I Kings 10:22 and II Chronicles 9:21), every three years King Solomon and Phoenician King Hiram bring ships in from Tarshish "carrying gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks." Due to this expanded trade relationship, many historians assume Jewish merchants began arriving to Tarshish on King Solomon's boats or with Phoenician merchants from Sidon and Tyre. This being the case, Jews were likely some of the first pioneers and settlers in Spain during the area's earliest period of civilization.

Origins of Sephardic Jews

By Elias Lira

The year 1492 is known for the discovery of the New World. However, another historical event of equal significance also happened during this period. The anti-Semitic act of the Catholic Spanish Monarchy of Ferdinand and Isabella, or as more commonly known, the Spanish Inquisition, occurred during this time. This act had as its end result the expulsion from Spain of all non converted Jews.

With the establishment of the Edict of Expulsion of 1492, the Sephardic, or Spanish Jews, (the term Sephardic has its roots in the Hebrew term for the Iberian Peninsula, Sefarad) found themselves facing the dilemma of whether or not to remain in Spain. To remain in Spain meant the Jew would have to deny his beliefs and traditions, convert to Christianity and submit to the supervision of the Spanish Monarchy, to do otherwise would result in torture and possibly death. His only remaining option was to leave his home with only those few personal belongings he could carry. The Edict of Expulsion carried with it the appropriation and seizure by the monarchy of all earthly properties belonging to the Jew. The ideals for which so many Jews fought, the idea of a different Spain, one with greater honesty, integrity, well being for all, coexistence, freedom and tolerance were crushed in the rabid desire to be rid of the Jews.

The process of religious and state persecution of the Jews, the Spanish final solution to the Jewish "problem" was selective, massive and consistently repetitive. Those that finally managed to leave Spain were sheltered by countries such as Portugal, Morocco and Turkey. However, the Portuguese crown soon followed the Spanish example and launched its own decree "baptism or expulsion", forcing the persecution of non-converting Jews. The



Spanish-Portuguese Jew found himself wandering once more. Fleeing Jews initially found refuge in Turkey and North Africa and then the rest of Europe.

While expulsion was taking place the expansion and colonization of the New World was also occurring. Some Sephardic Jews took advantage of this and tried to escape the horrors of the Inquisition by fleeing to the coasts of the American continent. **Many of those who embarked with Christopher Columbus on his voyages were really Jewish "marranos", (a Spanish derogatory term literally translated pigs), who took the opportunity to leave Spain.** With great pride and fanfare the Spanish Catholic religious authority described the new Jewish converts as "marranos" effectively classifying their newly converted "Christian brothers" as pigs. Thus the true anti-Semitic sentiment of the institutionalized universal church was evident. This abjectly obscene manner of treating the Jews is still evident in today's church. It is inexplicable and indignant to witness the vain and presumptuous behavior of the Spanish Church. More terrible still is the manner in



which Sephardic Jews found themselves dispersed, wandering to the remotest parts of the planet only to have the horrors of the Spanish Holy Inquisition visited upon them again and again. All this serves as evidence of the corruption and aberrant behavior of the institutional church. From the 15th century on the Inquisition maintained its power, pursuing “crypto-Jews” around the world. It wasn’t until the 19th century that it officially closed following the papal decree of July 15 1834.

The pressures of centuries of assimilation, the years of mixture and cultural diversity caused many of the Sephardic descendants to lose their historical memories disconnecting them from their ancestral Hebraic roots. But the remains of the Sephardic community have been indelibly stamped all over the world. The general archives of the prison of the Holy Office, the general and historical archives of various countries, the National Library of Spain and thousands of private and public documents throughout Europe and the Americas confirm this. In Israel the Diaspora Research Institute maintains an extensive collection of genealogical material from countries such as Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Holland, Italy, Romania and Latin America among others. Some 20,000 last names of Spanish Sephardic origin appear in these archives.

Presently the total number of dispersed Sephardim is unknown, but according to data provided by the Israeli press it is considered that in Latin America alone there exist no less than 35 million Hispanic descendants of Spanish-Jews. Today many of these Sephardic descendants have begun to leave the shadows in search of their long lost Jewish heritage. A historic visit took place in August of 2004 when a delegation representing the “Anussim” communities (Marranos) of Spain and Portugal came to Israel. This is considered the first visit of Sephardic Jews after 500 years of persecution. This visit may be considered the beginnings of the fulfillment of prophecy. In Obadiah, G-d speaks of the return of the people to the land of Israel with specific reference to Sepharad (Spain). The prophet Obadiah writes:

“Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau, and those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain; also, possess the territory of

Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel, Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the cities of the Negev. The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion. To judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the LORD’S”. (Obadiah 1:19-21)

Verses 19 and 20 of Obadiah specifically indicate the recovery of territory by returning Israelites. With the descendants of Sepharad (Spain) taking possession of the area known as the Negev. Today these areas of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza find themselves compromised by the combined pressures of terrorism and the “peace process.” The prophet Obadiah assures us that this will not remain so and goes on to detail the forceful taking of the land preceding the coming of the Messiah. This assures us that the descendants of Iberian Jews will have an active participation in this exciting event.

Our times are the result of a series of historical events coming together to form our present reality. For this reason one should take care and heed the warnings of history. In the documented history of 1492 Catholic Spain we encounter one terrible and heartbreaking truth, this was not solely the result of the repulsive hatred of the Spanish monarchy, but also the increasing indifference of a people that tolerated and promoted by action or omission the horrors of anti-Semitism. The intention was to cut and to limit, to snatch rights and destroy the noble souls of an entire people. But even this was unable to kill the dreams and hopes of the Sephardic Jew.

These times are wicked and it is precisely in such times that we must stand firm with truth and justice as our guide. The first thing we must do is to rid ourselves of the comforts of selective amnesia. In the end, past events give us much to ponder on. However, we cannot allow ourselves the luxury of falling prey to our emotions, this will lead us to forget the vital actions of history’s actors. As some one once said, “sometimes history is not like history when one is living it.” 

Reprinted with permission from Elias Lira, Tzemach Institute for Biblical Studies: <http://www.tzemach.org>

722 BC: Shortly after Assyria conquers the ten northern tribes of the kingdom of Israel and takes them away into captivity, records tell of a large influx of people who move to the Iberian Peninsula. According to legends, these people have Hebrew-like names and are of Hebrew descent.

586-549 BC: Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar sacks Jerusalem and forces the remaining two southern tribes into exile in Babylon. Many Jews flee to Tarshish during the time of the Babylonian exile but historians debate the exact point the escape to Tarshish took place. The Hebrew exiles could have escaped during the deportation from Jerusalem to Babylon, during the oppressive Babylonian exile, or once the Babylonian exile was over. Most likely, the largest Jewish migration across the Mediterranean happens at the end of Babylonian exile in 549 BC, after the united Media and Persian empires conquer Babylon. The new King Cyrus gives permission for Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem. At the time of the mass return to Jerusalem, it is expected some Jewish exiles opted for Tarshish instead of Jerusalem to join the Jewish community and traders already believed to be living there.

135-409 AD: After the Romans suppress the Jewish revolt in Jerusalem, many Jews flee across the Mediterranean to Spain. For three hundred years the Jewish community in the Roman province of Hispania (Spain) enjoys a period of prosperity in trade and prominence in the sciences and arts.



306 AD: The Council of Elvira, the first Christian council held in Spain, passes an edict prohibiting Christians from marrying or socializing with Jews and from Jews blessing the crops of Christians.



325 AD: Roman Emperor Constantine presides over the Council of Nicea, convened to address theological



issues dividing the Christian Church on the nature of the Trinity and Christ's divinity. After much heated debate, the truth revealed in the scriptures of Jesus's eternal nature and true divinity is confirmed, Arianism is declared heresy, and the Nicene Creed is formulated. While this is a positive product of the Council, the Council also passes several civil legislations that are at their core anti-Jewish and aimed at completely separating the Christian Church from Judaism.

Differentiating Christian and Jewish holidays and observances is priority. While Christians at this time are still celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus on the Jewish Passover, the Council changes the date of the Gentile Passover to the first day of spring to ensure it will never coincide with the Jewish Passover. The Council officially changes the Christian Sabbath to Sunday. These measures are an intentional blow to Judaism and they are stepping stones for future anti-Jewish legislation and theological conclusions in subsequent councils. Replacement theology and anti-Semitism are created from the birth of the institutional church and persecution of Jews will forever be justified on these evil premises.



Destination: The New World

Columbus consulted with Jews,
and transported some to the New World.

By **Howard M. Sachar**

Was Columbus Jewish?

Jewish filiopietists, as well as several non-Jewish historians, have speculated that the "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" was a Jew. They note that the Spanish name, Colon, was a not uncommon one in Hebrew tradition; that his father was a weaver, one of the few trades open to Jews in his native Genoa; that his mother, Susanna Fonterossa, was the daughter of Jacobo Fonterossa and granddaughter of Abraham Fonterossa [also common Jewish names]

The hypothesizing has been extensive, and Columbus himself doubtless was responsible for much of it. His letters in the Archives [the Archives of the Indies in Seville] drop tantalizing hints: "I am not the first admiral of my family, let them give me whatever name they please; for when all is done, David, that most prudent king, was first a shepherd and afterward chosen King of Jerusalem, and I am a servant of that same Lord who raised him to such a dignity."

In his ship's log, Columbus makes frequent references to the Hebrew Bible, to Jerusalem to Moses, David, Abraham, Isaac, and Sarah. He computes the age of the world according to the Jewish calen-

dar: ". . . and from the destruction: the Second Temple according to the Jews to the present day, being the year of the birth of Our Lord 1481, are 1413 years..." In his last will and testament, Columbus asks that one-tenth of his income be given to the poor; that a dowry be provided for poor girls "in such a way that they do not notice whence it comes" — a characteristically anonymous technique of Jewish philanthropy.

Jewish Astronomer-navigators and Financiers Supported the Voyage

Today, however, most scholars dismiss the rather poignant effort to judaize Columbus. They prefer to focus on the overwhelming thoroughly documented role of Jews in the great mariner's voyages of discovery. In Lisbon, Columbus knew and consulted Joseph Vecinho, Martin Behaim and other [Jewish, either professing or *converso*] astronomer-navigators of the royal court. It was Vecinho who presented Columbus with a Castilian translation of Zacuto's tables. [Abraham Zacuto was an openly Jewish professor of astronomy and navigation at the University of Salamanca. His most important achievement was a table of celestial position that allowed sailors to ascertain their latitudes without recourse to the sun's meridian. Ed.] Later, Zacuto himself also met Columbus, and endorsed his proposed



Atlantic expedition.... Not the least of those hazards [of the voyage] was the absence of funding. For Columbus, none could be found in Portugal. He moved on to the Spanish court in Andalusia.

There he was received sympathetically by the small group of royal officials, among them... Luis de Santangel. [A converso, Santangel] emerged as particularly vital to Columbus's expedition. Chancellor of King Fernando's household, controller-general of Aragon, and an immensely wealthy tax-farmer on his own account, Santangel was in a unique position to exert influence at court. Personally, he favored Columbus's Atlantic venture and recommended it to his ruler.

When the king was not forthcoming, Santangel arranged three separate audiences for Columbus with Castile's Queen Isabel. Both men made a strong case. As an additional inducement, Santangel offered to advance 1.4 million maravedis of his own. Finally persuaded, the queen — and her husband — then supplied the rest of the funds. Santangel's crucial intermediary role would not be forgotten. It was to him that Columbus sent off report of his discovery after returning from his initial Atlantic voyage.

1492: Columbus Sails, Spain Expels Its Jews

In underwriting the expedition, the royal couple depended upon more than Santangel's participation. April 29, 1492, the day Columbus received authorization to equip his fleet, was also the day the Edict of Expulsion was publicly announced in several of the larger Spanish cities. The timing was not coincidental. For the Catholic Monarchs, the anticipated revenues of forfeited Jewish property represented a substantial "down payment" on Columbus's venture. Indeed, the two events were linked to the final moments of joint departure. "After the

Spanish monarchs had expelled all the Jews from all their kingdoms and lands," Columbus recorded, "they commissioned me to undertake the voyage to India with a equipped fleet." The scheduled date of sailing, August 2, was also the deadline for Jewish departure. Scores of vessels, with thousands of Jews packed into their holds, congested Palos de la Frontera, the maritime inlet of the Gulf of Cadiz. Here, too, Columbus gathered his fleet of three little caravels.

The tumultuous "ethnic cleansing" provided Columbus with more than his funds. At least part of his crew were conversos. Among them were — Alfonso de la Calle, a bursar, who eventually settled in Hispaniola. Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia, a surgeon, was a relative of Aragon's treasurer, Gabriel Sanchez. Another surgeon, Maestro Bernal of Tortosa, only recently had escaped the clutches of the Inquisition. Luis de Torres was a Jew who had accepted baptism just in time to sign on with Columbus's fleet. As a multilingual "oriental," Torres was regarded as a likely interpreter to the "oriental" potentates of the Indies. Later, he sought government permission to remain on the island of Cuba as royal agent, and his appeal was granted, along with a pension.

Meanwhile, in gratitude for Columbus's discovery of the Indies, the Catholic monarchs in 1493 authorized the great mariner to set sail again for the New World. To fund the second expedition, however, the royal court pounced on all remaining Jewish wealth — all unsold land and homes and unredeemed certificates, indebtedness; all chattels, precious metals, jewels, gold and silver utensils, even synagogue artifacts. The expropriation would generate 6 million maravedis, four times the amount available for the initial voyage. This time, the Admiral of the Ocean Sea departed in style.

See **Columbus**, next page

Arian Visigoths rule Spain, 409 - 711 AD

409 AD: After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Visigoths—Arian Christians from what is now Western Germany—take over the Iberian Peninsula. In the first two-hundred years of their three-hundred year rule, the Visigoth nobility is tolerant of Jews, primarily because the Jewish population significantly outnumbers the Arian population.



586-589 AD:

Visigoth King Reccared converts from Arianism to Trinitarian



Catholicism and declares Christianity as the legalized religion of the state. Reccared tries to fuse the religious doctrines of the Visigoth nobility and Catholic population to produce a more unified Spanish Christian nation. As the Church gains power behind the throne, Reccared is the first Visigoth king to take up an operational anti-Jewish policy.

The Visigoths are known for their obsessive use of legal codes to govern economic, political, and religious life. This affinity for legislation is especially evident in the dozens of detailed anti-Semitic cannons passed at various important councils during Visigoth rule. The laws relating to Jews and Jewish-Christian relations are often overlapping and inconsistent, which suggests the Visigoths were not as effective enforcing the laws as they were creating them.

The first of the cannons against the Jews are a product of the Third Council of Toledo. In an attempt to conserve religious orthodoxy, Jews are forbidden to marry Christian women, hold public office, and own Christian slaves.



612 AD: King Sesbut outlaws Judaism after many of his edicts against the Jews are not enforced. All Jews in the Visigoth kingdom must be baptized within the year or be forcefully exiled. All Jewish children over seven are to be taken from their parents. The majority of Jews refuse to convert and some escape to North Africa. Many who flee choose to return to Spain after King Chintila succeeds Sesbut.



633 AD: At the Fourth Council of Toledo, forced conversions are disapproved. However, Jews who already converted to Christianity—hereafter referred to as Anusim—but have backslidden are given very harsh punishments. Canons pass to take circumcised children from heretical Jewish families and put them in monasteries. If Anusim make contact with unconverted Jews, both parties are punished. Canons prohibit Jews and Anusim from holding public office or owning Christian slaves.



638 AD: At the Sixth Council of Toledo, Spain is declared a Catholic land and therefore only loyal Catholics are allowed to live in Spain. King Chintila ratifies a decision requiring all Anusim to swear an oath—a “Declaration of Faith”—that they will be loyal Christians, rid themselves of all Jewish practices and customs, marry Christians, abstain from kosher foods, and destroy all Jewish materials. All unconverted Jews are to be banished from Spain.

Columbus, *from page 9*

Conversos in New Spain, New Castile, and New Granada

It is a fact of history that Columbus’s four voyages achieved only a precarious foothold in the New World. Another half-century of exploration and conquest was required for others to secure Spain’s vast empire and to structure the sheer magnitude of terrain into the three manageable viceroalties of New Spain (Mexico, Central America, the Philippines), New Castile (Peru, all of South America except Brazil and the Guineas) and New Granada (Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador).

Colonization in those years took precedence over trade as an imperial objective. To foster that settlement, the Crown offered the inducement of great land *encomiendas* (estates) to loyal soldiers and farmers and shared profits for the prospectors, engineers, and overseers of South America’s boundless silver mines. Ostensibly, the constraints of *limpieza de sangre* [purity of blood] excluded New Christians from these ventures, or even from settlement in Spanish America.

Yet *conversos* aplenty found ways to emigrate to the New World. Spain’s notoriously venal bureaucracy was quite prepared to sell permits of exemption. For the right price, ship captains were equally willing to disembark New Christian passengers at secret inlets along the Gulf Mexico south of Veracruz, or on the Honduran coast. [The migration of *conversos* is important to Jewish history for at least two reasons: 1. Crypto-Jews made up a portion of the *converso* community. These Jews continued to practice Judaism in secret and often, if the opportunity presented itself, resumed living openly as Jews. 2. *Conversos*, whether they accepted

their new identity as Christians or not, still maintained personal and professional ties with their Jewish families — siblings, cousins, parents, grandparents.]

Indeed, the infiltration of conversos became something of an influx once the Spanish throne assumed its rule over Portugal in 1580... In the early seventeenth century, between three and five thousand Portuguese New Christians may have departed for the New World. They anticipated important commercial inducements overseas, and they were not disappointed.

In New Spain, as many as two thousand conversos settled in Mexico City, Guadalajara, Vera Cruz, Puebla, and Guatemala City. In New Castile, approximately the same number of New Christians resided in Lima, Poto Tucuman, and Cordoba. By the 1630s, hardly a town in the Spanish Empire did not shelter at least a scattering of conversos, some of whom migrated as far as New Mexico and Florida.

Their vocations were no less diverse than in Europe. Among the conversos there were numerous artisans — shoemakers, spice-makers, tailors. Others were ranchers. Several New Christians were priests. One was a bishop. There were converso military officers. The mayor of Tecali was New Christian. Yet, as in Europe, most Sephardim gravitated toward commerce. Several became managers of silver mines. Others were gem- and food-dealers. They played their traditionally decisive role in the import-export market, including the slave trade. Altogether, New Christians were as prominent in the Americas as in Spain, Portugal, or the Netherlands.



Extracted from Howard M. Sachar’s book “Farewell Espana: The World of the Sephardim Remembered,” Knopf (1994). Dr. Sachar is a Professor Emeritus of History and International Affairs at George Washington University in Washington DC.



Columbus and his Passengers



“In the same month in which their Majesties [Ferdinand and Isabella] issued the edict that all Jews should be driven out of the kingdom and its territories, in the same month they gave me the order to undertake with sufficient men my expedition of discovery to the Indies.” So begins Christopher Columbus’s diary. The expulsion that Columbus refers to was so cataclysmic an event that ever since the date 1492 has been almost as important in Jewish history as in American history. On July 30 of that year, the entire Jewish community, some 200,000 people, were expelled from Spain.

Tens of thousands of refugees died while trying to reach safety. In some instances, Spanish ship captains charged Jewish passengers exorbitant sums, then dumped them overboard in the middle of the ocean. In the last days before the expulsion, rumors spread throughout Spain that the fleeing refugees had swallowed gold and diamonds, and many Jews were knifed to death by brigands hoping to find treasures in their stomachs.

The Jews’ expulsion had been the pet project of the Spanish Inquisition, headed by Father Tomás de Torquemada. Torquemada believed that as long as the Jews remained in Spain, they would influence the tens of thousands of recent Jewish converts to Christianity to continue practicing Judaism. Ferdinand and Isabella rejected Torquemada’s demand that the Jews be expelled until January 1492, when the Spanish Army defeated Muslim forces in Granada, thereby restoring the whole of Spain to Christian rule. With their most important project, the country’s unification, accomplished, the king and queen concluded that the Jews were expendable. On March 30, they issued the expulsion decree, the order to take effect in precisely four months. The short time span was a great boon to the rest of Spain, as the Jews were forced to liquidate their homes and businesses at absurdly low prices. Throughout those frantic months, Dominican priests actively encouraged Jews to convert to Christianity and thereby gain salvation both in this world and the next.



From “Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to know about the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History” by Joseph Telushkin

653–656 AD: At the Eighth Council of Toledo, King Recceswinth issues a new code requiring all unconverted Jews to leave Spain or be baptized. All Anusim must practice standard Catholicism at the risk of severe public punishment. Violators are put on trial and if accused of any misdemeanor, they are to be stoned, burned, or beheaded. At the Ninth Council of Toledo, King Recceswinth elaborates on the ways in which Anusim are to be closely guarded to ensure their abandonment of Jewish customs. For example, all Anusim must be in the presence of a Catholic bishop when celebrating Christian festivals.

Thus far, all anti-Jewish decrees have been enforced with limited success. The aim of the Tenth Council of Toledo is to clamp down on Church leaders who have not been helpful in enforcing the restrictions and monitoring the practices of Anusim.



680–687 AD: King Erwig abolishes the death penalty for disloyal Anusim but reinforces the laws against “judaizing”—practicing Judaism in secret—by making punishments more severe and frequent. All Jews who have not yet converted are given the option of baptism or exile, but those who choose exile are to be publicly flogged. Also during this time, further restrictions are placed on Anusim to supervise their Christianity. Restrictions are placed on the travel of Anusim and before they are allowed to make a business transaction with a Christian, they must say the Lord’s Prayer and eat pork to prove their sincerity. The Twelfth Council of Toledo decrees the burning of all Jewish books.

Obadiah's Vision

By Shelley Neese



Shelley Neese

“*T*hen those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau, and those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain; also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria,

and Benjamin will possess Gilead. And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel, Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad [Spain] will possess the cities of the Negev. The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion. To judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the LORD'S”. (Obadiah 1:19-21)

The biblical prophets received divine revelations about a future war between the reunited Houses of Joseph and Jacob and the House of Esau. What all these prophets foretold was an ultimate victory over Israel's enemies, recovery of the land that was promised, and final ingathering of the children of Abraham. The prophet Obadiah, however, is given a very specific vision providing remarkable detail about where exactly in Israel one specific group of exiles will assemble. Obadiah's vision reveals the return of exiles from Spain, the Sephardim, to take possession of the Negev, Israel's southern desert. This short sentence—“the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the cities of the Negev”—may be easily overlooked by the passive reader but the alert believer immedi-

ately recognizes a prophecy that is being fulfilled at this very hour.

Hundreds of thousands of Sephardim from the Middle East and North Africa already returned to Israel soon after its foundation. Now, the Bnai Anusim, the lost Sephardic Jews in Latin and South America, are—five hundred years after their ancestors were forcefully converted to Catholicism—discovering their Jewish identities and Hebraic roots for the first time. As they awaken to their heritage, many of these Bnai Anusim are being called to the Negev. God, in all his mystery, is transforming a land without a people into the eternal possession of a people without a land.

Over the preceding centuries, Obadiah's vision would have seemed more like a curse than a blessing for the Sephardim. The Negev was no prize to be won. After centuries of neglect under the Ottoman Empire, the Negev was completely desolate and sparsely populated. When the British Mandatory Authorities explored the region after WWI, they marked it as uninhabitable, dismissing the idea of Jewish resettlement. The land was just as Deuteronomy 29:23 said it would be after centuries of exile: “a burning waste of salt and sulfur—nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it.”

Making something out of nothing, however, is where true Zionism excels. With the establishment of the state of Israel, the ingenuity of Israeli pioneers turned previously desolate wasteland into a success story of the Zionist movement. Israeli engineers developed the world's greatest systems of water desalination, drip irrigation, and desert preservation. The Negev bloomed into an economically productive desert with thriving agricultural



693-694 AD: King Egica at the Sixteenth Council of Toledo passes heavy economic policies to punish Jews. Jewish wealth is confiscated and properties previously owned by Christians must be surrendered by their current Jewish owners. Anusim are required to pay high taxes while un-baptized Jews are prohibited from commerce all-together.

At the Seventeenth Council of Toledo, Egica charges Jews with planning to “exterminate the Christian people and their homeland.” Jews are believed to be plotting with the Moors to undermine the Church and defeat the Visigoth Kingdom. Accordingly, the Jewish religion is completely outlawed. All Jews are reduced to the status of slaves. All Jewish property is confiscated and Jewish children are taken from their homes and given to Christian families or monasteries.

Moorish Rule of Spain, 711 - 1212 AD

711-719 AD: Tariq Ibn Ziyad—commander of a 12,000 member Moorish Muslim army—invades Spain and defeats King Rodrigo and his Visigoth army of 60,000. Many North African Jews who had fled persecution from Visigoth rule return to Spain to fight under the command of Ziyad. While the Moors go from city to city in their military conquest of Spain, they utilize their Jewish allies to garrison conquered areas. After eight years of fighting, all the Iberian Peninsula—except for small areas in Northern Spain—falls under the rule of the Caliphate and Islamic Sharia. The harsh rule of the Visigoths is officially over and replaced by a more tolerant, although



The Jerusalem Connection has set up The Cyrus Fund to assist in the aliya of Sephardim from Latin and South America. Through events like *Sukkot in San Antonio, Texas*, and our partnerships with Hispanic organizations, pastors, and Jewish community leaders, we are working to identify and encourage the thousands of Anusim who still called to return to Israel. The Cyrus Fund and its supporters will be active participants in the fulfillment of Obadiah's vision as we assist returning Sephardim logistically and financially in returning to their spiritual homeland.

settlements, fish farms, floral hothouses, and desert research centers. Only after this transformation was the harshness of the desert conquered and the Negev ready to be populated.

Indeed, Sephardim were the first large group to inhabit the region. Soon after Israel's birth, the world witnessed the partial fulfillment of Obadiah's vision as hundreds of thousands of Sephardim from all over the Middle East and North Africa returned to the Jewish homeland to reclaim the land marked as their spiritual inheritance. In the 1950s and 60s, 600,000 Jews immigrated to Israel from Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Egypt, Iraq and other parts of the Arab world. The Government of Israel was intent on using this massive immigration to settle the unpopulated parts of the land. They placed the vast majority of these Sephardic immigrants in absorption camps and development towns in the southern half of Israel. The heavy Sephardic influence and large numbers of Sephardim in the Negev's cities and towns is still felt today.

The Negev, however, has yet to reach its full potential. God's plans for the region are not complete. David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, said "the Negev holds the key to Israel's path and its future." His belief and vision are still very much relevant today.

The Negev accounts for over sixty percent of the land of Israel but has only ten percent of the population. In contrast, the narrow coastal land in the center of the country accounts for 50% of Israel's total population, one of the most densely populated areas in the developed world. As the center of the country reaches its maximum capacity, the Negev is the most obvious solution for relieving population pressures. Since the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon put a particular emphasis on the Negev and declared its development as one of Israel's primary national missions. The Jewish National Fund's Blueprint Negev and the Government of Israel's National Master Plan 35 have created planning policies for the next

twenty years to focus on developing the Negev in a few key areas: establishing new settlements, doubling the population of Beer Sheva, reinforcing desert infrastructure, relocating industries to the Negev, and encouraging small business development.

While the government's business and infrastructure plans are moving forward and meeting their targets, the biggest challenge for Negev developers has been the recruitment of large communities to populate new areas of the desert. The high temperatures, little rainfall, and more rustic lifestyle of the desert towns are significant obstacles to overcome in luring Israelis away from the cafes and malls of Tel Aviv. Despite recruitment efforts of the Jewish Agency, the majority of new immigrants are settling in Jerusalem and the center of the country. If Israel's goals for the Negev are to come to fruition, there needs to surface a large group of people divinely led to the desert.

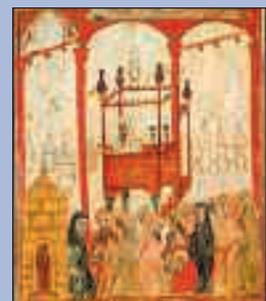
Obadiah's vision already identifies the individuals God has hand-selected to possess the Negev. This prophecy was partially fulfilled with the first wave of Sephardim from the Middle East and North Africa, but it will not be fully fulfilled until the Sephardim from the opposite side of the ocean have claimed their part of the spiritual inheritance. There are thousands—some suspect millions—of Sephardim currently living in Mexico, South America, and the southwestern United States. As their ancestors' identities were hidden because of persecution, the Bnai Anusim's knowledge of their Jewishness was buried over time. Only in the last twenty years are the Bnai Anusim awakening to their calling in larger numbers, returning to the Jewish community, and making aliya. The Negev, now conquered and cultivated, is prepared to absorb thousands of these new immigrants and in some mysterious way has been saving itself for the return Obadiah prophesized. As settlement of the Negev grows in importance for the future of the country, all that awaits the desert is a massive aliya—the ingathering of the lost Sephardim.

unpredictable, Moorish rule.

Despite their military power, the Muslims are a minority in this newly conquered land. It is critical for their survival to maintain and solicit Jewish support. Jews are allowed to practice their religion freely and govern themselves, but they are required to pay a special tax, wear identifying clothing, and live in separate communities.



711-1066 AD: Under Moorish rule, particularly with the Umayyad dynasty, Spain experiences its "Golden Age" as a prominent social and cultural capital of the world. Under this new leadership and flourishing environment, many formerly exiled Jews return to Spain and Jews fleeing persecution in Europe come as refugees. Sephardim flourish intellectually, socially, and economically. In trade, Spanish Jews become major importers and exporters of precious goods. In the arts and sciences, Jewish intellectuals study and translate Greek philosophers' original writings and develop new philosophies incorporating Jewish theology. Hebrew language and grammar are revived. Jewish scholars invent algebra and develop trigonometric theories. Jews also rise to the highest ranks in the public sector, serving and advising the Caliph and Spanish courts.





Obadiah's Prophecy

The Sephardic-Hispanic Connection

By Dell F. Sanchez, Ph.D.

While in Jerusalem in July 2004, I heard Jeff Malka, an expert in Sephardic genealogy, confirm the phenomenal awakening among Sephardic Jews.¹ These are the descendants of Spanish and Portuguese Jews that have multiplied and prospered in Diaspora in the last five hundred years.

Seven years prior to this, in 1997, I read an article in the Jerusalem Post that stated there were about 35 million Sephardic Jews in Diaspora. Nonetheless, I believe Ben Zion Netanyahu has a more accurate figure.² He estimates there are around 66 million Sephardic Jews in Diaspora which corroborates Malka's observations.

These Sephardic Jews have been known by many labels some of which include Crypto Jew, Marrano, Converso and Nuevo Creyente.³ However, of recent, Sephardic Jews have chosen to identify themselves as Sephardic Anusim. Anusim is a Hebrew



Dell F. Sanchez, Ph.D., Founder and Director Sephardic Anusim Center of the Americas

term that portrays the manner in which their forefathers were manipulated, forced and coerced to convert from a Sephardic lifestyle to Roman Catholicism.

The fact of the matter is that Sephardim founded Spain around three thousand years ago during the days of King Solomon. Through the many centuries of development, they led Spain into the Golden Era of the Middle Ages. However, these were increasingly difficult times for Sephardim due to generations of anti-Sephardic rulings. The Roman Catholic Church executed these through Papal bulls and mandates set forth by El Santo Oficio of the Catholic Church.⁴

Some of the pressures they endured included massacres, tortures, rampant spying, confiscation of personal property, forceful placing of children in Catholic homes, forced conversions known as autos de fe which often led to burning victims alive at the stake. This "slow holocaust" led to the massive 1391 Diaspora and its subsequent expulsion of Sephardic Jews from Spain in 1492. Just five years later, they were also expelled from neighboring Portugal.

Twenty-seven years later, in 1524, the Catholic Spanish Crown installed its Inquisition in Mexico City which lasted three hundred years. These Inquisitions were installed all across Latin America and the Caribbean Islands as well as the State of New Mexico in the United States of America; and, very few people know about it.

In similar fashion, very few know about the book of Obadiah or his prophecies in the Tanakh or the First Testament of the Christian Bible. Therefore, even fewer people know about the futuristic role of Sephardic Anusim which Obadiah prophesied over two thousand years ago.

Even though Obadiah is the only writer that addresses the term, Sepharad, we have

1066 AD: As Muslim leaders begin to feel threatened by the growing Christian kingdom in Northern Spain, instances of Jewish persecution become more frequent. In Granada, particularly, Muslims are suspicious and jealous of the prominence and power of the Jewish community. On 30 December, Joseph Ha-Nagid—the Jewish commander of the Army of Granada and son of the well-known vizier Samuel Ha-Nagid—is assassinated by Muslim fanatics. In the ensuing riots, the Jewish quarter of Granada is razed and 4,000 of Granada's Jews are massacred. Many Jews manage to flee to Christian Spain in the North.



1098 AD: While the armies of the First Crusade are conquering Jerusalem, Christian armies in Spain launch their own crusade and reconquer Toledo. Jews in Toledo prosper under Christian rule, while Jews in Muslim Spain suffer from limited freedom and an increasingly volatile environment. By this time period, more Jews live in Spain than all the other European countries combined.



1146-1156 AD: A fanatical Muslim political party from North Africa—known as the Almohads—conquers Morocco and many Southern cities in Spain. The Almohads impose the fullest restrictions on non-Muslims. Jewish properties are confiscated, wives and children are sold into slavery, and Yeshivas and synagogues are burned down. In Almohad Spain all Jews are forced to convert to Islam or sent into exile.



discovered close to a hundred other relevant verses across seven prophetic books.⁵ These prophets directly relate to God's plan for the land which Sephardim is to possess in the Negev of Israel.⁶

It is very significant to note that more than half of Obadiah's book relates to God's anger and punishment of Edom.⁷ In fact, since the days of the Babylonian Captivity there have been people that behave much as Edomites against Sephardic Anusim. They emerged at the turn of the millennium of this Common Era and erupted like a volcano in 1492. As they went underground and became Crypto Jews, the Inquisitions in the Americas managed to track them through subtle and secretive methods.

The intensity and frequency of these Inquisitorial terrors succeeded in creating a kind of systemic paranoia among Sephardic Anusim in our hemisphere. In other words, the "Edomite spirit" that existed during the Babylonian Captivity, and later the Roman Exile, forced itself all the way into the prolonged holocausts of Inquisitions in Iberia and the Americas. The longer these Inquisitions prevailed, the deeper Sephardic Anusim hid their identity. They hid the secret of their identity so well, for so long, many forgot what their heritage was.

However, in the last decade, the echoes of Obadiah's prophecy have managed to reach the depths where Anusim have been hiding for half a millennium. This is likened to the prophetic words of Ezekiel finally reaching the Sheol⁸ of dry bones and causing them to come back to life. But more than this, they are not merely arising from a half millennial slumber but also becoming "an exceedingly great army."⁹

A very long time ago, God placed in the spirit of Anusim the need and passion to return to their forefathers' homeland. Their passion to make things grow and for hidden things to emerge like streams in the desert is finally apprehending Anusim half a millennium later. The prophets such as Isaiah declare their role in the desert for the building of a Highway of Holiness¹⁰ of which they are a significant part.

In our attempt to identify God's job profile for end-times Sephardic Anusim, we find that Obadiah's vision grants us a perfect syn-

thesis for their involvement. In it he presents us with four vital principles and six specific dynamics.

These first principle concerns Obadiah's connection of Sephardic Anusim with their return to Abraham's land of the Negev. Secondly, he connects them to the punishment of Edom. Thirdly, he links them to the Liberation of Zion. And finally, he links them to the last and glorious words: ...And the Kingdom shall be the Lord's.

The point is that up until today, Anusim hasn't seen herself as worthy of the honor of taking possession of her inheritance in the Negev of Erez Israel. After all, many have ascended from an esclavo (slave) condition perpetrated by the Inquisition unto a faithful servant demeanor.¹¹

These Sephardic Anusim of Hispanic or Latin descent are the ones that have forever been saying:

"Estamos para servirle," (We're here to serve you);

"Mi casa es su casa," (My house is your house);

"Mi casa esta a sus ordenes," (My house is at your command or disposal).

Amazingly, Obadiah's prophecy also contains the dynamics that Anusim is connected to in this end-times quest. It is not as if Anusim must make these things happen. Anusim is the mere catalyst for these things that will began to occur according to Obadiah. Each of these dynamics begins with the letter "R" for simplification. They are: retribution, reconciliation, redistribution, redemption, repossession and reclamation.

Retribution

Over half of Obadiah's 21 verses reveal God's plan against Esau. We know this because of the manner in which Obadiah quotes God when He says of Esau:

"I will bring you down..." (Verse 4)

"Oh what disaster awaits you..." (Verse 5)

"You will be destroyed forever..." (Verse 10)

"There will be no survivors..." (Verse 18)

Behaviorally yet not necessarily etymo-

See **Obadiah**, next page

From the Christian Reconquest of Spain to the Spanish Inquisition, 1212 - 1492 AD

1212 AD: The Pope declares the reconquest of Spain a crusade. King Alfonso VIII of Castile recruits the help of all the Spanish kingdoms and leads a coalition of Christian armies in the great battle of *Las Navas de Tolosa*. This decisive victory over the Almohad sultan shatters Almohad power in Spain. The Almohads, already weakened from years of internal discord, begin their retreat. Rapidly, the Christian armies reconquer the rest of central Spain. Granada is the only place on the Iberian Peninsula Muslims continue to rule until 1492.

Though taxes under Christian rule are heavy, the Jews are happy to see an end to the oppressive Almohad dynasty. Spanish Jewry prospers and lives in peace with its Christians neighbors. Jews enjoy a period of religious freedom and protection by the state.

In the 13th century, there are two major contributions to Jewish biblical study. First, Sephardic scholars translate the bible into Spanish. Then, Rabbi Moses de Leon writes and compiles the Zohar, the Book of Splendor. The sacred book of the Zohar is the basis of Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism, and its teachings spread throughout Spain in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, gaining significant popularity.



1233-1235 AD: The Papacy, now with restored power through the Catholic monarchies in Spain, is concerned about the centuries of fraternizing between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Pope Gregory IX believes the Spanish monarchs and clergy are not dealing harshly enough with the Jewish and Muslim populations. French troops are thus commissioned to Spain to assist the Spanish reconquest and more severely deal with what are seen as the heretical religious minorities. The Pope also commissions the Archbishop of Tarragona to appoint inquisitors. One of



the first decrees to be enforced is the “Jew badge,” a yellow linen patch to be worn by all Jews to distinguish them from Christians.



1265 AD: King Alfonso X of Castile compiles *Las Siete Partidas*, a code of law which is anti-Jewish in its nature but does establish certain protective measures for Jews, their religion, and property. The laws—which do not technically go into effect until 1348—provide that Jews maintain their religious freedom and are allowed to build synagogues as long as they are limited in size and number. However, the law also stipulates that Jews are not allowed to marry or live with Christians, own Christian slaves, or be in any position of authority over Christians. Christians who convert to Judaism are to be put to death.

1267 AD: Pope Clement IV establishes the Inquisition in Rome, giving permission to Franciscan and Dominican inquisitors to investigate the lives of Anusim and reaffirming the use of torture as part of the investigation.



1348- 1354 AD: The “Black Death” rages in Europe, killing nearly half of the total population. Rumors spread that conspiring Jews from Spain poisoned the wells of Christians to cause the plague. This myth prompts angry mobs all over Europe to massacre thousands of Jews. Spanish Jewry suffers less than Jews in Germany and France but in Toledo 12,000 Jews are killed by angry mobs.

Obadiah, *from page 15*

logically, ancient Edom or Esau is daily observed in Fundamental Islamic terror activities. These terrorist attacks tend to zero-in on Israel but are now widespread around the world. Sephardic Anusim’s possession of their inherited land will be one factor that precipitates God’s retribution on Esau.

Reconciliation

I believe Sephardic Anusim’s possession of the Negev will also influence the wondrous reconciliation between two “houses” that have been at odds since most ancient times. Verses 17 and 18 demonstrate how God shall reconcile the house of Judah and the house of Joseph. The seventeenth verse tells us that revival fire is coming to both houses. “...The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame...” The resurrection of Sephardic Anusim from among the ash heaps of life will be a catalyst of this long awaited reconciliation in all facets of Hebrew life.

Redistribution

I believe that God has also begun redistributing the “saints” of His kingdom along with the objects needed to accomplish His purpose. For instance, verses 19 and 20 reveal six different and specific redistributions of people from or within the Negev. Let us look at it in the context of the New International Version:

First, “...people from the Negev will occupy the mountains of Esau...”

Second, “...people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines...”

Third, “...they will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria,

Fourth, “...Benjamin will possess Gilead...”

Fifth, “this company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess [the land] as far as Zarephath...”

Sixth, “...the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the towns of the Negev.

It is sad and disappointing to see the extractions of Jewish settlers from Gaza which is in the Negev. Many of them have been sent as far north as the Golan Heights while oth-

ers have been placed in the north-most part of the Negev not far from Hebron.

However, the very last movement or redistribution of people will be The Last Exodus which consists of those Jews of Sepharad now known as Anusim. This is not a migration but an immigration of Anusim into the Negev.

Despite it all, God will have the final say. Therefore, based on the comprehensive prophetic context, the effects of these transitions are going to cause an incredible change in the balance of Israel’s ergonomics for the good. In the process, God is using this occasion to cause laws, space and Solomonic provisions to begin flowing in accordance to Obadiah’s prophecy so that Anusim may possess their inheritance in the Negev.

Redemption

Verse 17 reads: “But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance,” (NIV).

The Jewish Bible says, “But on Zion’s mount a remnant shall survive...”¹² The American Standard Version says, “Those that escape.” In any case, the Hebrew root of this term speaks of an escaped portion that has been carried away into safety.

I earnestly believe the implication here speaks of “the ransomed of the Lord” that are found in this last exodus. After all, Isaiah 51:11 says, “The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away,” (NIV).

The Hebrew term for ransom is a primitive root that relates to a people that has been severed from their family or community; but, it also includes the dynamic, “to release and to preserve,” which is exactly what God is doing with Sephardic Anusim today.

What’s most amazing is that the Hebrew term for possess introduces the force that drives out the existing (enemy) tenants and to take possession of ones inheritance by the positive strength of the presence of God’s appointed destiny in their Aliyah.

Repossession

The Jewish Bible says, “...the Jerusalemite



exile community of Sepharad shall possess the towns of the Negev.” (Emphasis added) “Possess” is the same term used by most Christian Bibles as well.

The point is that since the days of Jeremiah, the Negev has been “shut up.” (13) The Hebrew term for this implies that this land has (temporarily) been surrendered. I strongly believe Obadiah holds the key for Anusim to repossess their forefathers’ land. However, there is much more to this question.

The “repossession” I am referring to does not merely include the occupation of Negevan land assigned to Sephardim. It includes a greater and more global take-over by the Lord Himself when Obadiah declares, “...and the kingdom will be the LORD’S” This is an emphatic and not merely auxiliary statement that believers in Messiah’s coming all hope and pray for.

Reclamation

Finally, Obadiah does not use the term “reclaim.” However, the application of this term is blatantly felt all across his prophecy. In fact, many years before him, Isaiah stated:

In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel...¹⁴ (emphasis added).

In this case, “reclaim” means “to procure,

especially by purchase.” This is why I firmly believe that the Aliyah of my Sephardic Anusim people is inherently connected to the punishment of Edom, the Liberation of Zion and the Lord’s total takeover of Israel and subsequently of all the nations under the sun.

This is why the prophet Isaiah declared:

“And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory.” “I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD—on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels,” says the LORD. “They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the LORD in ceremonially clean vessels. And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites,” says the LORD.¹⁵

There is no question that this present phenomena among Sephardic Anusim show most if not all the signs of Obadiah’s vision. I can earnestly say, based on my extensive research and travels that many Hispanic-Latinos of Anusim have already begun to believe their real history, to embrace their true identity and mobilize themselves in their God-given destiny.



1391 AD: While the peasantry in Spain is overtaxed and overburdened, Jews prove to be an easier scapegoat than the monarchy. Ferrant Martinez, Archdeacon of Ecija, capitalizes on these feelings by roaming the country, stirring up riots, and preaching fiery anti-Semitic sermons, claiming Jews represent the devil among them. Martinez commands clergy of various towns to tear down synagogues and confiscate Jewish property. Looting and terrorizing leads to massacres. In Seville alone, 4,000 Jews are killed. In June and August, a total of 50,000 Jews are killed from seventy communities. It is estimated that after a year of violence, over 100,000 Jews are killed and over 100,000 are baptized by the Church quickly enough to avoid execution. Jews who avoid execution and conversion flee from Spain and establish Sephardic communities throughout Southern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Smaller groups go to Western Europe and Holland.



1413-1415 AD: In an effort to compel the remaining Jews in Spain to convert to Christianity, there are forced religious debates to determine whether Jesus was the true Messiah. The debates—known as the Disputation of Tortosa—are held between Jews and a converted Jew and aid to the Pope Boniface XIII, Jeronimo de la Santa Fe. As a result of these debates and increased persecution, thousands of Jews convert to Christianity. Most Jews in the government, justice system, and financial administration are primarily secular and therefore quick to be baptized so they can maintain their appointed prestigious positions. In addition to the conversions, there are also many interfaith marriages between wealthy Anusim and Christian nobility. The marriages are convenient since Anusim are in need of social status while Christians lack the wealth they need to match their social positions.



1. This was at the 24th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy held in Jerusalem July 4th-9th, 2004.
 2. Ben Zion Netanyahu is the father of former Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu and an eloquent historian with volumes of material on Sephardim and the Inquisition.
 3. Crypto Jew is Sephardic Jew who hides his heritage and identity; Marrano means swine; Converso means convert; Nuevo Creyente means new convert; Anusim means the descendant of one that was forced or coerced to convert from a Jewish lifestyle to Roman Catholicism and implicates racial rape.
 4. El Santo Oficio means the “Holy Office” of the Roman Catholic Church which administered all Inquisitions
 5. Some of these prophets include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah and others. I write of this in my book, “Sephardic Destiny,” published in 2003.

6. The 20th verse of the book of Obadiah reads: “...the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the towns of the Negev.” (NIV)
 7. Edom is also known as Esau, Teman and Mount Seir
 8. Sheol is a Hebrew term for the world of the dead
 9. Ezekiel chapter 37:10 (NKJV)
 10. Isaiah 35:8
 11. This “faithful servant demeanor” by no means implies to be inferior, but within the scope of the Bible it portrays a Davidic-like spirit who served King Saul and was yet a champion and eventually the king.
 12. The Jewish Bible, Tanakh—The Holy Scriptures published by the Jewish Publications Society, 1985
 13. Jeremiah 13:19
 14. Isaiah 11:11-12a, NIV
 15. Isaiah 66: 18-21, NIV



A Quick Explanation of Ladino

By Shelomo Alfassa
Foundation for the Advancement of
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Ladino, otherwise known as Judeo-Spanish, is the spoken and written Hispanic language of Jews of Spanish origin. Ladino did not become a specifically Jewish language until after the expulsion from Spain in 1492 — it was merely the language of their province. It is also known as Judezmo, Dzhudezmo, or Spaniolit.

When the Jews were expelled from Spain and Portugal they were cut off from the further development of the language, but they continued to speak it in the communities and countries to which they emigrated. Ladino therefore reflects the grammar and vocabulary of 14th and 15th century Spanish. The further away from Spain the emigrants went, the more cut off they were from developments in the language, and the more Ladino began to diverge from mainstream Castilian Spanish.

In Amsterdam, England and Italy, those Jews who continued to speak “Ladino” were in constant contact with Spain and therefore they basically continued to speak the Castilian Spanish of the time. However, in the Sephardi communities of the Ottoman Empire, the language not only retained the older forms of Spanish, but borrowed so many words from Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Turkish, and even French, that it became more and more distorted. Ladino was nowhere near as diverse as the various forms of Yiddish, but there were still two different dialects, which corresponded to the different origins of the speakers.

“Oriental” Ladino was spoken in Turkey and Rhodes and reflected Castilian Spanish, whereas “Western” Ladino was spoken in Greece, Macedonia, Bosnia, Serbia and Romania, and preserved the characteristics of northern Spanish and Portuguese. The vocabulary of Ladino includes hundreds of archaic Spanish words which have disappeared from modern day Spanish, and also includes many words from different languages that have been substituted for the

original Spanish word, from the various places Ladino speaking Jews settled.

Some terms were actually transferred from one community to another through commercial or cultural relations, whereas others remained peculiar to particular communities. These foreign words derive mainly from Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, Greek, French, and to a lesser extent from Portuguese and Italian. In the Ladino spoken in Israel, several words have been borrowed from Yiddish. For most of its lifetime, Ladino was written in the Hebrew alphabet, in Rashi script, or in Solitro, a cursive method of writing letters. It was only in the 20th century that Ladino was ever written using the Latin alphabet. In fact, what is known as “rashi script” was originally a Ladino script which became used centuries after Rashi’s death in printed books to differentiate Rashi’s commentary from the text of the Torah.

At various times Ladino has been spoken in North Africa, Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, France, Israel, and, to a lesser extent, in the United States (the highest populations being in Seattle, Los Angeles, New York, and south Florida) and Latin America. By the beginning of this century, with the spread of compulsory education in the language of the land, Ladino began to disintegrate. Emigration to Israel from the Balkans hastened the decline of Ladino in Eastern Europe and Turkey.

The Nazis destroyed most of the communities in Europe where Ladino had been the first language among Jews. Ladino speakers who survived the Holocaust and emigrated to Latin America tended to pick up regular Spanish very quickly, whilst others adopted the language of whichever country they ended up in. Israel is now the country with the greatest number of Ladino speakers, with about 200,000 people who still speak or understand the language, but even they only know a very limited and basic Ladino.

It is important to note that Ladino is not modern Spanish, and also to note that just because someone speaks modern Spanish, this fact alone does not make them Sephardic.



1449 AD: With thousands of new Jewish converts in Spain, tensions arise between old and new Christians. Part of this animosity towards Anusim derives from the fact that many are known to still be practicing Judaism in secret. There is also significant jealousy towards the Anusim because they are now able to use their status as Christians to move up the ranks in Spanish society. Discrimination of Anusim officially takes on racial tones when the City Council of Toledo passes the “purity of blood” statutes. These statutes use family histories to try and distinguish Christians of “pure stock” from Christians with Jewish ancestry. The statutes prohibit impure Christians from holding any public or private office where they may “exercise power over old Christians.”



1479 AD: The marriage of Ferdinand V of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile unite the two Spanish kingdoms. As Queen Isabella establishes order and centralizes authority in a relatively short period of time, the united Spanish kingdom becomes one of the more powerful states in Europe. Maintaining royal political power and unity is a priority to the monarchy but the threat of a popular uprising looms large. Given the large scale animosity felt towards Anusim, establishing an inquisition is one option for satisfying the masses.





Saving Souls through Torturing Bodies



The Spanish Inquisition was a perverse attempt to save people's souls by torturing their bodies. Since only Christians of pure faith could go to heaven, the Inquisitors reasoned, and all others would be sentenced to the eternal torments of hell, it made sense to temporarily torture people of impure faith until they accepted Jesus, and thereby save their souls from the never-ending tortures of the next world.

Contrary to a popular misconception, the Inquisition was not directed against Jews, but against all supposed heretics, particularly former Jews who had converted to Christianity. Since these Jews had generally converted under duress, either to save their lives or their livelihoods, the Church had good reason to mistrust their sincerity. Inquisition officials, aided by informers, continually and carefully scrutinized these new Christians. If any of their actions indicated that they might be secretly practicing Judaism—perhaps they were observed never to eat pork or cook on the Sabbath—these “new Christians” were summoned before the Inquisition. The Inquisitors, all of whom were priests, asked the accused if

they were secret Jews. If they confessed immediately, and supplied the Inquisition with names of other secret Jews, they got off lightly: a religious ceremony at which they made a public confession, and suffered various humiliations. If they were convicted of being secret Jews and only then confessed, they were guaranteed a less painful execution: They were strangled before being burned at the stake.

Those people who refused to confess even after being convicted, or who were courageous enough to acknowledge that they were still Jews, were repeatedly tortured to force them to concede the truth of Christianity. During the centuries in which the Inquisition had power, thousands of secret Jews were put on the rack, had water forced down their throats after their noses were pinched shut, or subjected to other tortures. All these actions were carried out by priests who claimed to be motivated only by love of the people they were torturing. 🇺🇸🇨

From “Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to know about the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History” by Joseph Telushkin

1481-1492 AD:

The Queen becomes convinced by her confessor, Friar Thomas de Torquemada, that heretical Jews pose a threat to the kingdom's unity. As a result, the Queen orders a papal inquisition in Seville and



appoints Torquemada as the Inquisitor-General. As Torquemada displays a ruthless determination in rooting out the heretics, the Inquisition quickly spreads throughout Spain. The inquisitors seek out, investigate, torture, and often kill Anusim who are found guilty of practicing Judaism in secret. While the Inquisition initially investigates the piety of only those accused of heresy, it quickly becomes a racial exercise, targeting all Anusim just for being of Jewish descent. Even Jewish converts of nobility or social stature are not immune to the Inquisition. The Inquisition relies on informers and their suspicions. Once a heretic is identified, torture is used to procure confessions, even forced and false ones. Heretics are then given a public trial of humiliation, *auto-da-fé*, to determine their sentence. 13,000 are found guilty of judaizing—2,000 of whom are burned at the stake while the rest are whipped, imprisoned, or enslaved. The wealth and property of the Anusim is confiscated and divided between the Inquisition, the Church, and the Queen. After a long and expensive war to recapture Granada from the Muslims, the monarchy's coffers are in bad need of this increase in their funds.

1492 AD: On 31 March, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella sign a certificate of expulsion, the Alhambra Decree, which orders all Jews left in Spain to either convert to Christianity or leave the country within four months. While tens of thousands of Jews are quickly baptized, around 100,000 flee to Portugal, and another 100,000 flee to modern-day Italy, Holland, North Africa, Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, the Balkans and the new colonies. They are forced to leave behind all of their valuable possessions.

The Cyrus Legacy Lives On

“ I will gather you from the West... Isaiah 43:5 ”

God is restoring Israel in fulfillment of His word. Just as in the days of King Cyrus, God is fulfilling His promises to Israel and the Jewish people in ways that are unprecedented. All over the world and now increasingly from the Americas, Jewish hearts are being stirred by God to return to their covenant land in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Over 5.7 million Jews now live in their homeland...Israel.

Cyrus was a gentile king living in a gentile nation, however, he came to believe in and acknowledge the God of Israel as the true God. God gave him unusual favor and authority over nations and he conquered them. Cyrus was called to be a very important part in God's plan for His covenant people (Isaiah 45). He not only conquered Babylon so the Jews in exile could go free, he spoke to them on behalf of God, telling them that it was time to return to Jerusalem to restore the temple. Cyrus then used the

resources of his empire to help them on their way back to the promised land and even funded the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1.1-6).

Clearly the church has been called to be the Cyrus of our day. There is no greater way to show our love and support to Israel than by helping Jewish families to return to live in their homeland. The strength of a nation is its people and their desire to build and to prosper that nation. As God brings His people back from the West may we answer our call to be a catalyst of their return. Just as Cyrus made the way for the Jews in Babylonian exile to return to Jerusalem, we too are to be an active part of Israel's restoration to their land from the nations.

Deborah Kellogg and her husband Bart have been answering that call and encouraging others to do as well. In 1993 they began to work with the Ebenezer Fund's aliyah (return) project in the

Former Soviet Union. This Christian organization, has been able to bring over 100,000 Jews back to Israel because of the giving of Christians around the world. In 1998 Deborah and her husband received a directive from the Lord to begin to prepare for the aliyah from the West. This included North, Central and South America. "This will be the largest exodus of any other region in the world; God will move in a great way," Deborah said. They then founded Preparing the Way Ministries in 1999 to answer that call and in 2003 founded the Cyrus Foundation as an expansion of their work helping Jewish families to return home to Israel from the Americas. The foundation supplies financial help for shipping household goods or with travel costs to needy families. There is also practical help available when they arrive in Israel. "We want to show them Christians do care and want to be a blessing to them as they make that



Deborah and Bart Kellogg

"The last words of the Hebrew Bible are spoken by King Cyrus of Persia: 'Anyone of His people -may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.' [i.e., let him make Aliyah] (II Chron.36:23). With the creation of our own Cyrus Fund within The Jerusalem Connection, we consider it an honor to partner with the Cyrus Foundation, in the spirit of Cyrus, to help facilitate the return of the Jews to their homeland that God promised by covenant. The time has come to focus our finances, efforts and prayers on the millions of Jews in the Americas. The Cyrus Foundation has been birthed for such a time as this." -Dr. James Hutchens, President, The Jerusalem Connection, International

“ I will assemble the outcasts of Israel from the four corners of the earth. ”



often difficult but fulfilling move back to their homeland."

Family after family have expressed how they've been touched by this help. Many are amazed that Christians, who throughout history have been persecutors of the Jewish people, are now becoming friends and supporters. The Aminov Family writes, "...we always believed our last stop would be Israel. It was the financial fear of not making it that held us back. Now our goal has changed. We strongly believe that G-d will help us every step of the way of making this aliyah happen...I am speechless and amazed at your mission...your determination and kindness affects many families, especially mine, we've been deeply touched... Do miracles happen? Absolutely." The Epstein Family, writes, "Thank you! Our family says thank you. This is the move of our life and it is great to know people like you and the Cyrus Foundation are behind us." The Suard's write, "Thank you!!! We didn't expect so much help... It is so much an encouragement, it brings us so much joy to know that G-d wants us back so clearly." The person coordinating aliyah for 21 Anousim (hidden Spanish Jews) from South America writes, "We appreciate your help and love from the bottom of our hearts. When I told the families that they can now move to Israel because of the Cyrus Foundation's financial help many of them began to cry. Something that seemed so impossible was now possible; they could not express enough how much they appreciate your help. Thank you again, all of them will be in Eretz Yisrael soon."

The aliyah from the west is steadily increasing. We are asking you to pray about becoming involved in this amazing end-time move of God's restoration and redemption as we all prepare for the coming Messiah. For more information: www.cyrusfoundation.org, or www.restorationisrael.org 

Do you suspect that your family background is Jewish but you do not have proof? Contact www.FamilytreeDNA.com.



“Comfort, comfort My people! Speak tenderly to the heart of Jerusalem...” Isaiah 40:1 ”

Top left, the Suard family. Top right, the Aminov family. Near bottom, the Epstein family. Far bottom, the Rosenberg family.



Sephardim in the New World

1492-1502 AD: Two days before the deadline for the Spanish expulsion, Columbus sails to the New World. Columbus's four voyages are funded by three wealthy Anusim: Sanchez, Santangel, and Abranbanel. Many historians believe there is sufficient evidence Columbus was of Jewish descent and the sense of urgency in his voyages was because many of Columbus's passengers were fleeing Jews. The total number of Anusim who sail to the New World in these voyages is unknown but estimates are high and continue to grow. Hoping to start a new life and live in freedom and autonomy, many Jews flee to the New World because an inquisition in the colonies has not yet been established and many parts of Europe are closed to Jews. Technically, several decrees barred the entry of Jews into the colonies but through bribery, secrecy, and forged documents, thousands manage to secure a place on the boats. Sephardim settle in colonies that are now modern day Cuba, Mexico, the Caribbean, South America, and the Southwestern part of the U.S.



1506 AD: During Passover, anti-Semitic riots break out in Lisbon, Portugal. Over three thousand Anusim are massacred. At this time, Anusim are still protected by law in Portugal and their persecution or murder is illegal. Upon hearing the news of the Lisbon massacre, King Manuel is furious and orders the execution of forty-five of the ringleaders, including two monks. For the next twenty years, Portuguese Anusim live free from routine persecutions or local hostilities but they are more careful in hiding their Jewish practices.

1531-1540 AD: Pope Clement VII authorizes an inquisition tribunal in Portugal. The Anusim of Portugal knew for three years about the coming Inquisition but King John III prohibited their emigration. The first *auto-da-fé* in

Jews in Mexico, A Struggle for Survival

By Shep Lenchek

The survival of Judaism in Mexico is a tale of tenacity and tolerance. The story begins in Spain with the "Conversos", Jews who had converted to Christianity, always under duress.

It starts in 600 AD, the Visigoth king, Reccard, forcibly baptized 90,000 of his Jewish subjects and expelled those who would not accept Christianity. Some of the Conversos continued to practice their religion secretly for almost a century, then openly during the 800 years of Moorish rule. The number of Conversos grew during the 15th century when, in 1479, Ferdinand and Isabella launched a massive campaign to forcibly convert the Jewish population in Spain to Christianity.

With the birth of the Spanish Inquisition some three years later, the "Conversos" were now accused of secretly practicing Judaism. In 1492, all practicing Jews were expelled from Spain.

By 1530 the Royal Viceroy of Nueva Espagna, Antonio de Mendoza, had established law and order in the New World (some historians feel Mendoza himself came from a Crypto-Jewish family. Mendoza was a very common name among Spanish Jews).

The "Conversos" were under increasing

pressure from the Inquisition. Looking for a place in which they could retain their Spanish identity, they focused on Mexico. In 1531 large numbers of them left Spain and Portugal for the New World.

The inquisition had not yet come to Nueva Espagna and the new arrivals soon married into prominent Mexican families, became priests and bishops and enjoyed a 40 year period during which time, many began to practice Judaism openly. Doctors, lawyers, notaries-public, tailors, teachers and silversmiths, they brought much needed skills to the new colony and were well received. They settled in Vera Cruz, Campeche, Oaxaca, Guadalajara, Morelia and Mexico City.

By 1571 the Inquisition had arrived in the New World and again both practicing Jews and Conversos were under religious threat.

In 1579 the King of Portugal granted land for a colony north of Nueva Espagna, to a Portuguese nobleman, Luis de Carvajal. Named the "Kingdom of Nueva Leon," both Conversos and practicing Jews, banned in the Spanish colony, were welcome. But by 1641 the colony was gone. However, some of the original settlers had moved on to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, then still part of Mexico, bringing with them seeds of Judaism that still survive.

One such family, named Villarreal, who



Jose Maria Villarreal and Juanita Trevino circa 1890 (Nuevo Leon)

Photos courtesy of Danny Villarreal



freely acknowledges remote Jewish ancestors, has a web-site on the Internet (<http://members.aol.com/daniel5822/villarrealindex.html>) that gives us an interesting look into the entire situation from the point of view of the Conversos. Located in South Texas, but with branches of the family still in Mexico, they openly acknowledge their Jewish heritage and are attempting to contact others with similar backgrounds, but make it clear that they will remain Catholics. They arrived as Conquistadors in 1519, most certainly “New Christians,” since no practicing Jew could have served with Cortes. In 1573 they received a document from the King of Spain granting them the same status as “Old Christians.” Yet in 1590, they left “Nueva Espagna” and settled in “The Kingdom of Nueva Leon.”

Exactly why the ancestors of the Villarreal family left Nueva Espagna after approximately 71 years, during which they and their descendents enjoyed privileged status as original Conquistadors, is a question the living members of the family cannot answer. Perhaps it substantiates claims that the Inquisition often persecuted people who had sincerely accepted Catholicism, simply to strip them of wealth and power. This family was truly converted to Catholicism and remains so, but must have felt a threat to their safety from the Inquisition. Unlike others who fled, once safe in the “Kingdom of Nueva Leon,” they did not return to Judaism. It appears that Jewish ancestry could cause problems for even devout Catholics.

Some 10 years later, all vestiges of open Judaism had disappeared. But what remained was perhaps as many as 20,000 Mexicans who had Jewish ancestors, almost five percent of the European population of that time.

It was not until 1865, during the reign of the ill fated Emperor, Maximilian, that an edict of religious tolerance was issued. Until then, only Catholics could be citizens. Some Jews who had arrived in the guise of “Conversos” and escaped the Inquisition, may have continued to practice Judaism secretly, but it was highly dangerous. As late as 1867 there were only 20 Jewish families in Mexico City and perhaps a dozen more in the rest of the country. It was not until late 1882, after the assassination of the Russian Tsar, Alexander II, that significant numbers of practicing Jews entered the country. In 1867 Benito Juarez, a



Rosa Villarreal circa 1890

Zapotec Indian and a liberal, dealt what amounted to a deathblow to the Catholic Church. He banished the Papal Nuncio, seized church property, secularized hospitals run by the church and banned priests and nuns from wearing clerical garb in public. Religious processions were prohibited.

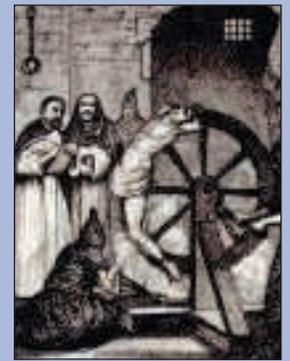
Now, Protestants were allowed to establish themselves in Mexico. With complete separation of Church and State now being enforced, and with the Catholic Church fighting for its life, it had neither the strength nor the inclination to concern itself with Jewish immigration. Basically, the only problems faced by the new arrivals were economic. The Jews who escaped from Russia to Mexico are the ancestors of possibly half of the present Jewish population.

In 1884 the Mexican government invited more than one dozen Jewish bankers to open branch banks in the country. With some sources of credit now available, Jews settled all over the country. Many of them became peddlers. With merchandise strapped on a burro or mule, they brought housewares, clothing and novelties — heretofore not available locally — to the remote villages scattered throughout the Republic. Judaism has always recognized that the obligation to provide for the family comes before most other rules of Jewish law. Thus those who ventured into the hinterland were able to violate the rules of Kashruth, a code that sets up dietary rules, with a clear conscience, while remaining observant Jews.

By the time the next wave of Jews started

See **Mexico**, next page

Portugal took place in Lisbon in 1540. Thereafter, thousands of Anusim convicted of heresy are robbed, imprisoned, tortured, or burned at the stake. Many



Anusim manage to flee Portugal, escaping to Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the New World—all places where there are existing Sephardic communities.

1571 AD: After the Inquisitions, Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal move in large numbers to cities in Mexico such as Oaxaca, Vera Cruz, Guadalajara, and Mexico City. According to chronicles from the period, the combination of Jews and Anusim far outnumber true Catholics. Free from the Inquisition, many of these Anusim circumcise their children, eat kosher, and even build synagogues.

By 1531, Catholic Franciscans in Mexico are fed up and write to the Spanish Monarch complaining the Anusim are taking over the lands of the New World. Though local Franciscan inquisitors have already been conducting *auto-da-fes* in Mexico for forty years, in 1571, Pope Philip II orders the establishment of a formal inquisition tribunal in Mexico and Peru—the first tribunals in the New World.

During the entire colonial period of Mexico, approximately 1,500 Anusim are convicted of heresy. Punishments include confiscation of property, lashes or public beatings, a lifetime of wearing a “holy sac,” or execution. Inquisition records show that out of those Anusim found guilty of heresy, approximately 110 were executed. Although these numbers do not include those victims who died in prison



or from torture, they are very small in comparison to the thousands massacred and burned at the stake by the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions.



1579-1596 AD:

Spain grants Luis de Carvajal, a Spanish Conquistador and son of Jewish converts, a very large land tract which covers a major portion of northern Mexico, South Texas,

and New Mexico. This is the only land grant given by Spain where the recipient does not have to prove a pure Christian blood line. Carvajal and two hundred Sephardic families settle the land and establish villages in Northern Mexico, which are today the sites of Monterrey and Monclova. When the Inquisition indicts the Carvajal family and friends for practicing Judaism, Luis de Carvajal refuses to denounce them. Five of the Carvajal family members are tortured and burned at the stake in Mexico City's main plaza. Luis de Carvajal is put in prison and dies within the year.

1580 AD: La Santa Catalina, a ship sailing from Portugal, drops off many Sephardim at the Island of Ocoa—today the Island of Santa Domingo.

1600s AD: In Amsterdam, a protestant country immune from the Inquisition, Sephardim thrive and grow in number and influence.



Mexico, *from page 23*

to arrive in 1911 and 1913 and again in 1920-21, most of the former peddlers now owned stores. These newcomers came from what had been the Ottoman Empire and had lived there since being expelled from Spain. The Empire was breaking up, and centuries of tolerance were now over. As Sephardim, they re-established the style of worship that had existed in Spain before 1492. Language was no problem, since they spoke Ladino, a dialect of Spanish. Lacking capital, many of them started "sidewalk" businesses, displaying things on blankets spread on the sidewalk. Others became peddlers, replacing their more affluent co-religionists, who had settled in the larger cities of the Republic. Coming from a primitive part of the world, they had no difficulty in adapting to conditions in small-town Mexico. Some settled in places where Jews were totally unknown. But Mexicans and Jews adopted to each other well. In both groups, the family was the predominant social group and those who chose to settle in such places had experience in surviving in a non-Jewish environment. They struggled against living conditions, not hostility or persecution.

The next and last significant number of Jews to seek refuge in Mexico also came from Russia after WWI. Now a well-established Jewish community was there to receive them. The majority of those who chose Mexico rather than the United States, had either relatives or friends already settled in the country. Additionally in 1921 and again in 1924, new laws, passed in the U.S., restricted immigration, making Mexico even

more attractive. Easing the way for this new influx, in 1917, President Venustiano Carranza started to revive the anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution of 1857 that had destroyed the position of the Catholic Church. Never popular, these laws had been disregarded and the Church had re-established itself. Now, Carranza, seeking to bring a form of Socialism to the country, revived them, and once again the church was in no position to protest the arrival of non-Catholics into the country. Additionally, they viewed the spread of Protestantism as a much greater threat, than that of Judaism.

From 1920 to 1930 Jews in Mexico enjoyed a period of stability during which they prospered.

The only recorded incidents of official anti-Semitism came in the 1930's. Suffering from a depression, Mexican labor unions pressured the government to enact restrictions on "Chinese and Jewish" immigration. Later in the same decade, neo-Nazi right wingers, financed from Berlin, staged anti-Jewish demonstrations in Mexico City. But not a single act of violence against Jews or Jewish property can be documented. It was just sound and fury without action, and garnered little support. This is not to say that some individual Mexicans do not harbor anti-Semitic feelings.

Despite strenuous efforts by the Jewish community to rescue Jews from the Nazis, they had little success. The Mexican government, now headed by Lazaro Cardenas, was more than willing to look the other way and did so when some 200 Jews from Cuba entered the country illegally.

By and large, since the end of WWII,



The Villarreal family in Havana, Cuba



Villarreal family circa 1880 (San Antonio, Texas)

Mexicans Jews have encountered no more and possibly less anti-Jewish bias than other Jews throughout the Western World.

The Jewish experience must be divided into two parts — those whose families experienced persecution in Mexico, and those who have not. Conversos, who arrived between 1753 and 1821, when Mexico gained Independence from Spain and the Inquisition in Mexico ended, had been persecuted. By 1651, most of the “Crypto-Jews” had been wiped out. Their only legacy is those Mexican families, devout Catholics, who practice some Jewish customs, perhaps without realizing it. Those who suffered were those who had been promised a haven in the “Kingdom of Nueva Leon.” Some of them became Catholics. Their descendents know of their Jewish heritage, but remain Christians.

The Inquisition was never as virulent in Mexico as it was in Spain, where more than 4,000 people were burned at the stake. Many more were imprisoned for the “Jewish Heresy.” Massacres were instigated that took thousands of lives. By contrast, between 1571 when the Inquisition was established in Mexico and 1821 when it ended, only about 110 people were actually burned at the stake. Perhaps the same number died under torture or in prison, either awaiting trial or after sentencing. There were no popular outcries against Jews. The Inquisition was imposed from Spain. It cannot be blamed on Mexicans.

Those who arrived between 1821 and 1865 were not allowed to become Mexican citizens. While this discouraged Jewish

immigration, those who did enter the country, faced basically the same problems as those who were citizens. Political and economic chaos, not bias, was the problem.

Between 1882 and the 1930's those entering the country lived in harmony with their fellow Mexicans and since WWII there have been no real threats to Judaism. The miniscule number of Jews, just a small fraction of the total population, makes them invisible to the average Mexican. They no longer interest the Catholic Church. Passion plays still depict the Jews as being responsible for the crucifixion but when the play is over, it seems to have had no visible impact on day to day relationships between Jews and their neighbors.

The combination of tenacity on the part of Jews, and tolerance by Mexicans, both official and as individuals, has permitted Judaism to put down deep roots. Mexican Jews still struggle today against inter-marriage and migration to the United States and Israel. They have taken positive steps to handle these problems and, barring a radical change in the attitude of Mexicans or their government, are here to stay.

http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_travel/slenchek/sljewsinmexico1.html

Editor's Note: The Villarreal family never left New Spain (Mexico), they merely migrated northward as most of the conquistador families. Following new opportunities for wealth, they moved from Mexico City to Guadalajara to Zacatecas to Saltillo and then into Nuevo Leon.

1602 AD: Don Juan de Onate leads a group, largely of Jewish descent, across the Rio Grande River and through El Paso, Texas. In order to escape detection from the Mexican Inquisition, these Anusim settle the interior of the New World, including present day Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and California. Under Onate's governorship, they become the founders of the modern state of New Mexico and the city of Santa Fe.



1625 AD: Over a hundred years since its establishment and after decades of inactivity, the Inquisition in the Canary Islands remobilizes. Denunciations by informants reveal a large and rich, although secretive, Jewish community dating back to the Spanish Inquisition. By and large, the Inquisition in the Canaries during the 17th and 18th centuries is unsuccessful in finding and convicting Anusim because the general public is not very supportive and ignored the Inquisition's edicts.



1630 AD: For the last two hundred years, thousands of Anusim have settled in the Spanish-Portuguese colony of Brazil. In those first two centuries, Anusim suffered socially from the Inquisition but prospered economically from sugar plantations and exporting wood to Europe. In 1630, the Dutch defeat the



Hidden Heritage

By Gail Lichtman
The Jerusalem Post

“We didn't live as Jews,” he recalled.

“Nevertheless, all my life I felt I was Jewish.”

Portuguese and take over northeastern Brazil. In Dutch Brazil, the Jewish community thrives, practicing Judaism openly and building synagogues. More Jews from Holland migrate to Brazil, making the Jewish population the largest group of European colonists. After a nine year siege, in 1654, the Portuguese armies overtake all of Brazil. As a condition for surrender, the Dutch governor of Brazil insists that the Portuguese not slaughter the Jews. Instead, they are forced to leave along with their Dutch comrades. While some Anusim stay, most move to Holland, the Rio Grande, and the Caribbean Islands.



1642 AD: The discovery of a secret synagogue in Mexico City reignites the Mexican Inquisition. Thomas de Trevino de Sobremonte, a practicing Jew and highly respected leader of the Jewish community, refuses to convert and is burned at the stake.

1655 AD: With the Portuguese takeover of Brazil, two dozen Jews leave Recife, Brazil and migrate to New Amsterdam (New York). There, they establish the first organized Jewish congregation in the United States. While they were always free to practice their faith privately, it takes thirty years before they receive official permission to publicly and officially practice Judaism. This accomplishment is owed to their unrelenting struggle to establish religious freedom for themselves in their new land. In 1730, the congregation consecrates the first synagogue in the United States, Congregation Shearith Israel.



Barcelona-born Eduard Perez was researching his family's roots and discovered that his ancestors were "anusim" (Spanish Jews forced to convert to Christianity some 500 years ago during the Inquisition.)

Lorenzo Ujmin is a descendent of a group of Moroccan Jews who ventured into the Amazon more than 100 years ago in hope of making a fortune in rubber and were left stranded there. Orlando Maman from Peru has dreamed for more than 60 years of meeting his Jewish step-siblings in Eretz Israel.

Juan Carlos's mother secretly whispered to him when he was a young boy that she was Jewish. And as a child in Venezuela, Ariel Vanesh was intrigued by books written in a strange alphabet that he found in his grandfather's library.

Perez, Ujmin, Maman, Carlos, and Vanesh are five of the more than 85 students currently enrolled at Shavei Israel's Machon Miriam Institute for Jewish Studies, a Jerusalem-based conversion program for Spanish speakers, certified by the Rabbinical Courts Administration.

“Here is an unending story of return,” states Michael Freund, chairman of Shavei Israel.

According to Freund, most of the students at Machon Miriam have historical connections to the Jewish people. “In recent years, we are seeing a real awakening among descendents of Jews who were lost to assimilation or conversion. I believe that we have an historical, moral and religious responsibility to help bring them home.”

Established three years ago in memory of Dr. Miriam Freund-Rosenthal, Machon Miriam provides Spanish speakers with a place in Israel where they can find their way back to Judaism. Most of the students arrived in Israel with little or no money and live in the Beit Canada Absorption Center

in East Talpiot. Entire families have come together; one family includes 13 children.

Says Freund, “At a time when Jewish communities in North America and Europe are hemorrhaging due to assimilation and intermarriage, it is very moving to see people who want to be Jewish so badly that they are willing to overcome obstacles in order to do so.”

Their stories are different, yet each of the new immigrants speaks of an uncanny, inner awareness of their Judaism.

Nine years ago, when Eduard Perez was 20, his research into the roots of his family names revealed that Perez is a name associated with anusim, as is Gomez, his mother's maiden name.

Perez began to study the history of the Jews in Spain and the Inquisition. “I didn't feel any special connection to Judaism. As I learned more, I began to feel a connection to Judaism. I felt this was my true identity.”

Perez has been in Israel since 2004. He is working on a doctorate at the Hebrew University on medieval Hebrew manuscripts connected with the Jews of Majorca and Malaga.

Itzjak Jayute, 25, grew up in Cartagena, Columbia. His father was Jewish but his mother was not. “We didn't live as Jews,” he recalls. “Nevertheless, all my life I felt I was Jewish.”

Jayute began to take private lessons in Hebrew, Bible and Jewish history. He decided he wanted to become an observant Jew. Unable to convert in Cartagena, he came to Israel. He is now studying for a master's degree at the Hebrew University and thinks his three sisters may follow in his footsteps.

In the 1880s, a group of Moroccan Jews was lured into the Peruvian Amazon with tales of fabulous wealth that could be made from rubber. The venture fell through and instead of returning to Morocco as wealthy men, the group remained stranded in the



jungle. The Jews married local Indian women and assimilated.

Lorenzo Ujmin from Iquitos, Peru is a descendent of these Moroccan Jews. He is one of a number of descendants who have found their way back to Judaism. Until recently, there was even a special class in Judaism in Iquitos, and in recent weeks alone, six of Ujmin's "landsmen" (fellows from Iquitos) have completed conversion in Israel.

Not eligible under the Law of Return to make aliyah, Ujmin underwent a non-Orthodox conversion in Peru and came to Israel a year ago with his wife and four children. Now in Israel, he and his wife have become observant, are studying in an Orthodox conversion course, and have enrolled their children in religious schools in Jerusalem.

When Juan Carlos, 36, was a boy in Madrid, his mother confided her secret to him: she told him she was Jewish. Then, when he was nine, she sent him to study Hebrew for a few years. But it was only after his mother died in 1997, that he decided to make every effort to return to his mother's religion. Since he had no documentation attesting to his mother's Jewishness, he decided to formally convert.

Ariel Vanesh, 29, was born into a Catholic family in Venezuela, but remembers that he had always been intrigued by the strange books in his grandfather's library. Later, he learned the books were written in Hebrew.

"My mother raised us with a lot of Jewish

customs," he recalls. "At night, when she tucked us in, she would say 'Shema Israel' (traditional prayer.) She also told us stories from the Tanach, not the New Testament."

At age 14, Vanesh started to study Judaism. "For many years, I was searching for a framework to convert. I finally converted three years ago."

Juan Sierra's father was Jewish. The family lived on an isolated farm in Venezuela near the Columbian border. Although married to a non-Jewish woman, Sierra's father made kippot for every son he had and taught the children the laws of Jewish burial so he could be buried halachically. His father's wish was that his children would make aliyah and return to their Jewish roots.

"I am fulfilling my father's legacy," says the 60-year-old Sierra, father of 15 children, who is converting along with his wife and 13 of his children. "I feel I have the soul of a Jew."

While Shavei Israel does receive some support from the Ministries of Education and Absorption, the bulk of its funds are derived from private donations from the United States, Europe and Israel. To help the men as they embark on their lives as Jews, Emunah recently donated 15 sets of tefillin, courtesy of Rabbi Dale Polakof and the Great Neck Congregation in Great Neck, NY. 

Gail Lichtman is a correspondent for The Jerusalem Post, where this article first appeared.

Majorca's Returning Jews

Majorca, a small island off the coast of Spain, is believed to have a community of Anusim numbering around 15,000. The Jewish community dates back to the 1300s. Persecuted by the Inquisition, the Jews that survived the massacres and forced conversions all became crypto-Jews. Though outwardly Catholic, they were identified as "Chuetas" (pigs) and isolated from the larger Christian community. According to Israelnationalnews.com, there may be as many as 10-15,000 "Chuetas" now living on the island. In the last several years, the numbers are growing of Anusim in Majorca who are returning to Judaism. In November 2005, Shavei Israel organized seminars for those interested in learning more about normative Judaism. Several Majorcan Jews have already moved to Israel or are in the process. 



Chanuka in Majorca

1658 AD:

Sephardim escaping the Inquisition in the Caribbean Islands move to Newport, Rhode Island.



Over the next century, until

the American Revolution, their population swells as they develop a practicing Jewish community of Sephardic tradition. In 1763, they dedicate the Truro Synagogue, the oldest surviving synagogue in the United States.

End of Inquisition in Europe and the Americas and the Rise of Anti-Semitism in Muslim Lands

1670 AD: Jews in Morocco suffer greatly under the tyranny of Moulay Rashid. Intent on terrorizing the Jews, Rashid publicly burns Jewish officials, expels others, imposes outrageous non-Muslim taxes, and destroys synagogues.

1773 AD: Portugal's King Joseph I establishes a royal decree abolishing discrimination between old and new Christians based on "purity of blood."





Sephardic Hall of Fame

1790 AD: After the accession to the Moroccan throne of Jew-hater Moulay Yazid, a terrible pogrom breaks out in Tetouan and spreads to several other Moroccan cities. Jewish men, women, and children are stripped in public, dragged through the streets by horses, beaten, thrown in prison, and often killed. Those that survive the massacres either convert to Islam or pay enormous bribes to the monarchy.



1807 AD: Under the leadership of Napoleon, France invades Portugal. 20,000 Portuguese identify themselves to the French as Jews.

1821 AD: The Mexican Inquisition is abolished with the independence of Mexico. Fifty years later, an edict of religious tolerance is issued allowing Jews to become Mexican citizens.



1822 AD: Brazil gains independence from Portugal. Escaping persecution and economic hardship, many Moroccan Jews migrate to Brazil and settle along the Amazon River.

1834 AD: Inquisition tribunals of Spain finally disappear completely.

1839 AD: Mobs attack the Jewish community in Mashhad, Iran and burn down synagogues. The remaining Iranian Jewish community converts to save their lives but continues practicing Judaism in secret.

By Shelley Neese

Hisdai Ibn Shaprut (915-970) was the first powerful Jewish politician to serve under the Umayyad caliphs in Spain. Known for his strong command of Latin and Arabic, Shaprut was commissioned to translate a famous medical text from Latin to Arabic. After receiving significant recognition for this accom-

plishment, he was appointed inspector-general of customs and diplomatic advisor to the caliphate in Cordova. Appointed leader of the Jewish community of Spain, Shaprut was a patron of Jewish learning and devoted much of his influence and finances to supporting Jewish poetry, Hebrew writing, and Talmudic study. He is credited for the revival of Jewish scholarship in Spain and for establishing its independence from Babylonia.



Left to right Samuel HaLevi, Rabbam, Christopher Columbus, Columbus discovers the New World, Queen Isabella, a Spanish Jewish community, and Beatrice Mendes

Samuel HaLevi (993-1056) was the political head of the Jews of Granada in the 11th century. Before he held the highest position of power of any Jewish notable in medieval Muslim Spain, HaLevi was a petty merchant. He was discovered for his wisdom by the vizier of

Joseph, are the only two Jews to ever be given command over a Muslim army.

Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon (1135-1204), also known as Rabbam and Maimonides, is the most famous Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages and one of today's most widely studied Jewish scholars. In Egypt, Maimonides was appointed personal physician for the Grand Vizier of Egypt and Sultan Saladin. At the same time, he served as Chief Rabbi of Cairo. Maimonides wrote several important texts in the field of Jewish law and Talmudic study. His most famous works are his commentary on the *Mishnah* (first commentary of its kind); *Mishnah Torah* (first systematic written code of Jewish Law); and *Sefer HaMitzvot* ("Book of Commandments"). Because of



Maimonides's Aristotelian world-view and emphasis on rationalism and science, he was a controversial figure, both loved and hated by his Jewish contemporaries. Only centuries after his death were his contributions to Jewish scholarship fully appreciated and standardized in Orthodox Judaism.

Luis de Santangel (?-1498) was vital to the success of Columbus's first expedition. Santangel, the son of Jewish converts and treasurer of the Kingdom of Aragon, was very wealthy and had many connections among Spanish notables. He used his influence to arrange for Columbus to have an audience with King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. When the king was not forthcoming, Santangel

and together they had six children. Samuel was the head of the Jewish community in Naples and a wealthy businessman. After Samuel's death, Abrabanel took over his large business. Under her direction, the business did extremely well. Abrabanel used her money to help poor and oppressed Jews and also sponsor Jewish education and scholarship. Abrabanel is credited for single-handedly buying the freedom of more than a thousand Jews imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition.

Beatrice Mendes (1510-1569), also known by her Jewish name Gracia Nasi, was the most famous Jewish woman of her time. She married a very wealthy Spanish Jewish banker, Francisco



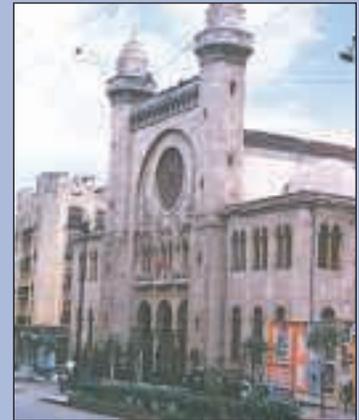
arranged for additional meetings and helped Columbus make his case. After three meetings, Columbus's proposal was accepted. Part of the agreement was that Santangel would personally sponsor a portion of the first trip and the royal funds would supply the rest. Columbus did not forget Santangel's role and felt personally indebted to him. Columbus's most famous correspondence reporting his discoveries of the New World was written directly to Santangel.

Benvenida Abrabanel (1490-1560) is memorialized as a woman of valor for the life she dedicated to helping oppressed Jews and giving to Jewish causes. Abrabanel and her family fled the Spanish Inquisition in 1492 and moved to Naples. She married Samuel Abrabanel

Mendes, but after only eight years of marriage, she was widowed. Mendes inherited half the family fortune and took over her late husband's large enterprise. At enormous risk to herself, she used her fortune and connections to run a secret underground railroad to help Jews trying to escape the Inquisition. In 1555, after Pope Paul IV determined to violently rid all the papal states of Judaizing Christians, Mendes used her power to try and organize all Jewish merchants to boycott the port of Ancona, Italy. The plan was opposed by prominent rabbis who feared that taking dramatic actions would upset the Papacy and Christian kings. Mendes's belief in the power of Jewish solidarity in fighting oppression was ahead of her time.

Who's Who continues on following pages ...

1870 AD: After forty years of French colonization in Algeria, Algeria's Jews are granted French citizenship and largely adapt the French language and culture. A significant Jewish presence in Algeria dates back to the Roman period. Many Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition went to Algeria to join the already established Jewish community. In Ottoman Algiers, Jews lived with a relative degree of social autonomy, prospered economically, and were able to maintain their religious orthodoxy.



1917 AD: Samuel Schwartz, a Jewish engineer in Portugal on business, discovers a community of Anusim in Belmonte. Traveling throughout Northern Portugal, Schwartz identifies around 15,000 Anusim, in addition to those in Belmonte, who have maintained secret Jewish practices throughout the centuries. These Portuguese Jewish communities believe they are the only remaining Jews.

Sephardim in the Holocaust and the Birth of Israel



1939-1945 AD:

Sephardic Jewry in Europe suffers the same fate of their Ashkenazi counterparts. While Sephardim live in all parts of Europe, the largest Sephardic communities are in Greece, Holland, Yugoslavia, and Italy. More than 90% of the Jewish community in Greece is wiped out by the Holocaust. Hitler's goal to eliminate world Jewry is not confined to central Europe. The spread of Nazi ideology has a devastating affect on the Jewish communities of Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia.



1941 AD: For two days in June, Iraqi Jews suffer their own Kristallnacht, known as the “Farhud,” meaning “violent dispossession.” Incited by pro-Nazi radio messages from the Zionist enemy, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, Iraqi mobs rampage several Baghdad districts killing any Jew in site, including women and children, and destroying all Jewish property. The army and Iraqi police do nothing to stop it and in many instances participate. The massacre continues for 48 hours until they are forcefully stopped by British forces reentering Baghdad. This is the beginning of the end for Iraq’s Jewish community.



1948 AD: With the establishment of the State of Israel, Sephardim living in Islamic countries are persecuted and threatened. Over the next twenty years, 600,000 Jews from Muslim states flee to Israel independently or

are brought over on special Israeli military operations. Over 200,000 come from Morocco and 100,000 from Iraq. In most cases, Muslim authorities in all Arab states confiscate Jewish possessions and



property and force them to relinquish their citizenship. As a result, the majority of Sephardim arrive to Israel poor and empty-handed. Overwhelmed by the enormous numbers and with no help from the United Nations, the Government of Israel places the Sephardic immigrants in transit camps in the less populated areas of Israel, primarily the

Francisca Nunez de Carvajal (1540-1596) and her nine children are the most well known victims of the Mexican Inquisition. Originally from Spain, Carvajal was the sister of the famous conquistador Luis de Carvajal. When Luis received a land contract for colonization in the New World, Francisca and her family were invited to join him. Under Luis de Carvajal’s governorship, the majority of colonists in the Kingdom of Nuevo Leon were Anusim. Once they were settled in Leon and somewhat distanced from the Inquisition, they began practicing Judaism as a community. Francisca and her children were bold in their encouragement of Anusim to remain faithful to Judaism and observe the Law of Moses. Eventually Francisca and her family were discovered

northern Rio Grande Valley and El Nuevo Mexico. It is suspected that many of the colonists who joined his caravans were not on the official audits because they were Anusim escaping the Inquisition.

Manasseh Ben Israel (1604-1657) is known as the founder of the modern Jewish community in England. While Israel was still an infant, his father was accused by an *auto-da-fe* and the family fled Portugal for Amsterdam. Israel became rabbi to the congregation of Neveh Shalom in Amsterdam where he developed a widespread reputation as a grand orator. He wrote several books directed to Christian audiences to help them understand Judaism. His master work, *El Conciliador*, deals with the difficult passages of the Old Testament and explains the



Left to right, Burning of Carvajal family, Luis de Carvajal, Don Juan de Onate, Manasseh Ben Israel, Sephardic synagogue in Amsterdam, Gershom Mendes Seixas, commemorating Francis Salvador, Moses Montefiore,

by the Mexican Inquisition, arrested, and tried in *auto-da-fes*. All the family members refused to deny their Jewish faith, preferring to die as martyrs.

Don Juan de Onate (1550-1626), remembered as the “Last Conquistador,” was the founder of the city of Santa Fe and the first Governor and Captain-General of the new province of New Mexico. Onate was born in Mexico to a very wealthy and prominent family and married the granddaughter of Spanish conquistador Hernando Cortes. Studies of Onate’s maternal ancestry have shown that he was a descendant of Sephardim from Spain who had converted to Catholicism. In 1595, he was granted permission from King Philip II of Spain to lead a colonization and exploration expedition in the

Jewish method of addressing the apparent inconsistencies. Israel believed that before Jews could restore Jerusalem, they had to occupy every part of the world. With this line of thinking, he labored to attain permission for Jews to be readmitted into England, where they had been barred from living since 1290. Israel died before receiving formal permission.

Rabbi Isaac Aboab de Fonseca (1605-1693) was the first congregational rabbi in the New World. Born in Portugal, his family fled to Amsterdam where he received his rabbinical training. Fonseca later moved to Recife, Brazil to serve as rabbi for Recife’s newly organized five thousand member Jewish community and the first public synagogue in the New World. Under Dutch rule in Recife, Jews were



allowed to practice their faith openly and free from persecution. However, in 1646, the Portuguese besieged northeastern Brazil, trying to reconquer the land from the Dutch and destroy the protection Jews enjoyed there. For nine years, the Jews joined their Dutch comrades in fighting off the Portuguese. Risking his own life by staying, Fonseca bravely led his community during this time of terrible suffering.

Gershom Mendes Seixas (1745-1816) was the first native-born Jewish clergy in the United States. At age twenty-three, Seixas became the spiritual leader for New York City's synagogue, Congregation Shearith Israel. During the American Revolution, Seixas was a strong advocate for American Independence and an opponent

Assembly, he was the only Jew to serve in a colonial legislature. He actively opposed the royal government and played an important role in uniting the colonists' fight for independence. While the British were readying to attack the South Carolina colonies, local British authorities induced the Cherokees to attack the border settlements in order to create a diversion. Salvador was the first to learn of the planned massacre and rode on horseback twenty-eight miles to report the news to the militia. He then joined the militia's defense of the settlements and was killed in the fighting.

Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) was a famous Jewish philanthropist and statesman who made it his life's work to protect the world's oppressed Jews and relieve their



of British occupation. He called upon his congregants to pray for the country's leaders and to bless the revolution. While the British occupied New York, he closed down his synagogue as a sign of protest to British rule and to protect his congregants who had become outspoken in their opposition to the Crown. Seixas was well-respected for his charity and patriotism by the entire New York community. He was honored as one of the twelve clergymen present at George Washington's inauguration.

Francis Salvador (1747-1776) was the first Jew to be killed in the American Revolution. Salvador immigrated to America in 1773. Already a true patriot, he quickly became involved in America's struggle with the British. As an elected representative for the South Carolina General

suffering. Born into an Orthodox Sephardic family in England, Montefiore was very successful in the London Stock Exchange. A devoutly religious Jew, he was appointed trustee and community leader of the Sephardic congregations in London. Although his work extended globally to all parts of Europe and the Middle East, his primary efforts were with the devastated Jewish communities of Jerusalem under Ottoman rule. In his seven trips to the land of Israel, he set up hospitals, schools, water systems, and synagogues and also built apartments and farms. Montefiore commissioned a census of Jerusalem and he relieved the Old City's overpopulation by founding the first Jewish neighborhood outside the Old City walls. He died at the age of 101, leaving a lasting legacy as one of the world's most beloved Jews.

Negev. The difficult conditions of these camps do not create an ideal beginning for these communities, putting them at a disadvantage compared to the wealthier and more educated Ashkenazi community. Today, Sephardim still make up a much larger percentage of the working and under class in Israel than Ashkenazim but with time this social and economic gap is closing.



1956 AD: Tunisia gains its independence from France and a number of anti-Jewish policies are put into place while many Jews are targeted for attack and the Jewish ghettos are razed to the ground. Tunisia's 100,000 Jews emigrate to France or Israel.



1962 AD: Algeria gains its independence from France. In the face of mounting hostility toward Jews, nearly the entire Algerian Jewish community migrates to France or Israel.

1968 AD: On 14 December, the Jewish community in Spain receives official recognition as a practicing religious body. On the same day and in the same document, the edict of expulsion of 31 March 1492 is abrogated.



1999 AD: In Israel, the Sephardic political party, Shas, wins 17 out of 120 seats in the Knesset. This marks a great achievement by the Israeli Sephardim in achieving political influence.



Conclusion

For centuries, many Anusim and their descendants maintained their Jewish beliefs and practices in secret. Over time, some Anusim were able to pass the family secret down from generation to generation; others continued Jewish practices without knowing their source; and many lost the knowledge of their Jewish ancestry but never lost their sense of otherness.

It is suspected that thousands—if not millions—of Bnai Anusim, descendants of forced converts from Spain, are residing today in Mexico, South America, Spain, Portugal, and southwestern United States. Only a fraction of these “lost Jews” are aware of their Jewish identity. Recently, however, there has been a revival occurring among Bnai Anusim who are either discovering their Jewishness for the first time or finally shedding the secrecy of their identity. Particularly, in the last twenty years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Bnai Anusim who have publicly identified themselves as Jews and begun to explore the roots of their Hebraic heritage.

According to testimonies, some Bnai Anusim families carefully preserved and protected Jewish practices and therefore were always very conscious of their Jewish identity. Others, after centuries of forced assimilation, miraculously awakened to their sense of connection to Judaism and independently acted on their desire to return to their ancestral faith. Restoring their Jewish identity is a powerful process in reclaiming what had been forcefully stolen from their ancestors.

Assimilation and complicated family histories have made the task of identifying sources of Jewish ancestry difficult, although not at all impossible. Part of the discovery process is recognizing the Jewish practices Bnai Anusim have kept over the centuries, often without even knowing their source or purpose. Keeping Kosher, observing the Sabbath, using Ladino (Spanish Hebrew) words and phrases, and celebrating Jewish holidays are just some of the traditions these Sephardim have maintained. The survival of less known rabbinic practices such as putting pebbles on graves

Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo (1870-1938) served as a Supreme Court Justice for the United States for eight years. Born in New York, Cardozo’s ancestry traced back to the early Sephardic immigrants of the 18th century. Cardozo attended Columbia University Law School and went on to become a distinguished New York jurist. He served on the New York Supreme Court for just a few months before being appointed by the governor to the New York Court of Appeals. A prolific writer, he authored four volumes on the philosophy of law. Cardozo was nominated by President Hoover in 1932 to fill the seat of Oliver Wendell Holmes on the United States Supreme Court. His nomination was unanimously approved by the Senate.

“The New Colossus,” is engraved on a plaque in the Statue of Liberty with those famous lines “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

Alice Davis Menken (1870-1936) dedicated her life to helping less fortunate Jewish women and youth in New York. She mobilized the Sephardic women of Congregation Shearith Israel to form the Shearith Israel Sisterhood in 1896. Under her leadership, the Sisterhood developed a program to help New York’s poor Jewish immigrants in the Lower East Side. In the early 1900s, the majority of these new immigrants were from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Having a strong connection to her own Sephardic faith and practices, Menken took measures to



Left to right, Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo, Emma Lazarus, Alice Davis Menken, Arthur Barros Basto, Anusim in Portugal, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Sephardic immigrants in Israel, Moshe Katsav, Benjamin Netanyahu

Emma Lazarus (1849-1887) is one of the first well-known Jewish American authors. She was a patriotic poet, a defender of immigrant rights, a voice against anti-Semitism, and an early Zionist. Lazarus was one of seven children in a wealthy New York family that traced its roots back to the first Spanish and Portuguese settlers in North America. She connected her poetry to her Sephardic heritage and often wrote about early Spanish Jewry. Horrified by the pogroms in Russia, she was an advocate for the establishment of a Jewish nation in Eretz Israel years before Theodore Herzl even began speaking of Zionism. Her later years of poetry were marked by a stronger display of Jewish themes. One of her most famous poems,

encourage the survival of their Sephardic culture and use of Ladino. She taught classes in Sephardic ritual and gave them print materials on American history that had been translated into Ladino. Menken also founded the Jewish Board of Guardians to help Jewish women and youth on parole or probation.

Arthur Barros Basto (1887-1961), known as the “Portuguese Dreyfus,” was a captain in the Portuguese army and descendant of Anusim. After learning of his Jewish ancestry from his grandfather, he enthusiastically returned to normative Judaism and began organizing the Jewish community of Portugal. In this process, many Anusim revealed to him their secret identities and Jewish practices. Inspired



by this revelation, Basto traveled throughout northern Portugal discovering thirty-four hidden communities of Anusim. He established schools, a Jewish newsletter, and a synagogue to offer Anusim Jewish education and Hebrew instruction. Portuguese dictator Salazar did not appreciate Basto's attempts to spark a Jewish revival. False and unspecified accusations of moral depravity were brought against him, and he was stripped of his rank and dismissed from the army.

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (1920-) is the former Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel and the current spiritual leader of the Shas political party, the Orthodox Sephardic party in Israel. Born in Baghdad in 1920, Rabbi Yosef moved to Jerusalem with his family at the age of four. After years of

becoming Israel's youngest mayor. A Likud party member, he was elected as member of Knesset in 1977. In Katsav's long Knesset career, he held various important ministerial positions before being appointed as Deputy Prime Minister in the government of Benjamin Netanyahu from 1996-1999. In the election for President of Israel, he defeated Shimon Peres by six Knesset votes. Israel's eighth president, he is the first President of Israel from the Likud party and the first to serve a seven-year term.

Benjamin Netanyahu (1949-), current leader of the Likud party, was the ninth Prime Minister of Israel (June 1996 to July 1999). Born in Israel, Netanyahu served in an elite counter terrorism unit in the IDF and complet-

and sweeping floors a certain way, which could not have been learned from just reading the Torah, is particularly convincing proof of their direct Jewish heritage. For many returning Jews, their given names and family names are historic links to their Jewish genealogy. Dell Sanchez, in his books *The Last Exodus* and *Aliya!!!*, gives an extensive list of Sephardic surnames, noting that many historians believe the letters "ez"—short for Erez Israel—were attached to names by Sephardic Jews as a way of saying "I am of my land, Israel." In addition to genealogical and historical proof, there are growing numbers of Sephardim who have chosen DNA testing as a scientific tool for unlocking the truth of their ethnic origin.

As Sephardic Jews come to terms with their identity, whole communities are coming forth publicly and professing their desires to return to normative Judaism. Synagogues are being built and rabbis are sent to even the most remote communities of Bnai Anusim to offer them religious teaching in mainstream Judaism and reconnect them to World Jewry. Before these lost brethren fully return to orthodoxy, a conversion process is usually necessary. However, rabbis usually more sensitive to the context of the conversion, emphasizing it as a cautionary measure and ceremony of return, not meant to deny their Jewishness but to protect it.

In the wake of the return of the Bnai Anusim to Judaism, we can also expect to see a massive aliya to Israel. The Cyrus Fund of the Jerusalem Connection was created to help facilitate this aliya. To be sure, many of these Bnai Anusim have expressed their feelings of not belonging in the land of their birth, preferring to return to the home of their ancestors. They feel an unexplainable love for Israel and a longing to be part of the Jewish state. As the Spirit of God moves in their hearts, they are encouraged by the prophecies and feel commanded to return to Israel. Some have even testified of angelic visits and divine appointments in which this message was revealed. In the coming days of the Lord we will witness the full fulfillment of the prophecies in the final exodus. The hearts of the lost Jews will be restored to their fathers (Malachi 4:5) and they will gather and reunite with their brethren to possess the land promised to them (Obadiah 19-21).



service on Israeli rabbinical courts and before becoming Israel's Chief Sephardic Rabbi in 1973, he served as the Deputy Chief Rabbi of Egypt and the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Known for his expertise in Talmudic scholarship, he has written prolifically since the age of eighteen on questions pertaining to Jewish Law (*halakha*). Due to the genius of his scholarship and heavy political influence, Yosef is revered as one of the current most important figures for religious Sephardim.

Moshe Katsav (1945-) is the current President of Israel. Born in Iran in 1945, he and his family immigrated to Israel in 1951. At age 24, Katsav was elected mayor of his hometown Kiryat Malachi,

ed his higher education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1984, he was selected as Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations. A Likud party member, Netanyahu was elected to the Knesset in 1988 and was elected Likud party chairman in 1993. His election as Prime Minister came on the heels of a spree of Palestinian suicide attacks. Netanyahu's tough approach towards terror and the Palestinian Authority resulted in fewer terrorist attacks than in the previous administration. In Ariel Sharon's government, Netanyahu served as Finance Minister and instituted sweeping reforms to revive the Israeli economy. He resigned as minister in August of 2005 in protest to the Gaza Disengagement.



The Church's Role

By Dell Sanchez, Ph.D.

Franciscan Inquisition Leaders in Mexico City, 1524

The word soon got out across the ocean and into the Monarch's courts that the very people they had expelled in 1492 were, somehow, now showing up in increasing numbers in the New World. These *gente prohibida* (prohibited people) had again managed to avoid total extinction, much as their ancestors had experienced in the great Exodus from Egypt 3,000 years earlier. Just as those Israelis had left Egypt's bondage bringing much gold, silver and articles of value, these prohibited people were not beginning to re-blossom all across the Americas, particularly in Mexico.

This news greatly disturbed the Catholic kings to the point that a brand new action was established to send a group of loyal Catholic leaders of the Spanish Franciscan order into the New World. As early as 1524, these Franciscan "missionaries" came to Mexico City with vested powers to install the Spanish version of the Inquisition in today's capital of the Republic of Mexico.

They were instructed to clear the land of all practicing Jews as well as *conversos* who were new Christian believers. It is noteworthy to state that Mexico City was not the only location of an Inquisition High Tribunal sired by its prototype in Spain. High Tribunals were also instituted and administered in both Lima, Peru and Medellin, Columbia. Through the years, untold numbers of Catholic Missions were planted all across Latin America and into the Southwest of North America.

This action points directly to the fact that Sephardic Jews were beginning to expand everywhere they went. While this Mexican Inquisition strategy had much success in terms of identifying and punishing great numbers of Sephardic Jews, it was not able to quell their spread and influence all across the New World.

Franciscans Transfer Inquisition Control to the Dominicans in 1527

Interestingly, the Dominicans who held similar beliefs somehow replaced the Franciscans who were given to a life of theology and poverty. But their austere theological precepts appeared to have been more inviting to the existing cathedral powers. It has been an accepted fact that both orders, particularly the Dominicans of that time, were extremely rigorous in their regulatory role of *limpiezas de sangre* and *autos de fe* (blood cleansing and forced conversion of Sephardic Jews).

Hence, in 1527, the Franciscans transferred their control to the Dominican Order who fired up the flames of the *boguems* (burning at the stake) in Mexico. In fact, just one year after the Dominican leadership took over, the hogueras began. This was a short six years after Cortez had landed in the New World. The first *Auto de Fe* in Mexico City occurred on October 17, 1527 and featured four crypto-Jews. Two of them, Hernando Alonso and Gregorio Morales, were burned at the stake. This sparked many other public as well as private *Autos de Fe* as well as *boguems* and different "investigative" methods.

The Royal powers of Spain must have discerned that the Catholic religious Order of the Dominicans needed assistance or a change in methodology that they shipped what is called an Audiencia with power to be the Supreme Court in Mexico City. Hence, the Kingdom of New Spain was reorganized into the Vice-Regency of New Spain to be governed by the Audiencia. In 1536, the newly appointed Vice-Regency of New Spain created the Archdiocese that was seated in Mexico City. At this time, the inquisitorial powers were transferred from the Dominicans to the Archbishop and the regional bishops under his control. What this all basically meant was that the Dominicans were "supposed" to be out of the big picture of the Mexican Inquisition; and, that there was now a rift between the Dominican camp and the Archbishop's office. 

From "Aliyah!! The Exodus Continues," p. 26, 28



The Goya Inquisition

Texas Crypto-Jews Return to Judaism

By Leonard Martinez

After learning her family's history of being crypto-Jews, Guadalupe Ramos made the decision to formally convert to Judaism in 2001.

"It was important to me to do so to regain my Jewish roots," Ramos said. "When my husband finished conversion, I felt very complete. With every festival and Shabbat we celebrate, I feel we are regaining our Jewish roots little by little. Our family ... had generations

er, and I didn't know why, but I was making this bread," Ramos said. "Now I realize it is because we were crypto-Jews."

'Spark of Curiosity'

Rabbi Stephen Leon of Congregation B'nai Zion said most of the crypto-Jews have settled in the Southwest, including the El Paso area and New Mexico.

"I would like to put a spark of curiosity in the community because I know many, many people who are curious or suspect that they have Jewish roots," Leon said.

Leon became aware of crypto-Judaism

Many have Returned

During the past two decades, Leon has helped more than 30 families formally return, through conversion, to Judaism. He continues to work with dozens of other families in El Paso, Juarez, Ruidoso, Hobbs and Roswell.

"It is my belief that the return of the anousim fulfills God's promise to Abraham that the Jewish people will be as numerous as the 'sands of the sea' and the 'stars in the sky,'" Leon said. "I honestly believe that once the crypto-Jews return in large numbers, that God's dec-



Sukkot meal in a sukkah at a Laredo Sunday School, circa 1935



Wedding of Bessie Anweil and Labe H. Golden in Ft. Worth, December 1924



Joshua Furman reading the Torah at his bar mitzvah, San Antonio, May 1994

Photos courtesy of UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures

who lost their Jewish roots. I hope future generations of my family will never lose it."

Ramos found out she was a crypto-Jew when she talked to a woman who knew her grandfather and great-grandmother who told her of some of the Jewish practices they performed.

Ramos realized the connection she had to Judaism because she would make matzah — Jewish unleavened bread — just as her great-grandmother had done.

"I didn't meet my great-grandmoth-

er 19 years ago when he became rabbi at Congregation B'nai Zion. He said people in El Paso and Juarez who were following Jewish customs — lighting candles on Friday nights, covering mirrors when a loved one died and observing Jewish dietary customs — despite being Christians began to ask questions.

As these anousim (Hebrew for "the forced ones," a term often used for the crypto-Jews) researched their roots, many discovered they were descendants of Jews whose faith was hidden for centuries.

laration will be realized and redemption will be at hand.

"But the descendants of those lost in the Inquisition are alive and well and are found in the fastest-growing ethnic group in the world, the Hispanic population," Leon said. "I am sure that at least 10 percent of the worldwide Hispanic community today have Jewish ancestry from the Spanish Inquisition." 

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Hebrew for the Goyim

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Sephardim

There is great controversy surrounding ancient words like *Sepharad* (ספרד), the plural of which is *Sephardim* (ספרדים). Today, *Sephardim* refers to:

*“Jews of Spain and Portugal and their descendants, distinguished from the Ashkenazim chiefly by their liturgy, religious customs, and pronunciation of Hebrew.”*¹ [Gen.10-Ashkenaz was Gomer’s son, Japheth’s grandson, Noah’s great grandson]

As we shall see, however, there is more to the story. Although *Sepharad*’s location is not agreed on, Spain and *Sepharad* eventually became synonymous because the

“Targum of Jonathan renders Sepharad as Ispamia or Spami..., i.e., Spain. From the end of the eighth century C.E., [A.D], Sepharad became the usual Hebrew appellation [title] for the Iberian Peninsula.” [emphasis added]

Definitions using Hebrew Letters

• **Sephar** (ספר) – a scribe, to count, number, a story, book, man of learning. An author is a “man (איש) of *The Sefer*

(חספר).” Jews are called “people (עם) of *HaSefer* (The Book חספר),” understood to be The Torah, the first five books of the Bible.

• **Sepharad** (ספרד) — (1) the site of a colony of exiles from Jerusalem, equated by many as Sardis, the capital of Lydia in Asia Minor,² a peninsula in west Asia between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, including most of Turkey. (2) Wherever these exiles first went, *Sephardim* has come to refer to Jews in Spain and Portugal and their descendants. *Sepharad* is a compound word, perhaps from *sefer* (ספר) and *rad* (רד), which means “to come down, descend, depart” (from Jerusalem). From Jerusalem, any direction is considered “down” and one always goes “up” (hence *aliyah*) when going to Jerusalem. *Sepharad* could mean Jews who “went down” from Jerusalem by force, taken into captivity when Jerusalem was plundered. Or the word might combine *sefer* (ספר) and *parad* (פרד), which means “to separate, to be dispersed, scattered.”³ Same idea. Or could it mean “end” (*sof-ss*) plus “descend” (רד)?

• **Iberia** (jh-rct) — compare to

Hebrew (עברי) and *Abraham* (אברהם). Iberia is considered to be a peninsula in southwest Europe, comprising Spain and Portugal, perhaps the Basque area.⁴

• **Edom** (אדום) — Edom means “the red region,” from the same root of *Adam* (אדם) and *adumab* (אדמה red ground). Today we call it Jordan, the area southeast of Israel and south of Moab, which is east of the Dead Sea. The Greeks called Edom “Idumaea, Idumea, and identified it as an ancient region between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba...”⁵ “Edom’s treasure was enormous wealth from iron and copper mines, and caravan trade...and Edom was famous for her wise men (Jeremiah 49:7).”⁶

• **Idumaea** (of אדום) — means “of Edom.”

• **Obadiah** (עבדיה) – servant (עבד) of Yah (יה), the shortened form of Yahweh.

Sepharad in the Bible

Only one place in the Hebrew Bible uses the word *sepharad* (ספרד) — in the book of Obadiah (עבדיה), a minor prophet in Israel. God gave a vision regarding Edom (אדום), recorded in the

STU YOTE





shortest book in the Bible, Obadiah. The descendents of Esau, Jacob's twin brother, lived in Edom. It was to these long lost cousins Moses appealed when he came up out of bondage in Egypt. Go to Numbers 20:14-21,

"Moses sent messengers from Kadesh (קדש) to the king of Edom, 'Thus says **your brother Israel**, 'you know all the **tela-ab** [תלא, — hardships, suffering] that has befallen us: How **our** fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us (ירעו) - did us evil) and **our** father: [he's appealing to their common father] when we cried unto Yabweh, he heard our voice...and brought us out. Behold, we are in Kadesh, a city on the outskirts of your border. Please let us pass through your country...we will not turn to the right hand nor the left until we have passed your borders....**But** Edom said, You shall not pass...lest I come against you with the sword....thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border, so Israel turned away from him.'" [added]

Fast Forward

Edom turned their backs on their Israelite cousins exiting Egypt, but the Jews managed to survive and prosper anyway. Fast forward to what scholars identify as King Jehoram's time (c. 848-841 B.C.), a time when **the enemies of Israel invaded Judah and plundered**

Jerusalem (2 Chr. 21:16-17; Joel 3:3-6; Amos 1:6), a time when Edom was [still] a bitter enemy of Israel.⁷ What did Edom do this time? Basically, nothing. Again, they refused to help. They even rejoiced over it.

Fast Forward Again

Today we find ourselves looking at a prophecy regarding *Sepharad* — a prophecy which **has yet to be fulfilled**. Obadiah, vs. 20, says the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath [between Tyre and Sidon]; **and that the captivity of Jerusalem** [the ones originally taken captive from Jerusalem], **which is in Sepharad** [these Jerusalemites who had been sent to Sepharad], **shall possess the cities of the south**. [In short, the "Sepharadim" will come back to Israel, not to Jerusalem where they came from, but to the south, the south country, **the Negev**].

Ferdinand and Isabella

Legend says there were Jews in Spain as early as Solomon's time,⁸ and many from Jerusalem were taken elsewhere. What happened to the conquered Jews taken to Spain and Portugal from Jerusalem? Hundreds of years later, they were expelled from Spain.

Today, Iran's leader says all Jews

must leave Iran. In 1492, the day Columbus headed out for America, Ferdinand and Isabella ordered the expulsion of *all* Jews from Spain. Where did they go? They went where they could. Many, called "conversos," outwardly converted to save their families. Many went to Africa, Portugal, England, Western Europe, Holland, Italy, and Turkey. Many went to North America, Mexico and South American countries.

As We Speak

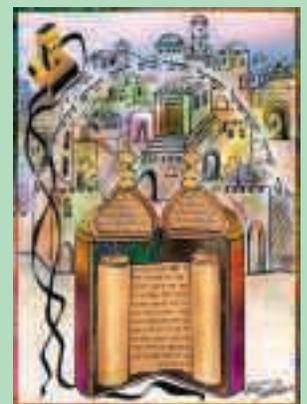
As God's Word tells anyone who will hear, many *Sephardim* (hundreds, thousands, perhaps more) are prepared, or will eventually be prepared to immigrate to their ancient homeland — to "possess the cities of the South," the Negev. Will you pray for them? Will you watch as this happens? Will you support efforts to help them return to their ancient homeland?



1. Random House Dictionary, p. 1301.
2. Jewish Encyclopedia, p. 1163.
3. Reuben Alcalay, Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary, (Massada Pub. Tel Aviv), p. 2095.
4. Random House Dictionary, p. 704.
5. Random House Dictionary, p. 454.
6. Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Handbook, (Moody Press, Chicago, 1966), p. 414.
7. Unger, p. 413.
8. Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. 14, (Jerusalem), p. 1164

Recommended Reading:

- *Christopher Columbus and the Participation of The Jews in the Spanish and Portuguese Discoveries* by Meyer Kayserling (1989).
- *Sephardim: Their Glorious Tradition from the Babylonian Exile to the Present Day* by Lucien Gubbay and Abraham Levy (1998).
- *Sephardim in the Americas: Studies in Culture and History* by Martin Cohen and Abraham Peck (1993).
- *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* by Jane Gerber (1992).
- *Remnants of Crypto-Jews Among Hispanic Americans* by Gloria Golden (2004).
- *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico* by Stanley Hordes (2005).
- *Sephardic Genealogy: Discovering Your Sephardic Ancestors and Their World* by Jeffrey S. Malka (2002).
- *Sephardi Story: A Celebration of Jewish History* by Chaim Raphael (1991).
- *The Spanish Inquisition* by Cecil Roth (1937).
- *A History of the Marranos* by Cecil Roth (1932).
- *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* by Norman Roth (1995).
- *Farewell Espana: The World of the Sephardim Remembered* by Howard M. Sachar (1995).
- *Aliya!!!: The Exodus Continues* by Dell Sanchez (2001).
- *The Last Exodus* by Dell Sanchez (1998).





Ode to Zion

By Judah Halevi

Judah Halevi was the greatest Hebrew poet in the “golden age” of Spain. Born in Toledo, Spain in 1075, he became the personal physician to the king of Spain. In addition to medicine, he studied Arabic, the Talmud, and philosophy. His philosophical novel, *The Kuzari*, which uses dialogue to present his views on the superiority of Judaism, garnered him lasting fame. Known as the “Sweet Singer of Zion,” Halevi had a mastery of biblical Hebrew and wrote volumes of nationalistic poems and liturgical hymns about the Jewish return to the Land of Israel and man’s relationship with God. Halevi’s poems were written at the time of the first crusades and are a reflection of his belief that only with the resurrection of Jerusalem by the Hebrew people will they be able to live peacefully. In 1140, Halevi—an early Zionist—set out to fulfill his life’s dream of living in Israel but he died on his journey before he ever reached the object of his devotion.

Art thou not, Zion, fain
To send forth greetings from thy sacred rock
Unto thy captive train,
Who greet thee as the remnants of thy flock?
Take thou on every side—
East, west, and south, and north
—their greetings multiplied.
Sadly he greets thee still,
The prisoner of hope, who, day and night,
Sheds ceaseless tears, like dew on Hermon’s hill—
Would that they fell upon thy mountain’s height!

Harsh is my voice when I bewail thy woes,
But when in fancy’s dream
I see thy freedom, forth its cadence flows
Sweet as the harps that hung by Babel’s stream.
My heart is sore distressed
For Bethel ever blessed,
For Peniel, and each ancient, sacred place.
The holy presence there
To thee is present where
Thy Maker opes thy gates,
the gates of heaven to face.

The glory of the Lord will ever be
Thy sole and perfect light;
No need hast thou, then, to illumine thee,
Of sun by day, or moon and stars by night.
I would that, where God’s spirit was of yore
Poured out unto thy holy ones, I might
There, too, my soul outpour!
The house of kings and throne of God wert thou,
How comes of it then that now
Slaves fill the throne where sat thy kings before?

Oh! who will lead me on
To seek the posts where, in far-distant years,
The angels in their glory dawned upon
Thy messengers and seers?
Oh! who will give me wings
That I may fly away,
And there, at rest from all my wanderings,
The ruins of my heart among thy ruins lay?
I’ll bend my face unto thy soil, and hold
Thy stones as precious gold.
And when in Hebron I have stood beside
My fathers’ tombs, then will I pass in turn
Thy plains and forest wide,
Until I stand on Gilead and discern
Mount Hor and Mount Abarim,
’neath whose crest
Thy luminaries twain,
thy guides and beacons rest.

Thy air is life unto my soul, thy grains
Of dust are myrrh, thy streams with honey flow;
Naked and barefoot, to thy ruined fanes
How gladly would I go;
To where the ark was treasured, and in dim
Recesses dwelt the holy cherubim.

I rend the beauty of my locks, and cry
In bitter wrath against the cruel fate
That bids thy holy Nazarites to lie
In earth contaminate.
How can I make or meat or drink my care,
How can mine eyes enjoy
The light of day, when I see ravens tear
Thy eagles’ flesh, and dogs thy lions’ whelps destroy?
Away! thou cup of sorrow’s poisoned gall!

Scarce can my soul thy bitterness sustain.
When I Ahola unto mind recall,
I taste thy venom; and when once again
Upon Aholiba I muse, thy dregs I drain.

Perfect in beauty, Zion! how in thee
Do love and grace unite!
The souls of thy companions tenderly
Turn unto thee; thy joy was their delight,
And, weeping, they lament thy ruin now.
In distant exile, for thy sacred height
They long, and toward thy gates in prayer they bow.
Thy flocks are scattered o’er the barren waste,
Yet do they not forget thy sheltering fold,
Unto thy garments’ fringe they cling, and haste
The branches of thy palms to seize and hold.
Shinar and Pathros! come they near to thee?
Naught are they by thy Light and Right divine.
To what can be compared the majesty
Of thy anointed line?
To what the singers, seers, and Levites thine?
The rule of idols fails and is cast down,
Thy power eternal is, from age to age thy crown.

The Lord desires thee for his dwelling-place
Eternally; and blest
Is he whom God has chosen for the grace
Within thy courts to rest.
Happy is he that watches, drawing near,
Until he sees thy glorious lights arise,
And over whom thy dawn breaks full and clear
Set in the Orient skies.
But happiest he, who, with exultant eyes,
The bliss of thy redeemed ones shall behold,
And see thy youth renewed as in the days of old.



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Return of the Prodigal

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